

Hounding Out Puppy Farms

A non-commercial set-up such as Hunt kennels, need not have been included in the legislation as they are not in the business of selling either puppies or breeding bitches. However, as they are included, a separate set of guidelines should be in place to accommodate dogs kept as packs so that their welfare needs are met and are not compromised. In a meeting with the Minister Rebecca Evans on the 6th of November, the Minister agreed to a separate set of guidelines and I await instruction from her officials.

- Puppies bred at hunt kennels are not for a sale. Hound puppies are never sold.
- Breeding hounds is a very selective process. Hounds selected to breed are chosen for confirmation, soundness, good health, working ability and physical and mental attributes.
- Hound puppies do not end up in domestic situations.
- Hounds are kept as packs; they eat, sleep, work and play together, naturally as pack animals. Special attention is paid to individuals who may be slightly shy in nature, for example, they get to eat first.
- Exercising a pack is very different to exercising many breeds with different needs. Hounds go out on walk together.
- Requiring more than one person to maintain a pack of hounds is neither practical nor justifiable. The staffing level required for keeping hounds is different to the requirements of keeping a variety of breeds, such as may be found in commercial dog breeding situations.
- Hunt kennels are already inspected by their representative organisation which is governed by the Council for Hunting Association. The Council for Hunting Association would be prepared to report to the Welsh Government. Hunt kennels that feed flesh / operate as collecting centres are already inspected by DEFRA and Trading Standards.
- Hunt kennels across Wales have contributed positively to the proposed microchipping legislation and most have microchipped. Many hunts already microchipped their hounds.
- To include hunt kennels in the same guidelines as those already set out for commercial kennels would be detrimental to their welfare as there are elements in the current guidelines that quite simply cannot apply to hounds kept as packs and their welfare would be seriously compromised. For example “each dog must have a bed of its own” would simply not work at kennels due to the nature in which they rest, together and rarely as individuals.

If you have any questions please contact Rachel Evans, Director for Wales for the Countryside Alliance on 07825337978 or rachel-evans@countryside-alliance.co.uk