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Defra consultation on Cat and Dog Microchipping and Scanning in England

Who we are

DBRG is a charity set up to try to improve the health and welfare of dogs related to breeding practices. To that end, we provide information and advice to the public about sourcing a puppy from a breeder who has high standards of welfare for the dogs used for breeding and their offspring. This includes the selection of dogs to be used for breeding to ensure parents are healthy and have good temperaments. By 'healthy' we mean that they are as far as possible free from breed-related genetic diseases and exaggerated physical features (conformation). Puppies should also be cared for appropriately with good diet and recommended socialisation and habituation.

www.dbrg.uk

Members of DBRG are all volunteers, who offer their skills and expertise on a pro bono basis. As a group we collaborate with other dog welfare organisations and the veterinary profession and take part in all Government consultations concerned with the improvement of dog welfare related to breeding.

We are independent and unique in having this very specific focus ie, dog health and welfare related to breeding practices, and have no business activities or conflicts of interest. We are for the benefit of the public and the health and welfare of dogs only. We are A Voice For Dogs™.

Our concerns and comments relate to the microchipping of dogs and the issues which have arisen from the current regulations.

Recommendations for improvements to the current Microchipping of Dogs Regulations

DBRG has serious concerns about the principles and practicalities of the current requirements for the microchipping of dogs which are preventing its effective implementation. These are:

- The proliferation of databases for dogs in England – currently 14 national databases

- The fact that each devolved administration has its own system rather than having one system for the whole of the UK.
- The breeders details are not retained on the database when a puppy is sold or a dog passed on to a different owner.
- The named owner on the database may not be the current owner if details are not changed when a dog is passed on.
- The multiple databases means that it can be very difficult to trace the current owner of a particular dog and to reunite a lost dog with its current owner.

DBRG recommends

- That there is one central database for dog microchip information. If this is not possible then a single point of entry is needed which connects to all of the databases and minimises the need for time consuming manual searching.
- Since in effect the UK is one country, it is not in the interests of animal welfare, to have different microchipping regulations in each of the devolved administrations. This leads to more confusion regarding traceability and facilitates puppy trafficking. DBRG recommends that the devolved administrations work together to standardise procedures, the microchip details required, and implement a single point of entry to facilitate ease of traceability.
- That the Microchipping Regulations for Dogs are amended to ensure that the breeder's details are retained on the microchip permanently so that there is always traceability back to the breeder in the case of serious inherited health problems further down the line. Many genetic diseases are not present or visible in puppies but develop later in life but not necessarily at an old age. A good breeder would appreciate having such information which will inform future breeding choices.
- That it should be mandatory to change the ownership details on the microchip when a dog is rehomed to a new owner. Many dogs have more than one owner in their lifetime. We believe that vets have a vital role in checking a dog's microchip when a new dog or owner is registered with their practice.
- We believe that vet teams can play an important role in checking a dog's microchip at first registration in their practice and in any situation in which the vet feels that identity may be in question or particularly relevant, for example euthanasia, when being health-tested or when presented by an unknown person.

