



American Brittany Club, Inc.

SPONSORS OF THE BRITTANY

10370 Fleming Road
Carterville, Illinois 62918

September 26, 2012

Dr. Gail Golab
AVMA Headquarters
Attn: Animal Welfare Division
1931 N. Meacham Rd. Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 90173-4360

Dr. Golab,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors and the Health and Genetics Committee of the American Brittany Club, Inc. We are the AKC Parent Club for the Brittany Breed. We have 87 clubs throughout the United States. We would like for the AVMA to reconsider its position on tail docking.

Our first breed standard was established in France in 1907 when Brittanys became a registered breed. The early standard required that the tail of a Brittany always be short at birth and that, in order to discourage further cross-breeding, black-and-white Brittanys were disqualified. The requirement for a naturally bobbed-tail was soon dropped and those not born with a natural bob were allowed to be docked.

Docking is allowed as a preventative measure to keep the tail from being injured during hunting. The Brittany is a small compact dog who has always been used to hunt in heavy cover with briars and thick brambles and vegetation. His body, unlike many of the taller sporting dogs, is close to the ground and subject to injury, especially if he had a tail. Unlike breeds like the Labrador Retriever which have thick, powerful, and well padded tails throughout the full length, or the English Setter and Golden Retriever, which have long course hair throughout the tail for protection, breeds such as the Vizsla, German Shorthaired Pointer, and Weimaraner, and Brittanys, have no such protection. Tails on these breeds are thus docked to keep them from splitting and bleeding when they are hunting.

Contrary to animal rights charges that it is done solely for cosmetic purposes is simply not valid. As members of the medical community, I'm sure you know that the removal of a tail at 3 days of age is a far less traumatic event for a puppy than a spay and neuter procedure often suggested at under 4 months of age. Spay and neuter is something prescribed to satisfy man's desire to limit the animal over-population and yet man's desire to perform a simple tail docking is condemned by the very groups seeking spay and neuter of all dogs. The two concepts are contrary to each other in logical thinking.

When the medical community refuses to perform docking procedures, you put our dogs at more risk as non-professionals will continue to do so possibly causing a less efficient process to take place.

Please reconsider your current policy opposing tail docking and help us use a century old procedure that has helped protect our dogs from injury.

Sincerely,

Margaret Horstmeyer, DVM
Chairperson of the American Brittany Club
Health and Genetics Committee