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Paper

The prevalence of tail injuries in working and non-working breed dogs visiting veterinary practices in Scotland

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to estimate the prevalence of tail injuries that required veterinary examination in different breeds of dog in Scotland. The study population included all dogs that had visited one of 16 veterinary practices located in Scotland between 2002 and early 2012. The overall prevalence of tail injuries in dogs visiting one of the 16 veterinary practices was 0.59 per cent. The prevalence of tail injuries in dogs of working breeds was estimated to be 0.90 per cent. Working dog breeds that were examined by a veterinary surgeon were at a significantly greater risk of sustaining a tail injury than non-working breeds (P<0.001). To prevent one such tail injury in these working breeds approximately 232 dogs would need to be docked as puppies. To prevent one tail amputation in spaniels, 320 spaniel puppies would need to be docked. Spaniels presented after January 2009 were 2.3 times more likely to have a tail injury than those presented before April 29, 2007 (date of the legislation that banned tail docking in Scotland). Given the results of this and the accompanying paper it may be appropriate to consider changes to the current legislation for specific breeds of working dogs.

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