



Schipperke Club of America, Inc.
Lee Ann Stusnick, President
1 Cedar Creek Drive
Shawnee, OK 74804
Lstusnick@aol.com

Dr. Douglas Aspros, DVM, President
American Veterinary Medical Association
1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360

September 22, 2012

RE: Schipperke Club of America Opposition to AVMA's Ear Cropping and Tail Docking Policy

Dear Dr. Aspros:

On behalf of the members of the Schipperke Club of America (SCA) and its Board of Directors, we join our many fellow breed clubs in registering our strong opposition to and disappointment with the AVMA's Ear Cropping and Tail Docking Policy ("the Policy"). The Policy lacks any scientific support or citation, and without seeking the input of, or involvement from, major stakeholders such as the American Kennel Club and breed parent clubs, merely weakens the AVMA's credibility and undermines important relationships.

Dog breeds have been developed by man to serve the needs of man throughout history. The phenotype of these individual breeds, as well as such things as ear cropping and tail docking, are essential to their function and identification. Specifically of historical note, only the European elite were allowed to own pure bred dogs. The working class was allowed to utilize these breeds, such as the Schipperke, so necessary to serve their owners, only if the tails of these dogs were docked, thus identifying the dog's use and ownership. The Schipperke has been known as a black tailless dog for more than 400 years. The Schipperke Club of America honors this tradition with its AKC Breed Standard which requires the Schipperke to have no tail visually discernible.

The SCA believes that docking tails and removing dew claws within 3-5 days of whelp is generally safe and we strongly support the involvement of veterinarians in such actions. By issuing the Policy without the offer of scientific support, the AVMA undoubtedly will drive crop/dock practices, now undertaken safely and humanely by veterinarians, underground perhaps to people with little or no veterinary expertise or experience. This is hardly the way for the AVMA to provide for animal health and welfare.

The tradition of pure bred dogs, marked visually by the phenotype, as well as such attributes as cropped ears and/or docked tails must continue. Underlying these visual differences are differences between breeds in their genotype. It is this genotypic variation that makes the pure bred dog so useful in cutting edge canine health research, much of which receives support from the AKC Canine Health Foundation, as well as from human health research organizations.

The SCA, on behalf of all breed clubs, advocates for the right of parent breed clubs to continue to specify that cropped ears and/or docked tails remain a part of their AKC breed standard, differentiating that breed from all others. SCA also stands to protect the right of individual owners to crop/dock their dogs in accordance with that respective standard for their breed.

Sincerely,

Lee Ann Stusnick, President

On behalf of the Schipperke Club of America Board of Directors

Beverly Henry, Vice President

Howard Cox, Treasurer

Kristin Morrison, Recording Secretary

Kathy Navarrete, Corresponding Secretary

Melanie Coronetz, Director

Dorothy Clem, Director

Kathy Gaul-Montgomery, Director

Jennifer Hutchins, Director

Kim Fickas, Director

Barbara Murray, Director

Betty Jo Patrick, Director & AKC Delegate

Cathy Thistle, Director

June Moore, Past President

Cc: AKC BOD Chair, Alan Kalter

AKC President, Dennis Sprung

Gail Golab, PhD, D.V.M., Division Director, Animal Welfare Division AVMA