



Veterinary Ireland Media Release 11th June 2018

Veterinary Ireland Calls on Minister Ring to issue New Dog Breeding Establishment Guidelines

Veterinary Ireland, the organisation representing veterinary practitioners in Ireland, has called on Minister Michael Ring T.D. to expedite the commitment he made early last month to approve and publish the new Dog Breeding Establishment (DBE) Guidelines by the end of June 2018. Veterinary Ireland says that the new Guidelines are needed to give adequate direction and clarity to operators of Dog Breeding Establishments and to Local Authority Veterinary Inspectors (LAVI's) and also to further improve standards at these establishments.

The Department of Rural and Community Development holds responsibility for dog control and Dog Breeding Establishments (DBE's). The Dog Breeding Establishments Act, 2010 came into force in 2012. The then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Phil Hogan, introduced DBE guidelines concurrently to assist DBE operators to comply with the Act and to assist LAVI's to apply the Act.

There was a total of 258 Dog Breeding Establishments registered with local authorities at the end of 2017. A DBE is defined as any establishment at which 6 or more female dogs, over the age of 6 months and capable of breeding, are kept. DBE's include hunt clubs, dog rescues and boarding kennels, as well as establishments where dogs are kept specifically for breeding.

Speaking on the call for action to Minister Ring, Dr. Gerry Neary MVB MRCVS, President of Veterinary Ireland, stated that *"there has been a significant improvement in the standards of DBE's in Ireland since the commencement of the Act in 2012. However, while most DBE operators are compliant and co-operate with LAVI's to improve their facilities and standards, he stated that local authorities had issued 31 Improvement Notices and 4 Closure Notices to DBE's between 2013 – 2017"*.

Improvement Notices are official notices issued by the local authority where it is satisfied that there has been a contravention of the Act or of conditions attached to the DBE registration, or where the DBE poses a threat to public health or animal welfare. The Improvement Notice requires the DBE operator to comply with specific provisions of the Act or conditions of registration or to take measures to avoid or prevent the specific threat to public health or animal welfare.

Closure Notices are official notices requiring the DBE operator to cease breeding or keeping dogs at the establishment and are issued where the local authority is satisfied that there is a serious and immediate threat to public health or animal welfare.



Most recently, of the 10 Improvement Notices issued by local authorities in 2016, 4 were appealed by DBE operators to the District Court. Dr. Neary stated that “*this high rate of appeal is due in part to a lack of clarity in the current DBE guidelines*”.

The process of review of the DBE guidelines began early in 2016 and led to the issue of the new draft DBE guidelines for public consultation by the Department for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in December 2016. Veterinary Ireland was one of several organisations to make a detailed submission to the Department. The public consultation period was closed at the end of February 2017.

In the meantime, this function was transferred to the new Department of Rural and Community Affairs, under the responsibility of Minister Ring. Veterinary Ireland wrote to Minister Ring in November 2017 urging him to prioritise the completion and publication of the new DBE Guidelines. On 20th February 2018, Minister Ring’s Department published a Consultation Summary Report, providing a summary of the submissions received during the consultation period and detailing the proposed next steps in the process. In answer to a Parliamentary Question from Clare Daly T.D., Minister Ring stated in the Dáil on 2nd May 2018 that he expected to have the revised DBE guidelines ready for his approval by the end of Quarter 2 of this year (i.e. 30th June 2018).

Dr Neary congratulated the Minister on the work done already, but again called on Minister Ring “*to expedite this process and to issue the new DBE guidelines as soon as possible*”.

ENDS

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