

**Veterinary Ireland Media Release
(29 April 2010)**



“The Facts about the Proposed Dog Breeding Bill”

Coalition of vets and trusted Irish animal welfare organisations work together to correct misunderstandings about dog breeding legislation

29th April 2010: A coalition of long established groups associated with dogs in Ireland has today issued a joint statement clarifying misunderstood aspects of the dog breeding legislation.

VICAS (Veterinary Ireland Companion Animal Society), the Irish Kennel Club, and widely supported animal welfare groups including, Dogs Trust, Dublin SPCA, , ISPCA and The Irish Blue Cross have spoken out in support of the Dog Breeding Bill that is currently passing through the Dail.

+++++

For the following reasons, we feel this well-considered Bill, produced after wide consultation under the previous Fianna Fail government, must be passed as soon as possible:

- Ireland does not have the standards in place that are present in other countries thus ensuring that unscrupulous breeders are able to take full advantage of our lax controls, leading to widely reported incidents of over-breeding of animals in poor welfare conditions
- The Dog Breeding Bill has nothing to do with hunting or angling. The purpose of the Dog Breeding Bill is to safeguard the health and welfare of dogs – a subject of serious concern to the vast majority of people living in the countryside, as well as those in urban areas.
- The Dog Breeding Bill is NOT part of a specific Green agenda. The process was started by Fianna Fail over 4 years ago following widespread concern about animal welfare abuses in the “puppy farms”. The legislation is essentially putting into place recommendations that were made by an expert committee convened by Fianna Fail.
- The Bill proposes that hunt clubs will be exempt from paying fees. However, if such kennels include six or more bitches of breeding age, they too must register and be subject to possible inspection. There’s no reason why any kennel that breeds dogs should be exempt from reasonable standards of animal welfare, and there’s a concern that if some premises are allowed to be exempt from inspection, a loophole will be created that may be exploited by individuals attempting to avoid all regulation.

- The much-cited Greyhound Act is solely about identifying and regulating greyhound racing - it does not mention welfare or breeding. The Dog Breeding Bill will not result in double taxing or double regulation.
- There is an existing inspection system for greyhounds but this does not extend to the breeding establishments, nor does it involve the inspection of dogs that aren't being raced, ie: the majority of greyhounds held by breeders and the racing establishment
- More than 1,000 of the 10,000 plus stray or unwanted dogs that were euthanased in Ireland's dog pounds in 2008 -- over 10% -- were greyhounds, one of the highest levels for any single breed: they are at least as much a part of the "dog problem" in Ireland as any other type of animal. There is no justification for any exemption from reasonable, affordable regulation of breeding.
- Breeding establishments are defined as having six or more entire bitches; those with fewer will not be included in the proposed legislation, so the "small time breeder" will not be affected by the legislation. Well-managed, well-maintained dog-breeding premises have absolutely nothing to fear from the new proposals.
- Some dog breeders have expressed fears that the dog breeding legislation will be enforced by unqualified animal welfare workers. In fact, it will be members of the Local Authority Veterinary Service (LAVS), a professional body of "government vets", who will oversee fair and reasonable implementation of the Bill
- The "high cost" of regulation amounts to a pro-rata sum that is a maximum of €400 per year for six or more breeding bitches, or less than €70 per breeding animal. If each bitch produces only seven puppies per year (and many will produce more than this), this amounts to a maximum cost of €10 on the price of a puppy that may be sold for €600 or more. This is a balanced and reasonable price to pay to ensure that minimal standards of animal welfare are upheld especially as breeder's organisations admit the industry is worth in excess of €29 Million.

There have been suggestions that the legislation is somehow part of some larger, anti-countryside conspiracy. This is clearly not the case: animal welfare and stamping out animal cruelty are the central aims of the legislation.

It is very important that the public are given the truth. The legislation is quite simply about bringing our legislation in line with international best practice, improving Ireland's international image, and protecting the welfare of animals.

The Dog Breeding Bill is a necessary piece of legislation that will ensure that Ireland will no longer be the 'puppy farm capital of Europe'.

For more press information and interviews with:

Veterinary Ireland Companion Animal Society please contact
 Pete Wedderburn BVM&S MRCVS CertVR - 0868847966

Dogs Trust please contact

Mark Beazley – 087 6129124

Dublin SPCA please contact

Orla Aungier - 087 6776552

Irish Kennel Club please contact

Sean Delmar - 01-4533300 / 0876269591

ISPCA please contact

Barbara Bent - 0871264048

The Irish Blue Cross please contact

Christina Conneely – 086 8099560