



Miniature Schnauzer Club of Canada

c/o Secretary, Box 579, Delisle SK S0L 0P0

July 13, 2010

Since 1955, The Miniature Schnauzer Club of Canada (MSCC) has served as the official voice of Miniature Schnauzer breeders across Canada. Some of the most influential dogs in our breed, worldwide, have originated from Canadian kennels.

We write on behalf of our membership to express grave concern at the actions being contemplated, and in some cases enacted, by veterinary associations in regards to so-called "cosmetic" surgeries; in particular ear cropping, tail docking and dewclaw removal. These procedures serve practical as well as aesthetic ends in our breed. Proposed bans on dewclaw removal are particularly inexplicable, for in heavily coated breeds such as our own, these appendages often go unseen by owners, and result in the claw growing back into the leg or being torn during grooming.

We also caution that any such bans are certain to result in damages to the financial, competitive, and exporting interests of our members, by effectively rendering Canadian bred dogs uncompetitive in the United States where the majority of important competitions are held, and cropping/docking the norm.

This, coupled with the demand for docked/cropped dogs by the pet buying public, is certain to lead to these surgeries being performed by lay practitioners who lack the full services and safeguards a veterinary clinic can provide. This is of particular concern regarding ear cropping. We stress that if cropping is removed as an option under our breed standard (which permits both cropped and drop ears) dogs with improper ear carriage will simply migrate from the veterinarian's clinic to a lay practitioner experienced in the process of "banging" ear cartilage to produce the desired fold. As ear and tail "fixing" are often performed without any pain medication at all, these are practices we do not wish to expand into our breed.

In addition to these concerns, we request that you consider the attached statement re: the broader consequences of forced novel selection practices for our breed's long term genetic diversity. This statement has been reviewed and endorsed by a number of respected Miniature Schnauzer breeder-vets.

In preface, the following comments by Dr. Mary H. Whiteley, who has studied the genetics of the Miniature Schnauzer at the molecular level in the course of developing a DNA test for juvenile renal dysplasia ;

" In the course of the genetic testing for juvenile renal dysplasia, it is abundantly clear that the Miniature schnauzer breed has a lack of genetic diversity. While there are three allelic variants for JRD, in the Miniature schnauzers the overwhelming allele in this breed is allelic variant 1. The extremely high frequency of this allele in the breed reflects a genetic bottleneck due to a founder effect. This is not the case in all the other breeds that we are testing where all three allelic variants are present. It is my opinion that any attempts to change the breed standard which may result in popular sire effects could result in further damage to an already compromised gene pool. The result of this may be detrimental to real health issues in the breed. " - Mary H. Whiteley, Ph.D., DOGenes Inc.

Respectfully,

Kay Deveyrac, President
on behalf of the MSCC Board of Directors