

Tuesday 14 March 2006

MPs Vote To Ban Brutal Tradition Of Cosmetic Tail Docking Of Dogs

MPs have voted this evening by 476 to 63 to ban the outdated, unwarranted practice of cosmetic tail docking of dogs during the report stage and third reading of the Animal Welfare Bill.

Acknowledging this as a major step towards getting a ban on the statute books, David Bowles, RSPCA Head of External Affairs, said: "Tradition is at the heart of this brutal and painful mutilation, and one that has no basis in logic.

"MPs have rightly signalled that it is unacceptable in a civilised society to amputate a puppy's tail purely because some people think that it is aesthetically pleasing to disable a dog in this way."

MPs were given the option of maintaining the status quo, where tail docking of dogs is allowed if performed by a vet; or amending the Animal Welfare Bill to have either an outright ban, or a ban with exemptions for working or gun dogs.

The RSPCA, the Royal College of Surgeons, British Veterinary Association and a host of animal welfare organisations have all been calling for total ban on tail docking, except on medical grounds as a salvage procedure following serious injury or disease.

TV Vet Emma Milne, founder of Vets Against Docking, said: "This is a step forward for the welfare of thousands of dogs. The veterinary profession has long argued that the practice should be stopped and I, along with all the vets who have contacted me regarding this issue, am very pleased, however a complete ban would have been preferable."

Shona Mclsaac, MP for Cleethorpes, said: "The evidence in support of a ban on this cruel practice is compelling. I am delighted that the House of Commons has now signalled the end of this unnecessary and unethical mutilation for cosmetic reasons. All docking should be consigned to history, just like the ear cropping of dogs."

The RSPCA's David Bowles added: "While we would have preferred a total ban on tail docking of dogs', we are gratified to see that it will become illegal to enter a docked dog into a show under the Animal Welfare Bill."

Today's decision means the UK is now able to join the 13 other European countries which have already ratified the European Convention on Pet Animals, which states that it is illegal to dock dogs' tails.