



## **Animal welfare information no 18.8**

### **Dog shows**

Since 1 March 2018, events involving animals must be carried out in accordance with Articles 30a and 30b of the Swiss Animal Welfare Ordinance (AniWO). This is to ensure that the animals' basic needs are better considered and that they are handled with care.

This technical information clarifies the above-mentioned provisions in regard to dog shows. It is aimed at event organisers, participants and the cantonal veterinary services responsible for enforcing animal welfare legislation.

### **Obligations of persons involved**

Responsibility for the careful handling of animals at events lies with both the organisers and individual participants. For example, both sides are obliged to minimise the risk of injury or disease and to avoid pain, suffering or harm. Animals must also be protected against overexertion (see Art. 30a(1) AniWO).

The different obligations of organisers and participants are set out below.

### **Obligations of the organiser**

In addition to organisational tasks, the event organiser has a supervisory role, in that it is required to take steps if participants fail to fulfil their obligations. It is also obliged to provide information to the enforcement authority (see Art. 30a(5) and (6) AniWO).

### **Licensing requirement? Contact the cantonal veterinary service in good time!**

Dog shows at which no animals are sold or exchanged are not subject to licensing requirements under Swiss animal welfare law. However, the cantons are entitled to enact further regulations and to require a licence for events involving animals.

Licensing requirements may also be founded on the legislation concerning epizootic diseases. The organiser must therefore contact the competent cantonal veterinary service in good time to inquire about the specific legal situation and, if necessary, to apply for a licence.

## Preliminary information for participants; inspections on entry to the event

Preliminary written information for participants concerning their animal welfare obligations at the event ensures smooth procedures and prevents unnecessary risks. This includes information on animal care regulations, housing of dogs during the event, health precautions and the ban on showing dogs with breeding traits that cause strain or dogs with cropped ears or docked tails. In the case of dogs with congenital stumpy tails, it must be possible to prove that the dog is not docked. Accepted forms of proof are a corresponding entry in the pet passport, an extract from the dog database, confirmation from the competent authority, or a genetic test that can be clearly assigned to the animal. A veterinary certificate alone is not sufficient.

In consultation with the competent cantonal veterinary service, organisers should provide information on measures to prevent animal diseases and, if applicable, on cantonal dog legislation. Information should also be provided on the special rules concerning the import and re-export of exhibition animals from abroad. Their microchip number and the validity of their rabies vaccination should be checked. By inspecting each dog registered for the show for symptoms of infectious disease and unacceptable breeding traits **on entry to the show**, organisers can ensure that the event is animal welfare compliant.

## Removing dogs with banned breeding traits that cause strain

Participants may not exhibit dogs which show banned breeding traits that cause strain (see below the section “Ban on exhibiting dogs with breeding traits that cause strain”).

If the event organiser learns that participants are not fulfilling this obligation, it must remove such dogs from the event (see Art. 30a(5) in conjunction with (4)(b) AniWO). Affected dogs must be suitably housed outside the public area of the show.

## Minimising risks of disease and overexertion

The coming together of animals from different origins increases the risk of transmitting pathogens. It is therefore a basic requirement for an event that only healthy animals should take part (see Art. 30a(4)(a) AniWO). Dogs with symptoms of illness or signs of pain must be kept outside the public area of the show and cared for or treated according to their condition.

The organiser must also comply with the following specific requirements (see Art. 30a(2) AniWO):

- An up-to-date **list** is available that shows the names and addresses of each participant and details of the breed, number and microchip numbers of dogs brought to the event.
- The event must be conducted in such a way as to permit adequate **rest and recuperation phases** for the animals.
- Care should be taken to ensure that dogs do not suffer from **noise or climatic factors** such as draughts, or sunlight heating their housing. If fans are used, they must be positioned outside the enclosure or at a safe distance from the dogs, for safety reasons.
- The catering area for the public must be physically separated from the animal area.
- **Animals which are overwhelmed** by the situation must be provided with suitable housing and appropriate care.

## Appointing a person to supervise the running of the event

The organiser must check that participants are fulfilling their obligations. If this is not the case, it must take the necessary steps (see Art. 30a(5) AniWO). In particular, dogs that pose a danger to people or other animals must be removed from the exhibition premises. To carry out these checks, the organiser must reasonably appoint one or more persons who will monitor the dogs' well-being at all times during the event's opening hours and provide information to the enforcement authority on request.

## Obligations of the participants

### Responsibility for the dogs' well-being

Participants are responsible for their animals' well-being. They must put the dogs' basic needs and careful handling above their personal interests and those of the organiser, e.g. when showing the animal (see Art. 30a(4)(a) AniWO).

Only healthy dogs may be brought to an event (see Art. 30a(4)(a) AniWO). They must not be exposed to any risks which may lead to pain, damage, suffering or overexertion (see Art. 30a(1) AniWO). To protect all participating dogs, every animal should be correctly vaccinated.

Dogs which are overwhelmed by the situation must be provided with suitable housing and appropriate care (see Art. 30a(2)(c) AniWO). If a stressed animal cannot be calmed, it must be removed from the public area of the event until it has recovered.

### Care and supervision of dogs

Dogs must have sufficient drinking and toileting opportunities and must be exercised in accordance with their exercise needs. Animals brought to dog shows must be constantly cared for and housed in such a way that they cannot escape. In addition, they must not pose a danger to people or other animals. Muzzles must be of anatomically correct shape and allow for sufficient panting (Article 76(5) AniWO).

### Ban on exhibiting cropped dogs

Advertising, selling, gifting or exhibiting dogs with cropped ears or docked tails is prohibited (Article 22(1)(e) and (2) AniWO).

### Ban on exhibiting dogs with breeding traits that cause strain

Dogs which have been bred in pursuit of banned breeding aims or by banned breeding methods may not be exhibited. A banned breeding aim is one that results in restricted bodily functions and/or sensory perception or deviations from species-specific behaviour (see Art. 25(2) AniWO and Annexes 1 and 2 to the Ordinance of the FSVO on the welfare of animals in breeding (ABWO)). A ban applies to the breeding of animals in which body parts or organs are congenitally absent or malformed and the animal endures pain, suffering or harm as a result. A ban also applies to the breeding of animals with deviations from species-specific behaviour that make it very difficult or impossible for them to live together with conspecifics (see Art. 25(3) AniWO).

Breeding-related strains may occur in the following breeds and breeding varieties.

**Individuals** with the characteristics and symptoms listed below are therefore not permitted to be shown:

- **Brachycephalic dogs with clear signs of respiratory problems** (laboured breathing, especially mouth breathing, snoring, increased respiratory frequency and/or swollen or discoloured tongue); see Annex 2 point 2.1.3 ABWO.  
This affects various breeds, such as Pugs, English or French Bulldogs and Pekingese.
- **Dogs with excessive skin folds** on the face, body or tail **with signs of chronic skin inflammation** (reddened, thickened or ulcerated skin areas); see Annex 2 point 3.1.1 ABWO.  
This affects Shar Pei, Pekingese, Shih Tzu, Pug, Boston Terrier, English Bulldog, German Boxer and other, mainly brachycephalic breeds.
- **Dogs with inward rolling of the eyelids (persistent entropion) with signs of corneal inflammation** (cornea reddened and/or ulcerated, eyes screwed up and/or watering; eyelashes or hairs of strongly pronounced nasal folds touching and irritating the eyes); see Annex 2 point 4.8 ABWO.

This affects St Bernard, Chow Chow, Shar Pei, Pug, Pekingese, Boston Terrier, Lhasa Apso, Shih Tzu, Rottweiler, Doberman, Bull Terrier and many other breeds.

- **Dogs with protrusion of the eyeball (exophthalmos) with signs of eye inflammation** (reddening, possibly watering and/or frequent screwing up of the eyes); see Annex 2 point 4.6 ABWO.

This affects Chihuahua, Shih Tzu, Yorkshire Terrier, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Pug, Boston Terrier, Pekingese, French Bulldog and other brachycephalic breeds.

- **Dogs with drooping eyelids (persistent ectropion) with signs of chronic conjunctivitis** (reddened, itchy and/or watery eye on one or both sides, increased blinking, swollen mucous membranes or eyelids); see Annex 2, point 4.7 ABWO.

This mainly affects Molosser dogs, especially Mastino Napoletano, Mastiff, Great Dane, St Bernard, Bloodhound, Basset and German Boxer.

- **Dwarf dogs weighing less than 1,500 g in adulthood**; see Art. 10(c) ABWO. This affects Chihuahua, Pomerian, Miniature Poodle and other small dogs.

## Careful handling of dogs

When handling dogs, excessive harshness, such as beating the animal with hard objects, must be avoided (see Article 73(2) AniWO). Training and behaviour aids must not be used in such a manner that the animal suffers injuries or substantial pain or is severely provoked or frightened (see Article 76(1) AniWO). The use of choke collars without a control loop is prohibited (see Article 73(2) AniWO); correspondingly, even a collar with a control loop must not be adjusted so tightly as to choke the dog. Furthermore, dogs must not be choked as a result of the way in which they are guided on a lead, especially during presentations.

The **grooming** of a dog with a view to showing is prohibited if this causes pain or harms the animal or compromises its well-being in some other way (see Art. 16(2)(i) AniWO). This includes attaching the dog to a restraining device (grooming stand) and the use of protective measures, especially around the ears, neck or legs, if they disturb the dog or impair its movement. Clips, curlers and other aids that exert traction on long hair are not permitted.

## Requirements concerning the housing of dogs during the event

Dogs brought to events must be housed in accordance with the principles of the Animal Protection Ordinance. Dogs differ so widely in their physiques and needs that it is not practical to specify uniform housing requirements.

Housing must be constructed and fitted out in such a way that the risk of injury to the animals is minimised, their health is not impaired, and they cannot escape (see Art. 7(1) AniWO). For a **maximum period of four days**, dogs brought to shows may be accommodated in housing that deviates from the minimum requirements for dog-keeping enclosures. Dogs must not be kept overnight in such housing.

The housing must meet the following criteria:

- the **space** available allows the dog or each individual dog in a group to assume a **normal posture**, i.e. the dog must be able to stand and sit, turn round, lie down and stretch out on its side;
- it must be ensured that the dog does not suffer due to **noise or climatic factors**, for example heat, cold, draughts or precipitation;
- the **lying area** must be designed in such a way that the dog's individual needs are taken into account;
- **undisturbed rest** must be ensured, especially in group housing, by providing suitable structures, e.g. elevated lying areas, screens or facilities for retreat;
- **sufficient access to water** must be ensured.

### **Legislation: Animal Welfare Ordinance (AniWO, SR 455.1) and Ordinance of the FSVO on the welfare of animals in breeding (ABWO, SR 455.102.4)**

#### **Art. 7 AniWO** Enclosures

<sup>1</sup> Housing systems and enclosures must be constructed and fitted out in such a way that:

- a. the risk of injury to the animals is minimised;
- b. the health of the animals is not impaired; and
- c. the animals cannot escape.

<sup>2</sup> Housing and enclosures must be constructed and fitted out and be sufficiently spacious to allow the animals to express their species-specific behaviour.

#### **Art. 12 AniWO** Noise

<sup>1</sup> Animals must not be exposed to excessive noise for a prolonged period.

<sup>2</sup> Noise is deemed to be excessive if it causes flight, avoidance or aggressive behaviour or freezing in the animal and the animal cannot escape the source of the noise.

#### **Art. 16 AniWO** Prohibited practices in all animal species

<sup>2</sup> The following are specifically prohibited:

- i. the performance of interventions or failure to perform interventions on an animal for exhibition purposes if this causes pain or harms the animal or compromises its well-being in some other way;

#### **Art. 22 AniWO** Prohibited practices in dogs

<sup>1</sup> In dogs, the following are also prohibited:

- e. advertising, selling, gifting or exhibiting dogs with cropped ears or docked tails if they suffered the cropping or docking procedure in violation of Swiss animal protection legislation.

<sup>2</sup> Dogs with cropped ears or docked tails may be brought into Switzerland by their foreign keepers on a temporary basis for holidays or other short stays and also imported as household effects by foreign keepers moving to Switzerland from abroad. Such dogs may not be promoted, sold, given away or shown at exhibitions in Switzerland.

**Art. 25 AniWO**

## Basic principles (breeding animals)

<sup>1</sup> Selective breeding must target to produce healthy animals that are free of characteristics and traits that undermine their dignity.

<sup>2</sup> Breeding objectives that result in restricted organ and sensory functions and deviations from species-specific behaviour are only permitted if it is possible to compensate for the deficits without the need for special measures in the care, housing or feeding of the animals that would expose them to stress, without interventions on the animals and without regular medical care.

<sup>3</sup> The following are prohibited:

- a. breeding animals which can be expected to have absent or malformed body parts or organs that are important for species-specific use and which can be expected to endure pain, suffering or harm as a result;
- b. breeding animals with deviations from species-specific behaviour that make it very difficult or impossible for them to live together with conspecifics.

**Art. 30a AniWO**

## Duties of the persons involved (events)

<sup>1</sup> Events must be planned and carried out in such a way that the affected animals are not exposed to any risks greater than those inherent in the event and that pain, suffering, damage or overexertion are avoided.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, the event organiser must ensure that:

- a. an up-to-date list is available that shows the address of each participant, the number of animals brought to the event as well as the number of animals, and, where available, the identification of the animals;
- b. the schedule of the event permits adequate rest and recuperation phases for the animals; and
- c. animals which are overwhelmed by the situation are provided with suitable housing and appropriate care.

<sup>3</sup> If the event organiser is in charge of the animals, an adequate number of animal carers as well as a person that assumes the responsibility of animal care must be appointed. This person must be skilled in the field and available at all times while the event is in progress.

<sup>4</sup> The participants must ensure, in particular, that:

- a. only healthy animals take part in the event and their well-being is ensured;
- b. no animals bred in pursuit of banned breeding aims (Art. 25 para. 2) take part in the event; and
- c. young animals that are still suckling are only exhibited with their dams.

<sup>5</sup> If the event organiser learns that participants are not fulfilling the obligations described in paragraph 4, it must take the necessary steps.

<sup>6</sup> The list described in paragraph 2 letter a must be presented to the competent authority on request.

**Art. 30b AniWO**

## Non-compliance with the minimum dimensions for a brief period (events)

<sup>1</sup> Animals participating in events may be kept for a maximum of four days in housing units and enclosures that deviate to a minor extent from the minimum dimensions stated in Annexes 1 and 2. If the animals are moved or trained sufficiently every day, they may be kept for a maximum of eight days in housing units and enclosures of this kind.

<sup>2</sup> However, the requirements concerning the installations and lighting in the housing units and enclosures must be fulfilled and the climatic conditions must be suitable for the animals.

**Art. 73 AniWO**

## Handling dogs

<sup>2</sup> Measures to correct dogs' behaviour must be adapted to the situation. The following are prohibited:

- b. the use of:
  1. choke collars without a control loop,
  2. prong collars,
  3. other leading devices with inwardly protruding elements;
- c. excessive harshness, such as beating the animal with hard objects.

**Art. 76 AniWO** Aids and equipment

<sup>1</sup> Aids must not be used in such a manner that the animal suffers injuries or substantial pain or is severely provoked or frightened.

<sup>5</sup> Aids that are placed around the muzzle of the dog to prevent biting must be of anatomically correct shape and allow for sufficient panting.

**Art. 10 ABWO** Prohibited breeding varieties

The following breeding varieties are prohibited:

- c. dwarf dogs weighing less than 1,500 g in adulthood;

**Annex 2 ABWO** Characteristics or symptoms which may lead to moderate or severe strain in connection with the breeding goal

2.1 Deformities of the skull with impeding effects, such as effects on tooth position, eye position, respiratory capacity, birth process.

3.1.1 Surplus skin causing a constraint, such as: excessive folds accompanied by chronic skin inflammation;

4.6 Displacement of the eyeball.

4.7 Persistent ectropion.

4.8 Persistent entropion.