

COUNCIL OF HUNTING ASSOCIATIONS
CODE OF PRACTICE
for the Welfare of Hounds in Hunt Kennels



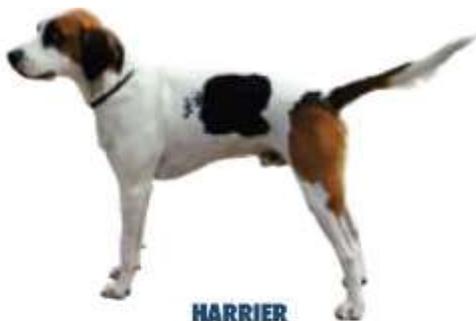
FOX HOUND



FELL HOUND



BASSET



HARRIER



BEAGLES



MINK HOUND

Foreword

The Council of Hunting Associations (CHA) has produced this Code of Practice for Hunt Kennels in light of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and in so doing have imitated the style of codes that are already in place for other domesticated and farmed animals.

Extracts from Animal Welfare Act 2006 give reasons why this code is a necessary preparation for the future:

Section 14. Codes of Practice

(1) The appropriate national authority may issue, and from time to time revise codes of practice for the purpose of providing practical guidance in respect of any provision made by or under this Act.

Section 15. Making and approving codes of practice

(1) *Where the Secretary of State proposes to issue (or revise) a code of practice under section 14, he shall:*

- (a) prepare a draft of the code (or revised code).*
- (b) consult about the draft such persons appearing to him to represent any interests concerned as he considers appropriate, and*
- (c) consider any representations made by them.*

Members of the CHA to which this Code applies

Masters of Foxhounds Association (MFHA).
Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles (AMHB).
Masters of Basset Hounds Association (MBHA).
Masters of Deer Hounds Association (MDHA).
Masters of Mink Hounds Association (MMHA).
Central Committee of Fell Packs (CCFP)
Masters of Drag and Blood Hounds Association (MDBHA).

Disclaimer

This code of practice provides advice for Masters and Hunt Staff on the necessary standards for hound husbandry and the veterinary treatment of kennelled hounds. The Council of Hunting Association has sought advice from experienced veterinary surgeons and kennel huntsmen on the content of the code of practice, but cannot accept any liability for loss or damage purported to result from the advice given in the code of practice.

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1. Introduction

This Introduction explains the Code's role and the broad considerations on which it is based. The legislation quoted in the shaded boxes in sections 2 and 7 is not part of the Code but is intended to highlight the principal legal requirements that are in force on the date of publication of the Code. Those responsible for hounds should be aware that any of the legal requirements quoted might be subject to change – the Council of Hunting associations (CHA) will update their Members on changes in the law as it comes into force.

This Code of Practice applies to all member Hunts of the CHA as listed in the frontispiece. The Code has no statutory powers but could be referred to by inspectors appointed by local authorities in the event of allegations against the Animal Welfare Act 2006, or by Courts.

Following the Code will help to ensure that the welfare of hounds is safeguarded. The recommendations are not a complete list and they are not intended to supersede expert veterinary advice.

The welfare issues are considered within the framework set out by the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

This Act sets out the duty imposed on a person who is responsible for an animal in order to ensure its welfare. A person commits an offence if he does not take such steps as are reasonable in all circumstances to ensure that the **needs** of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice.

An animal's **needs** are taken to include:

- **Need for suitable environment;**
- **Need for a suitable diet;**
- **Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;**
- **Need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals;**
- **Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.**

2. The Law

2.1. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 makes it an offence to cause "unnecessary suffering" and to fail "to take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which a person is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice".

A person commits an offence if an act of his, or his failure to act, causes an animal to suffer; and he knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that his act, or failure to act, would be likely to cause suffering; and that the suffering is unnecessary.

2.1.1. Additional Powers

There are two different types of action that can be taken under the Act:

- An improvement notice can be issued;
- A criminal prosecution can be brought.

2.1.2. Improvement Notices

If a person does not look after his animal's welfare, an improvement notice can be issued. This will set out:

- how the person is failing to look after the animal's welfare;
- what steps need to be taken to improve it;
- a time limit within which to comply with the steps set out in the notice;
- and, it will explain what will happen if the notice is not complied with.

If a person complies with the improvement notice within the time limit set out, then he cannot be prosecuted for those actions which led to the notice being issued. An improvement notice is not a criminal penalty, and a person who receives an improvement notice will not have a criminal record as a result. However, failure to put right the welfare problem which led to the giving of an improvement notice can lead to a criminal prosecution.

2.1.3. Enforcement

The Act gives formal enforcement powers to the police and 'inspectors'. 'Inspectors' are appointed by local authorities, or, by the Secretary of State in England, or the National Assembly in Wales. In practice this can mean a local authority employee with responsibility for animal welfare, or an Animal Health Officer (formerly State Veterinary Service). However, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), like most laws, is a 'common informer's Act'. This means that anyone is allowed to bring a prosecution for an offence.

If a person claims to be acting as an inspector under the AWA, the Act requires the person entering to show evidence of his identity and his authority to enter, and to give information about his reasons for entering. However, there needs to be a request for these things before there is a requirement to provide them. It is an offence under the Act for anyone to obstruct an inspector in the course of his duty.

2.1.4. RSPCA

RSPCA inspectors have the same status as any other private individual. As explained in section 2.1.2 above, the AWA is a common informers' Act, so anyone can prosecute. This is the same as was the case under the 1911 Protection of Animals Act. The RSPCA has not been given, nor have they sought, any new powers.

RSPCA inspectors have no rights of entry or inspection and enjoy none of the statutory powers of enforcement which under the Act belong only to the police or Animal Welfare Act inspectors.

If an RSPCA inspector wishes to enter private property he would need to be accompanied by a police constable or an Animal Welfare Act inspector. Both a police constable and Animal Welfare Act inspector must comply with the provisions on enforcement and entry as set out in the Act.

2.1.5. Powers of Entry of the Police and AWA Inspectors

Sections 18 and 19 and Schedule 2, allow an inspector or police constable to enter premises for the purpose of searching for an animal covered by the Act, if he reasonably believes that there is an animal on the premises and that the animal is suffering or, if the circumstances of the animal do not change, it is likely to suffer.

An inspector or constable may (if necessary) use reasonable force in exercising the power of entry, but only if it appears to him that entry is required before a warrant can be obtained and executed.

There is no right of entry without a warrant to any private dwelling or to a part of a premises which is used as a private dwelling. This includes a yard, garden, garage or outhouse which is used for purposes in connection with that private dwelling.

In exercising the right of entry, Schedule 2 allows a constable or inspector to take other persons onto the premises. This is at the discretion of the inspector or constable who is entering. For example, it may be necessary to take a veterinary surgeon onto the premises.

2.1.6. Power of taking possession

Section 18 authorises an inspector or constable to take a protected animal into possession where a veterinary surgeon certifies that it is suffering, or is likely to suffer. In emergencies the inspector or constable may do the same without the certificate of a veterinary surgeon.

Where an animal is taken into possession and has dependent offspring, those offspring can be taken into possession along with it.

2.2. The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 provides that the professional diagnosis and treatment of animals in the UK may only be carried out by a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. There are, however, important exemptions under Schedule 3 of the Act which allow :any minor medical treatment given to an animal by its owner, by another member of the household of which the owner is a member, or by a person in the employment of the owner.

2.3. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005, which replaces the Medicines Act 1968, revises the classification system of veterinary medicines, splitting companion animal medicines from livestock medicines.

The new categories are:

- AVM-GSL – Authorised Veterinary Medicine available on general sale from supermarkets and pet shops.
- NFA-VPS – Non Food Animal or companion animal medicines. The prescription can be issued and dispensed by a veterinary surgeon, Pharmacist or Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) – the VPS route. Agricultural merchants may be expected to have SQPs on site for issuing medicines.
- POM-VPS – Livestock Medicines (not generally applicable to medicines for hounds and horses) – Prescription Only Medicine only available via VPS route.
- POM-V – must be prescribed by a Veterinary Surgeon, and can be dispensed by any veterinary Surgeon or pharmacist.

2.4. Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Certain potent drugs which are POM-Vs are further classified as Controlled Drugs (CD) under the above Act. These comprise drugs such as morphine (Schedule 2) and the anaesthetic, pentobarbitone sodium (Schedule 3). Depending on the schedule of the drug, the Act imposes further requirements on recording and storage, with which your veterinary surgeon will be familiar.

2.5. Under the Firearms Act 1968, any firearms kept at hunt kennels must have the appropriate licence or certificate and be stored correctly. A firearms licence is required from the police for the acquisition and possession of any firearm, excluding a captive bolt pistol, other than a shotgun for which a certificate is required.

2.6. The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 2006. From the 5th January 2007 new rules applied across the whole of the EU covering the transport of all live vertebrate animals in connection with an economic activity.

The Regulation does not apply to the transport of animals:

- Where the transport is not in connection with an economic activity; or
- Transport to or from veterinary practices or clinics under veterinary advice; or
- When the animal is an individual animal, is accompanied by its owner or other responsible person and is fit for the intended journey; or
- Where the animals are pet animals accompanied by their owner on a journey.

All EU countries are now required to carry out some checks on pet movements within the EU. Changes to the pet travel scheme came into effect on the 29th December 2014.

If you already have a passport for your pets, you do not need to get a new one. The main

requirements of the scheme will stay the same. All dogs, cats and ferrets travelling with their owner will still require:

- microchipping;
- vaccination against rabies;
- a blood test 30 days after vaccination (if travelling to or from an unlisted third country);
- treatment against the EM tapeworm (dogs only)
- a pet passport (or third country certificate) issued by an authorised vet;
- a waiting period after vaccination and prior to travel:
 - 21 days if travelling from another EU country or a listed third country;
 - 3 months (following blood test) for unlisted countries.

If you have more than five pets and wish to travel with them within the EU and/or return to the UK (unless you are going to a show or competition) you will need to comply with additional rules. These include:

- travelling from a registered premises;
- using an authorised transporter and
- registering the movement on the TRACES system.

However, If you are travelling with more than five pets (aged over six months) and can present written evidence that they are registered to attend a show, competition or sporting event (or training for such an event) you do not need to comply with these extra rules and can continue to travel under the EU pet travel scheme.

The evidence you provide will need to show at least the name of the event, together with the address and date(s) it is taking place. You may also be asked to sign a declaration confirming that you are eligible to make use of this exemption. This requirement may change – Defra are consulting on some of these details – so it is advised to check the Defra website for up to date information before travelling.

There are further references to the law in Sections 7.9 Dew Claw Removal; 7.10 Tattooing; 7.11 Euthanasia; and 7.12 Possession of Medicines.

3. Accommodation

Need for a suitable environment

Section 9(2)(a) Animal Welfare Act 2006

Need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

Section 9(2)(d) Animal Welfare Act 2006

The appropriate housing of hounds is essential to their health and welfare. Good housing will reduce the risk of disease.

3.1. Buildings and Accommodation

Buildings may be purpose built or adapted farm buildings. These should be of solid construction, ideally with pitched roof and airspace. Cavity wall insulation is also desirable but not essential.

Kennels should be designed so as to provide adequate space with easily cleaned surfaces, good drainage and a separate eating area.

Hounds are pack animals and therefore should be housed together. Hounds are usually kept in groups of 20–40 animals in compartments or lodges with a raised, insulated sleeping area or bed that provides:

- sufficient room per animal;
- good ventilation with adequate air exchange;
- a draft free and comfortable environment.

The room per animal will vary according to the size of the type of hound being housed.

The beds should be made of waterproof concrete or insulated concrete overlaid with a waterproof paint. Wooden beds, which become pitted and worn and are difficult to clean should be avoided.

3.2. Ventilation

Good ventilation of hound lodges is essential for preventing outbreaks of respiratory disease such as kennel cough and for ensuring a healthy respiratory environment. Different buildings will achieve an adequate air exchange in a variety of ways depending on the building in question.

The building may be subdivided into a number of “lodges” but share a common air space. The ideal method for ventilation is by the ‘stack effect’, that is fresh air is drawn in at ground or window level, warmed by the heat of the animals within and voided as stale air through the ridge of the building, partly by convection and partly by external wind suction/flow.

In buildings where satisfactory ventilation is not being achieved, consideration should be given to either new outlets or a fan assisted scheme.

Kennels should smell clean and fresh; those that do not are likely to have inadequate ventilation.

3.3. Whelping Accommodation.

Whelping pens must be provided that are warm and draft free. Particular attention should be paid to the lying surface which should be made up of carpet with an electric rubber mat for underlay heating. The carpet overlay must entirely cover the electric mat and lead. This mode of heating is more efficient and safer than using overhead infrared lamps. If infrared lamps are used these must be securely fixed and hung at a height that allows the lamp to be effective in warming the whelps, without any risk of burning the bitch.

Dependent on the weather, puppies should have access to “grass pens” within 2 weeks.

3.4. Quarantine Kennel

Separate accommodation for nursing wounded or sick animals and for bitches in season must be provided. Artificial heating should be available. Oral fluid therapy (water and electrolytes) should be available. For seriously ill animals – Seek advice from your veterinary surgeon.

3.5. Cleaning and Hygiene

Scrupulous attention to hygiene is essential for preventing problems with external parasites such as mange and lice and for avoiding intestinal (enteric) disease caused by a variety of organisms.

The basis for good hygiene is smooth easily cleaned surfaces. Internal walls of lodges should be tiled to a height of approximately 4ft (dependent on the size of the hound), or be rendered with a waterproof cement. The external walls of kennel yards should be similarly cement rendered.

The lodges and yards should be washed down at least twice a day.

Bed shavings should be brushed up daily and changed weekly. Straw, preferably oat straw, is also suitable for hound bedding providing that it is dust free and without awns. It should be changed regularly and before it becomes odorous.

In the event of disease outbreaks disinfectants such as Virkon, bleach or Trigene at the recommended dilutions should be used.

Lodges, including the internal roof space, should be steam cleaned or pressure hosed every 2-3 weeks.

Whelping kennels should be thoroughly cleaned every 2-3 days when in use.

3.6. Flesh House

Buildings used for the handling of fallen stock must comply with the standards set by the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003:

(www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/Ahealth/by-products). The flesh house should be hosed down thoroughly after use.

4. Feed and Water.

Need for a suitable diet

Section 9(2)(b) Animal Welfare Act 2006

4.1. Feeding – General

Hounds may be fed either dry food, flesh or a combination of both. As with flesh feeding only, the combined approach is a less exact science than dry feeding only.

Kennel huntsmen should “observe” hounds individually to gauge the right level of food per hound – getting this right is an attribute of good stockmanship.

Hounds should be fed in groups daily on a regular routine. Special attention should be paid to slow feeders.

4.2. Dry Feeding

Feeding hounds with a proprietary brand of food only is now practised by many Hunts. It also represents a more controlled method of feeding as it can be tailored more easily to the work output and needs of the hound.

Guidelines for protein, fat and energy content of the diet are:

	Growing Hounds & Light working Hounds	Hunting Hounds	Lactating Bitches
Oil	6-8% DM	10-12% DM	10% DM
Protein	18-20%	22-25% DM	22-25% DM
Carbohydrate (Cereal)	45-50%	45-50%	45-50%

[Key: DM = Dry Matter. Digestibility should be greater than 80%]

Kennel huntsmen must check the data sheet supplied with the brand of meal used against the standards given in the table above. Further, they should be aware that the fat content of dry feed will not be defined on the bag and, in any case, may be lower than that required. Fat content may be raised by feeding pies, chicken waste or bought in fat.

Research on working huskies has shown that an increase in protein alone is not the answer but increasing fat content enables the dog to utilise feed more effectively and hence enhance performance.

Essentially the only difference in the formulations is in the oil content (see below). Note that the cereal and fat basis of the diet may not be specified on the label.

The 45-50% carbohydrate or cereal basis of dry food formulations recognises the fact that the diet of a carnivore such as a dog does not need to be an exclusively flesh diet. Indeed in physiological terms hounds are probably better with a cereal based diet since an all flesh diet provides protein levels far higher than is necessary for maintenance and even the most strenuous work. Since the body cannot store protein the surplus has to be metabolised and excreted, which puts a physiological load on the kidneys and liver.

Carnivores, and dogs in particular, are readily able to metabolise fat and oil to produce their energy requirements and this fact is exploited in dry food formulations by raising the 8% oil level in the diet of the light working hound to 12% for the hunting diet.

Feeding levels should be adjusted to weather extremes - upwards for cold and downwards for hot conditions.

4.2.1. Adult Hounds

Foxhounds should receive approximately 750g of dry food a day in a single feed – Harriers, Beagles and Bassets proportionally less according to their size. Unlimited access to water must be allowed.

4.2.2. Pregnant Bitches

In the last 3 weeks of pregnancy increase the feed by 10% and change to a 50:50 adult puppy ration. The ration may be divided equally between 2 meals, but careful attention must be paid to the condition of the bitch; neither too fat nor too thin which in turn will facilitate an easy whelping and the feeding of the pups.

4.2.3. Lactating Bitches

The milking bitch must be fed a high (25%) protein diet 3-4 times a day with free access to clean water – puppy food is ideal. In the first week of lactation this should be approx. 1.25X maintenance increasing to 3+1/2 times by week 4. If the bitch has a history of eclampsia (milk tetany) a calcium supplement should be fed starting in the last few days of pregnancy.

When weaning begins at about 3 weeks of age start to reduce the bitch's diet aiming for a maintenance ration by the time the pups are fully weaned. If the bitch has lost condition maintain the protein rich diet and quantity until she improves.

4.2.4. Suckling and Growing Puppies

Puppies should be introduced and fed to appetite on a suitable dry puppy food (minimum 20% protein) as they are gradually weaned from 3 weeks of age onwards. A regime of 2-3 meals a day may be instituted from three months of age. From six months of age healthy pups should be gradually changed onto a maintenance diet fed twice a day.

The quantity of feed needs to be increased over the rapid growth period (5-9 months) to reach a peak of approx. 30% above the adult maintenance after which it should be levelled off.

If pups are fed flesh and pies this should not constitute more than 50% of their diet.

The bitch and her pups must be regularly overseen by the kennel huntsman or other nominated person. A healthy bitch should be able to raise 7-8 pups but more will require supplementary feeding or a pre-planned foster bitch.

4.3. Flesh Feeding

As indicated above flesh feeding is less of an exact science than dry food feeding and kennel huntsmen should therefore “observe” their hounds more carefully and gauge the right level of flesh per hound.

Foxhounds should receive up to 1.5kg of palatable flesh a day – again Harriers, Beagles and Bassets proportionally less. Cooking the flesh will reduce the risk of transmitting infectious organisms such as tapeworms and salmonella.

4.4. Fallen Stock

Hunt kennels that collect or receive carcasses for feeding to hounds require approval from their local Animal Health Officer (formerly State Veterinary Service Officer) to be either “collection centres” or, if they only receive flesh for feeding, “final users”.

Masters and kennel huntsmen should be aware that raw flesh may be contaminated with infectious organisms such as salmonella or tapeworm cysts. The risk of transmission is considerably reduced if the evisceration and cutting up process is carried out hygienically so that the flesh does not become contaminated by gut contents or the contents of tapeworm cysts. The risk is also considerably reduced if sheep carcasses are not used, as sheep are the principal carriers of tapeworm cysts.

Flesh should be stored in a cold room.

4.5. Disposal of Waste.

Waste must be disposed of either in incinerators that comply with the EU Animal By-Products Regulations 2003, or by an approved collection service. It is an offence to bury animal waste or carcasses.

4.6. Water.

Hounds should have access to water at all times.

Water troughs should be designed and placed where:

- They are protected from fouling;
- There is a low risk of the water freezing in cold weather;
- There is sufficient space and easy access for the hounds.

5. Exercise.

Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.

Section 9(2)(c) Animal Welfare Act 2006

5.1. Regular and adequate exercise is essential for the good health of hounds.

Every kennel huntsman should establish an exercise schedule so that hounds are walked out at least once a day and preferably twice. The amount of exercise must ensure that hounds are fit enough to meet the demands of their hunting activities.

Exercise periods are also an optimal time to observe hounds individually. Kennel huntsmen should always carry with them a pocket notebook and immediately record when bitches are coming into season. Keeping records will help to ensure that breeding bitches are covered at the appropriate time and give guidance as to when the next season may be due (normally six months intervals).

It should also be noted if any hounds are lame or showing signs of sickness. A simple note for example "Hound Landlord, lame near hind" will enable the kennel huntsman to check the near hind leg as soon as hounds are back in kennels and take appropriate action.

Pregnant bitches require reduced exercise and care should be taken to ensure that these bitches are not squeezed or pushed about through doorways when hounds are being fed or are exiting the kennels.

5.2. Grass Yards

Grass yards can be a useful alternative to kennel routine but should not to be used as replacement for taking hounds out for proper exercise. Grass yards must be securely fenced, have adequate shelter or shade and a plentiful supply of water.

Hounds in grass yards are at an increased risk from worm infestations and as such the yards must be cleansed of faeces regularly with smaller yards being cleansed daily.

Grass yards are frequently used to "turn out" puppies that are back from walkers during the winter and spring months and again they must be cleansed regularly.

6. Breeding.

Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.

Section 9(2)(c) Animal Welfare Act 2006

6.2. Selection of Hounds.

The genetic status of hounds, that is their breeding and strain, will undoubtedly have a bearing on disease resistance and performance. Breeding bitches should be genetically selected for their hunting ability, conformation and temperament. It is important that they are in good condition at the time of mating.

6.3. Records

An individual record of breeding, movement, death and disposal of hounds, including puppies, must be kept and archived. A specimen record sheet is shown as Appendix 1.

Kennel huntsmen should keep records of when bitches come into season in order to enable optimal mating.

6.4. Oestrus and Mating

The first sign of oestrus (season) will be a swelling of the vulva, but the first sign of blood should be counted as day 1.

Bitches should be covered as soon as they will stand “willingly” to be mated, which will generally be at 10 days. However, they should be tried from day 6 onwards.

Mate the bitch every other day until she ceases to stand – aim for at least two matings. The most common error, especially where bitches are visiting other kennels, is that the bitch has passed her optimal time for mating.

If the bitch is discharging more than three weeks after starting her season, it is abnormal and veterinary advice must be sought immediately.

If bitches are not becoming pregnant there may be physiological or infectious reasons and a veterinary surgeon should be consulted.

6.5. Misalliance in Bitches

Pregnancy may be terminated up to 45 days from mating by the use of 2 injections – 24 hours apart – of aglipristone (Alizin). This is a POM-V drug and can only be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon for a specific case.

6.6. Whelping

The bitch should be introduced to the whelping accommodation at least ten days before she is due.

In the last week of pregnancy the rectal temperature will fluctuate. There is a marked drop 8 – 24 hrs before labour. The temperature returns to normal as the pups are born.

Whelping is divided into 3 stages.

First stage labour can last up to 24 hours. The bitch is likely to be restless, panting and show nesting and other behavioural changes.

Second stage labour is when the waters break – clear fluid - visible abdominal straining starts and the rectal temperature returns to normal. The first pup may take 2-4 hrs to be born. The bitch may show short periods of rest between delivering the pups.

The following danger signs require immediate veterinary intervention:

- The waters have broken 2-3 hrs ago and the bitch is doing nothing.
- There is no straining and the vaginal discharge turns green.
- The bitch shows weak, irregular contractions for more than 2-4 hrs and no pup is born.
- There is constant abdominal straining for 1 hr and no pup is born
- The vaginal discharge is red/brown in colour.

If there is any concern seek immediate veterinary advice sooner rather than later.

Third stage labour is the expulsion of the foetal membranes. Each placenta usually follows the pup as it is born although occasionally 2-3 pups may be born with their membranes' expelled afterwards. It is preferable, where possible, to count the placentas and to discourage the bitch from eating them as she may develop vomiting and diarrhoea. Post whelping there may be a vaginal discharge for 2-3 weeks.

When whelping is over it is essential to check that all puppies are alive and have fed – quiet puppies are contented puppies.

Post-whelping the following signs require veterinary attention:

- If all the placentas have not been passed 4-6 hrs post whelping – be aware that the bitch may have eaten some.
- The discharge is brown and malodorous.
- There is persistent vaginal haemorrhage.
- The bitch is dull, listless, not eating and not feeding the pups.
- She has signs of mastitis i.e. hot, hard and painful teats.

6.7. Post-Whelping Care and Feeding

Refer to section 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 above.

7. Health.

Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Section 9(2)(e) Animal Welfare Act 2006

7.1 General

Maintenance of good health is the most basic requirement affecting the welfare of hounds. Measures to protect health include good hygiene, good husbandry, effective ventilation and regular exercise.

All Hunts must have a good relationship with a veterinary practice. This is essential to ensure good husbandry and welfare. **Hunts should work with one veterinary practice and within that practice have one principal contact.**

7.2. Hound Health Programme.

Each Hunt should have a hound health programme drawn up on the basis of this Code of Practice, which is agreed annually by the Masters, kennel huntsman and the principal veterinary contact.

7.3. Preventative Measures

Each Hunt should have a regular routine of veterinary visits to the kennels by the principal veterinary surgeon, using a pre-agreed health programme as a checklist.

7.3.1. Worming Procedures

There is a responsibility on Masters and kennel huntsmen to ensure that hounds are regularly wormed. Adult hounds must be wormed for tapeworms, roundworms and hookworms at least twice a year, at the start and end of the hunting season, with a licensed product in accordance with its data sheet.

There are a number of different compounds for worm treatment. Some compounds will treat only one type of worm, whilst others will treat all types. Kennel huntsmen should consult their veterinary surgeon to work out the best programme for their hounds.

7.3.2. Tapeworms

Hounds must be wormed regularly for tapeworms (*Dipylidium*, *Taenia* and *Echinococcus* spp), not only for their own health but also as a precautionary measure to prevent any spread of infection to farm livestock.

Regular treatment with a wormer that contains praziquantel plays an essential part in Regular controlling tapeworms.

7.3.3. Roundworms

Unlike tapeworms, roundworms (*Ascarid* spp) do not have a lifecycle that involves an intermediate host. Instead vast numbers of eggs are passed in the faeces of the infected hound by the adult parasite and infection (except for newborn pups – see below) is direct, that is by ingestion of faecal material, containing the roundworm eggs.

Breeding bitches can pass roundworms to their unborn puppies in utero (in the womb) and as such must be wormed at mating and again at 6 weeks gestation with fenbendazole at 25mg/kg and thereafter DAILY to two days following whelping.

Puppies must be wormed at 12-14 days of age and then every two weeks up to 12 weeks and thereafter every month to 6 months of age.

Hounds must be wormed regularly for roundworms not only for their health but Masters and kennel huntsmen should also be aware that, because infection with the parasite initially involves a migratory stage through the body aberrant, migrating roundworm larvae from dogs are a potential hazard for humans. However, the risk is low and is effectively eliminated by a regular worming programme.

7.3.4. Hookworms

As hounds are kennelled animals, frequently with access to grass yards, they are also susceptible to infestation with hookworms (*Uncinaria* and *Ancylostoma* spp) and whipworms (*Trichuris* spp). Hygiene, rotation of grass yards and picking up faeces will help to reduce the source of the infection as will regular worming.

7.3.5. Vaccinations

Puppies must be vaccinated according to the data sheet recommendations. A polyvalent vaccine containing canine distemper virus, parvovirus, adeno (hepatitis) CAV-2 virus, leptospirosis and parainfluenza virus should be used. Some vaccines now also contain coronavirus.

Vaccinations at 8 and 10 weeks will confer immunity on the pup by 12 weeks of age – when they go out to walk.

Annual boosters are advisable to maintain the hounds' immunity. Two options are available:

- 1 All components are boosted annually or
- 2 Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza and Coronavirus boosted annually with Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus being boosted alternate years.

Hounds drafted in from other Hunts, of uncertain vaccination status, should receive a full primary course of 2 injections.

7.4. Clinical signs of systemic (generalised) disease.

Kennel huntsmen familiar with their animals will be able to detect abnormalities in the animals in their care. The key to recognising early signs of disease is good observation whilst exercising or feeding. Signs may include:

- Loss of appetite;
- Diarrhoea;
- Persistent vomiting;
- Body shape change - loss of weight, dehydration, abdominal distension;
- Lethargy or collapse;
- Respiratory distress – coughing, breathlessness;
- Bilateral conjunctivitis;
- Congestion (reddening) or yellowing of mucous membranes (gums or eyes);
- Heart rate elevated;
- Raised rectal temperature (greater than 102°F or 39°C).

Any affected animal must be isolated immediately and put under close observation. This is not only for the benefit of the sick animal but will also help to minimise the risk of any cross infection with other hounds.

A veterinary surgeon should be consulted immediately if the condition appears serious or there are any signs of deterioration.

Sudden and/or unexpected deaths must be recorded and reported to your veterinary surgeon, who may investigate further if he, or she, considers it necessary.

7.5. Infectious and Contagious Diseases

Nowadays there are only two serious diseases that may present a problem in packs of hounds – kennel cough and mange.

Canine distemper, canine hepatitis, parvovirus infection and leptospirosis remain serious and potentially fatal diseases for dogs, particularly young animals, but the effectiveness of modern vaccines has largely controlled these diseases of the canine population.

It is thus imperative that Masters and kennel huntsmen ensure that they continue to vaccinate all hounds properly to prevent the re-emergence of these potentially fatal diseases.

7.6. Kennel Cough.

This is the most common respiratory disease which affects hounds. As with the common cold in humans, a number of infectious agents may be responsible. It is highly contagious.

Most cases involve a primary viral infection which may be mild and transitory. Secondary bacteria and other agents may become involved if hounds are stressed and will create more severe problems.

In general young hounds are more susceptible with transmission occurring when infected hounds are in close contact with susceptible ones.

Signs of infection usually develop within three to five days following initial exposure, the main symptom being a dry hacking cough which is exacerbated by excitement or exercise. Occasionally a nasal discharge is present. Temperature is usually only mildly raised for a short time, if at all.

In uncomplicated cases, signs are usually mild and a hound will improve within about 10 days. The majority of cases do not require medical treatment and will improve with rest and fresh air.

However, complications do occur and may progress to lower respiratory disease and pneumonia, which can be fatal if not recognised early and treated quickly, usually with broad spectrum antibiotics. Loss of appetite, dullness, an elevated rectal temperature (over 39°C) and rapid breathing are the cardinal signs of lower respiratory disease.

7.6.1. Prevention

The two currently available kennel cough vaccines have been improved and are now licensed to last a year.

In order to improve the efficacy of the vaccines and to provide information for a national survey outbreaks of kennel cough, particularly severe outbreaks, must be reported to the Hunting Office so that samples can be made available to the Animal Health Trust.

In addition Masters and kennel huntsmen should look to the environment of their lodges, if kennel cough is a persistent problem with their hounds. Adequate ventilation, a dust free environment and attention to hygiene and cleanliness are the keys to controlling the disease. The disease is not readily transmitted in the open air.

Mixing of visiting hounds and those back from walk are potential sources of infection.

Kennel huntsmen are strongly advised to consult their veterinary surgeon as soon as there are any signs of kennel cough.

7.7. Mange

Mange is caused by the microscopic mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which burrows into the skin causing pruritis (itching) with subsequent hair loss, thickening of the skin, crusty surface exudates and general loss of condition. The ear flaps, elbows and hocks are usually the first areas affected and young hounds are more susceptible. If untreated, animals can become severely debilitated.

The infestation spreads rapidly between animals so that the condition is rarely seen in just one animal and all animals in direct contact with the primary cases must be regarded as potentially affected.

Kennel huntsmen must be aware that the disease can be transmitted to other animals, including humans, particularly children. Therefore, care must be taken after handling infected animals to change out of working clothes at the kennels and to wash hands thoroughly before returning home. Rubber gloves should be worn when handling infected animals.

Although the clinical signs of itching and hair loss in a number of hounds make diagnosis of the condition relatively simple, confirmation can only be made by identifying the mite under the microscope from a skin scraping. The disease is readily treated so you should consult your veterinary surgeon for the best course of treatment. All animals in immediate contact with the affected animals should be treated and the lodge thoroughly cleansed. The parasite does not survive away from an animal host in the fabric of a building for more than a couple of weeks.

7.8. Treatment – General

If an injury is severe the kennel huntsman should consult a veterinary surgeon about the most appropriate course of action.

Speed of treatment is essential both in terms of welfare and the law. It is therefore vital that kennel huntsmen have the authority from Masters to make rapid decisions, so that delays and subsequent problems are avoided.

If the hound is to be treated the animal must be restrained, confined on its own and receive first aid treatment. If the injury is very severe, and a veterinary surgeon is unavailable, then the kennel huntsman should have the authority to decide that euthanasia is the most humane option to relieve suffering.

Severe lameness, often following a traumatic accident, may be associated with distortion or displacement of the limb and loss of normal flexion and extension due to dislocation or fracture of the limb. This is an acute situation requiring instant action.

Oral fluid therapy (water and electrolytes) and warmth are beneficial in dehydrated and ill hounds. However if the hound does not respond the animal must be referred to a veterinary surgeon.

7.8.1. Skin, Muscle and Pad Lacerations.

These should be cleansed thoroughly at the earliest opportunity by generous irrigation with saline (one teaspoon of salt to a pint of warm water), diluted chlorhexidine or similar product to remove foreign material. **Avoid Dettol, TCP, methylated spirit and other tissue damaging solutions.** Having cleansed the wound a healing ointment may be applied. Cleansing and dressing should be repeated daily as required.

7.8.2. Staple Guns

Many simple wounds can be closed using a modern staple gun. These are easy to use and they facilitate rapid healing. They must not be used for bite or muscle wounds and must not be used unless appropriate instruction has been received from a veterinary surgeon. If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of using staples a veterinary surgeon must be consulted.

7.8.3. Bites

These should be cleansed thoroughly as above but because they are often deep penetrating wounds involving bacterial contamination their treatment will probably need supporting antibiotic therapy and as such your veterinary surgeon must be consulted.

7.8.4. Inflammation of Eyes and Ears

Simple cases may be treated with proprietary drops or ointments recommended by your veterinary surgeon. Inflammation of the ears may be due to mites but many eardrop preparations will contain a suitable acaricide.

Cases that fail to respond to treatment may be due to foreign bodies such as grass seeds (in summer), which will need to be removed by a veterinary surgeon. Note that bilateral conjunctivitis is often a sign of generalised disease (see section 7.4 above).

Note also that severe trauma to the eye is an acute situation requiring immediate attention by a veterinary surgeon.

7.8.5. Skin Infections and Hair Loss

These are usually caused by external parasites; mange mites, fleas or lice and may be treated by suitable topical medicated baths.

Certain spot on preparations such as Stronghold (Pfizer) are effective for treatment and prevention of a number of external and internal parasites including mange mites, fleas and roundworms (see section 7.7 above).

Treatment of puppies at 8 weeks with spot on preparations prior to departing to walkers is strongly recommended and also politic. You should consult your veterinary surgeon for the best course of treatment for the hounds' particular condition.

Scrupulous attention to kennel hygiene is important to prevent and contain these infestations.

7.8.6. Lameness

Most cases of sub acute lameness in hounds are seated in the foot. Examine the foot carefully for cuts and foreign bodies. Treat as above for foot lacerations and only when certain that the foot is not involved consider other parts of the limb.

7.9. Dewclaw Removal

The removal of dewclaws in England is permitted under The Mutilations (Permitted Procedures, England Regulations 2007). The regulations operate alongside the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The removal of dewclaws by an owner, or his employee (over 18 years of age), before the dog's eyes are open, continues to be lawful.

The Regulations state that the permitted mutilation must be carried out in such a way as to minimise the pain and suffering it causes to the animal; in hygienic conditions; and in accordance with good practice. If the eyes have opened then anaesthetic must be used.

Dewclaws should be removed when the pups are three days old using a pair of sharp, curved, surgical scissors, which must be clean and sterilised. The wound should be dressed with a tincture of iodine and the pups kept separate from the bitch for about half an hour to ensure that any bleeding has stopped and the wound is dry. When pups are put back with the bitch it is essential the bedding is clean, so as to avoid infection. The pups should be checked regularly for any bleeding.

7.10. Microchipping

England

Microchipping in England will be a requirement at some stage. All dogs must be microchipped before the 6th April 2016.

Wales

Under the Animal Welfare (Identification of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014, which will come in to force at some stage. all puppies must be microchipped before they

7.11. Euthanasia

It is not an offence under Sections 4(4) and 9(4) of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, or other legislation, to kill an animal so long as it is done in an "appropriate and humane manner". What is appropriate or humane will depend upon the age and size of the animal and the skill of the person responsible.

For adult hounds and puppies over the age of 10 weeks a humane killer should be used. Alternatively all ages of hounds may be put down by a veterinary surgeon with an overdose of pento barbitone sodium (Euthatal).

Carcasses must be disposed of either in incinerators that comply with the EU Animal By-products Regulations 2003 or by an approved collection service. It is an offence to bury carcasses or other animal waste.

7.12. Possession, Storage and Administration of Medicines

It is a criminal offence to have medicines in your possession that have not been obtained via one of the prescription routes set out above under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005. It is also an offence under the Regulations to use a medicine that is not specifically licensed for a particular species. However, in the event that there is no licensed product for a particular species the “cascade system” allows the discretionary use of the same medicine licensed for man or another species. You should consult your veterinary surgeon about what is permissible.

Veterinary advice must be sought on the appropriate medicines that can be kept at the kennels (see section 2.3 above). They should be held in a secure place at the required temperature according to the instructions on the labels.

Normally kennels will only have medicines in the first three categories of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 (AVM-GSL, NFA-VPA, POM-VPS) in their possession. The other category, POM-Vs, may be prescribed by attending veterinary surgeons for specific problems directly under their care and supervision.

Under these circumstances the POM-V may be administered by the kennel huntsman. The veterinary surgeon may only prescribe medicines in the POM-V category sufficient for a specific condition. The category of all medicines is shown on the label circumscribed in a rectangle.

7.13. Record of Treatments

All treatments including vaccination and worming carried out either by a veterinary surgeon or a kennel huntsman must be recorded on a medicines and treatments sheet, ‘Use of Veterinary Medicines’, approved by the Council of Hunting Associations. On the same sheet records must be kept of all medicines supplied and purchased for future use. Record sheets must be kept and archived. A specimen record sheet is shown as Appendix 2.

7.14. Disposal of Clinical Waste

Used needles must be disposed of in a sealed “sharps” container and clinical waste (syringes and empty medicine bottles) placed in a separate sealed bin. There needs to be a disposal contract with a waste disposal company or arrangements made with a veterinary practice.

8. Transport.

Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Section 9(2)(e) Animal Welfare Act 2006

8.1. General

Hounds must be transported in a way that would not cause injury or unnecessary suffering.

8.2. Journeys

All persons who take animals on a journey, whatever the length, should always apply the following good transport practice:

- The journey is properly planned, time is kept to a minimum, the animals are checked and their needs met during the journey;
- The animals are fit to travel;
- The vehicle and loading and unloading facilities are designed, constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering;
- Those handling animals are trained or competent in the task and do not use violence or any methods likely to cause unnecessary fear, injury or suffering;
- Water, feed and rest are given to the animals as needed, and sufficient floor space and height is allowed so to provide sufficient ventilation.
- If a sick or injured animal is to be transported a second person to help restrain the animal to prevent further injury or suffering is advisable.



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