

ECMA CONDEMNS WELSH ASSEMBLY BAN ON ELECTRONIC TRAINING COLLARS

Press release

Date: 26th June 2008

The Electronic Collars Manufacturer's Associations, (ECMA), has condemned the Welsh Assembly proposal for legislation to ban electronic training collars as hasty, premature and unnecessary.

Electronic training devices have been widely used for some time to improve an owner's ability to train their animals and thus improve relationships between the owner and the pet. From a recent ECMA survey, over 95% of the 350,000 owners of electronic collars in the UK acknowledge that the products' have saved their pets' lives or made them a great deal safer and given the owners peace of mind.

ECMA believe that the Welsh proposal is based on the misreading of available science, some of which is biased by the prejudging attitude of researchers. Much of the available research is also limited in range and scope and has even been rejected by DEFRA at Westminster.

In response to requests to ban the products the UK Government recently invested £469,000 of taxpayers' money in its own scientific research study into the implications of these devices, due to be completed in 2010.

The UK Government stated:

"While we are aware of a number of scientific studies on electric shock collars, Defra considers that to date those studies published in this area are not sufficiently robust and that the evidence base needs to be built on before consideration can be given to either banning or regulating their use. The government is not prepared to do this unless there is clear evidence that these devices in themselves are harmful to welfare".

ECMA firmly believes that the Welsh Assembly Government should take a similar line.

Today's announcement does not have any immediate effect. The sale, ownership and use of electronic training products remains legal until a detailed piece of secondary legislation is developed, discussed, adopted and implemented as law in Wales.

ECMA will engage fully in the consultation process and play a constructive role in supporting the many thousands of Welsh pet owners who have found the collars have given their pets a greater quality of life. An announcement is expected shortly in Scotland and ECMA is hopeful that the Scottish Government will adopt a moderate approach based on common sense and solid scientific research.

Duncan McNair, Spokesman for ECMA said:

"ECMA are both puzzled and disappointed by the decision to ban electronic training collars in Wales.

"The move denies the almost universal experience of owners of electronic training collars, who say that they bring enormous benefits to pet and owner and in many cases have saved animals lives."

Pet owners living in Wales who have concerns about how the announcement may effect them are advised to contact ECMA for advice on 07941 082694.

Ends.

FOR FURTHER PUBLIC AFFAIRS INFORMATION AND TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS PLEASE CONTACT DUNCAN MCNAIR AT ECMA ON 07941 082694.