

30 November 2010

The Welsh Assembly Government took the decision earlier this year to introduce a new law to ban outright the use of electronic training collars for dogs and cats in Wales. The Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association (ECMA) and PetSafe Ltd applied to have a judicial review of the regulation believing it to be wrong in light of the available scientific information.

Most other European jurisdictions (including England, Ireland and Scotland) have chosen not to impose such legislation in the absence of robust science. The ban in Wales was also considered to be disproportionate and did not take account of the serious impact it could have on animals in Wales. Dogs without training collars can stray onto neighbouring land, causing distress to other animals and may be lawfully killed in such circumstances.

The outright ban was introduced without a facility for licensed ownership and use of training collars. ECMA and PetSafe felt bound to attempt to challenge the ban – having regard to the welfare of animals in Wales. The matter has now been considered by the Administrative Court in Cardiff, and whilst ECMA and PetSafe were given permission by the Court to mount a challenge to the ban, ultimately the Court concluded that the Welsh Ministers were within their powers to enact the legislation criminalising the use of the training collars.

We are naturally very disappointed at that outcome. However, the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales has stated that she will review any new evidence which might impact upon the appropriateness of the ban – and we shall continue to work with her for the welfare of animals in Wales. New evidence is indeed being obtained and we believe it will in time persuade the CVO and the Welsh Ministers to reconsider and remove the ban.