

# **REPORT ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF COMPANION ANIMALS**

**Prepared by**

**THE COMPANION ANIMAL  
WELFARE COUNCIL**

**12 June 2002**

**This Report has been submitted for their consideration to:**

**H. M. Government**

**The National Assembly for Wales**

**The Northern Ireland Executive**

**The Scottish Executive**

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**CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD**

The Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC) has pleasure in publishing its Report on the Identification and Registration of Companion Animals. This Report has been drawn up by a Working Party of CAWC but has been approved by the whole Council.

This Report is the first to consider the advisability of identification and registration of the major companion animal species, namely dogs, cats and horses. Originally it was anticipated that the wider range of companion animals such as birds, rodents, fish etc. would also be considered. However, information on the identification of and the need for identification and registration of these other species was sparse and it was concluded that the report would be better served by concentration on the three main species. Nevertheless tradespersons or organising bodies are encouraged to make their own decisions for the other species of companion animals, bearing in mind the advantages offered by identification with each species of companion animal.

The rationale for the identification of companion animals is laid out in paragraph 2 and the advantages apply both to the companion animal, to the owner and to Society at large. Considerations of registration, both voluntary and mandatory, are dealt with in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

The study, which is the first undertaken by CAWC, was initiated by a Call for Evidence to every local authority in the country, to 104 magazines through the Press Agency, publishing the details on the Internet and sending direct to 150 people and organisations with an interest in companion animals. Some forty written responses were received and following this a seminar was arranged to which 12 representatives were invited. In May 2001 an interim report was published for comment. This summarised the evidence submitted and was distributed to those who had responded to the Call for Evidence. Two further interim reports were produced and circulated. This Report therefore encompasses a wide range of input, from individuals and organisations, and provides a considered submission of the issue of the identification and registration of companion animals.

A similar review was conducted by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions – the Dog Identification Working Group (DEFRA – DIG 2000) but was restricted to dogs.

**The Companion Animal Welfare Council has as its principal objectives:**

- (a) the provision of advice on the welfare of companion animals and the publication of its findings;**
- (b) the furtherance of the fuller understanding of companion animal welfare and of the role of companion animals in society;**
- (c) the assessment of existing legislation affecting the welfare of companion animals, and the making of recommendations regarding amendments or additions thereto.**

**In the furtherance of these objectives, the Council intends to:**

- undertake independent and objective studies of companion animal welfare issues and identify where further information is required;**

- **prepare and publish reports thereon;**
- **make available information and research data which it has obtained, in order to enable Parliamentary legislation on companion animal welfare issues to be drafted and debated on an informal basis;**
- **be open to requests for objective views, advice and the carrying out of independent studies on issues concerned with the welfare of companion animals.**

Apart from the present Report, Working Parties have been established to consider:

- Companion Animals in Health and Social Care Institutions
- Standards of Animal Welfare Establishments
- Non-Domesticated Animals – Standards and Controls
- Legislation on Companion Animals

Each Working Party issues a ‘Call for Evidence’ to all potentially interested organisations and following the receipt of submissions a joint meeting of major contributors to the topic of the Working Party is held. A draft Interim Report is prepared and submitted to participating organisations for comment (a process which may be repeated two or three times) after which a draft Final Report is submitted to the CAWC Council for consideration and, ultimately, approval.

CAWC is an independent organisation launched in 1999 and funded through a charitable trust, the Welfare Fund for Companion Animals. Funding is derived from companion animal welfare charitable organizations. Membership of CAWC is on an individual basis according to the expertise of the Council member and not on the basis of representation of the supporting animal welfare charities.

CAWC functions for companion animals in a similar way that the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) does for farm animals, although it does not receive Government support as occurs for FAWC.

I commend this Report on the Identification and Registration of Companion Animals to your attention. It has gathered evidence from a wide range of individuals and organisations nationally and internationally and interim drafts of the Report have been scrutinised similarly by those bodies. The recommendations resulting from these consultations are submitted as a basis for action at the local and central government levels and by private and voluntary bodies concerned with the welfare of companion animals.

Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior  
Chairman



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**SUMMARY**

- This report has considered the advisability of identifying companion animals.
- In order to do this, evidence has been taken about the topic from anyone wishing to provide it following a “Call for evidence”.
- The species concerned were reduced to Cats, Dogs and Horses, although encouragement is given for trades persons or organising bodies to make their own decisions for other species, bearing in mind the advantages to each particular species.
- There is little point in identification without a related register. Once details are listed in an agreed format, and are available on a national basis through a single phone call access system, there are perceived advantages to animal welfare and to the peace of mind of animal owners who become able to track down their lost animal quickly and reliably.
- There is considerable confusion existing at the present time regarding stray animals. Uncertainty exists about where to take them when found, who is responsible for their care, and how to trace them when lost.
- Around 1.2 million dogs annually are estimated to stray in Britain. Approximately 135,000 pass through the hands of Local Authorities. It is not the same dogs that stray each year. Around 5 million phone calls are made each year within the stray animal arena.
- Every Local Authority should have a multi-reader for microchips and use it to try and identify lost animals. Evidence suggests that this will save animals’ lives. 1 in 4 equines, 1 in 6 dogs and 1 in 12 cats are microchipped.
- Systems used in other countries are also looked at to consider costs and effectiveness. Discussions for and against the proposals are detailed, and the conclusion is in favour of the introduction of a mandatory scheme of identification and registration for dogs and horses. Cats should be re-considered in 5 years time using the experience gained from dogs and horses to help reach a decision
- Enforcement is a statutory duty, whereas education is not. Placing education of owners and animals on an equal legal footing with enforcement should be tried in order to improve animal welfare. Offering alternatives to purely punitive controls should prove beneficial to owners, animals and society at large. This is seen as a positive way forward.
- We concur with the DETR DIG Report that there are considerable cost savings to be made by implementing an identification / registration scheme. Allowing Local Authorities to retain fixed penalties should encourage their commitment and help them to overcome the financial restrictions, which may, at present, restrict their activities despite their willingness to do more.

- The proposal of such a scheme is not in itself definitive, and it may be found that there are alternatives to the simplicity of this proposal that will add significantly to the ultimate effectiveness of a final scheme resulting from pragmatic applications of incentives aimed at encouraging more responsible animal ownership.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *The Council recommends that legislation is introduced to provide local authorities with the power and the duty to carry out microchipping of all stray dogs brought into their custody prior to returning them to their keepers (2.2.1.3)*
2. *The Council recommends that the methods of identification chosen should be selected on what is judged to be the most humane and efficient means for any particular species, but the use of microchip technology is, in general, the preferred way forward for identification of the species under consideration at the present time. Tattooing remains an acceptable method of identification. In both cases an additional visible indicator (eg 'collar and tag' law) should be displayed. (4.7.1)*
3. *The Council recommends that all local authorities obtain and use an approved multi-reader for the purpose of reading microchips in animals that stray or otherwise come within their "approved officer's" jurisdiction. (4.7.2)*
4. *The Council recommends that all dogs should be identified individually by microchip, or tattoo, together with a visible means of identification. This information should be kept on a register for both owners and dogs. In order to alleviate the concerns of owners regarding the difficulties of immediate compulsory registration, a scheme should be introduced as from a set date whereby all puppies of a set age are so identified and registered. This should commence in three years time following publication of this report (8.11.1)*
5. *Where the required means of identification are not present, the addition of a fixed penalty system should be introduced to assist with the proper enforcement of attaining full take up of the registration and identification procedures. Local Authorities should be given the power to retain fixed penalties, which should be ring-fenced to aid their work to improve animal welfare. (8.11.2)*
6. *Voluntary registration using microchip or tattoo should be encouraged for all dogs in the intervening period. Local Authorities should be encouraged to enforce the existing requirement for visible identification (8.11.3)*
7. *The Council recommends that all equines should be microchipped and records held on a nationally accessible computer database system. That fixed penalties and power of seizure should be applied equally to equines as to dogs once microchipping becomes a requirement. Microchipping should commence at the same time and manner as planned for dogs, starting with foals. Existing databases will undoubtedly continue, but the benefits of co-operation to reduce costs and improve information availability through a single access*



*point should be examined by the providers as a matter of priority in order to improve animal welfare (8.11.4)*

8. *The Council recommends that voluntary microchipping of cats should be encouraged with a review of the position being carried out in five years time to assess progress both within the species and as a comparison to the success of any comparable mandatory scheme such as dog / horse identification (8.11.5)*
9. *The Council recommends that Government appoint a body to be responsible for auditing the performance of databases, and approving new entrants into the marketplace to ensure they meet the agreed operational requirements applicable to existing databases. (9.6.1)*
10. *A Code of Practice should be produced by the industry, with input from users to ensure an equitable review of operational procedures. (9.6.2)*
11. *All database information shall be kept in safekeeping to ensure continued operation irrespective of what might occur to the providing company. (9.6.3)*
12. *The council recommends that the Secretary of State should set an annual registration fee that should be the subject of regular and periodic review. Consultation with organisations and representative interests who may be substantially affected by this issue should be a part of the process. (11.18.1)*
13. *The Council recommends that appropriate education regarding responsible pet ownership should become a legislative requirement empowering Local Authorities in tandem with the law for enforcement. (12.5.1)*
14. *The central “board” offering checks on effective procedures should also consider the reasonable costs of performing the database activities, and determine a percentage for local authority use in the areas of enforcement and education. (12.5.2)*

## COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL

### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF COMPANION ANIMALS

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

##### **1.1 Companion Animal Welfare Council**

The Objects for which CAWC has been established are to:

- Conduct studies into the welfare, care and treatment of companion animals, and their role within society, and to publish the results of those studies.
- Further the education of the public about the welfare and care of companion animals and their role within society
- Promote the welfare of companion animals
- Advise both members of the public or any other institution or organisation and the Government on any matter or issue affecting the care treatment or welfare of companion animals and their place or role in society generally.

##### **1.2 Companion Animals**

**"Companion Animal " shall mean any animal which for the time being and from time to time shall be kept by man as a companion, whether or not such an animal shall also be kept by man for purposes other than as a companion.**

##### **1.3 Council Member Selection**

- 1.3.1 Considerable effort has been made to ensure that CAWC is independent. The Steering Committee submitted many names to an independent Appointments Committee, which was itself made up of eminent individuals, so that twelve persons could be selected from within particular fields of animal welfare to form the Council. Current details of the council membership can be found on the Council website [www.cawc.org.uk](http://www.cawc.org.uk)*
- 1.3.2 The Council selected a three- year work programme based upon submissions made to it for consideration. Companion Animal Identification was chosen as one of the two areas suitable for early examination, and a working group was formed from council members to carry out those investigations.*

## **1.4 Report Process**

- 1.4.1 The process of producing this report started with member selection by an independent body, followed by a meeting of the full Council. This meeting determined the topics for consideration and selected a working group to deal with identification in different species. Approaches were made to any group, organisation or individual that was thought to be able to add to the research detail helpful in producing a draft interim report.
- 1.4.2 Calls for Evidence were sought by disseminating the “call” to approximately 150 people or organisations, every local authority in the country, 104 magazines through the Press Agency, and publishing the details on the internet. A cut off time for return of the evidence was set in February 2000.
- 1.4.3 Forty written submissions were received, from both organisations and individuals. These came from both direct contact and via the press releases. Further meetings determined which of these persons or organisations should be offered the opportunity to give oral evidence.
- 1.4.4 A meeting was held in London in May 2000 at which twelve representations were made over two days. Further approaches were made to organisations or departments whom it was thought might add pertinent information to aid the research of the group.
- 1.4.5 In May 2001 an interim report was published for comment. This summarised the evidence submitted and was distributed to those who responded to the original call for evidence, publicised by press releases and on the Internet. Twenty-three individuals/organisations commented on this interim report by the extended deadline at the end of September 2001.

## **2. COMPANION ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION**

### **2.1. Rationale for the Consideration of Identification of Animals**

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this consultation report is to examine the issues of identification across the range of companion animals.
- 2.1.2 Identification of animals has been demonstrated to be important for the control of animal movement associated with disease control, prevention of theft, and the identification and recovery of strays, lost and stolen animals. (See appendix 1.)
- 2.1.3 This increase in efficiency in the tracking of animals, animal disease and the return of lost animals decreases costs to society and improves the welfare of both animal and human by minimising stress.
- 2.1.4 Over the last few decades there has been an increase in the ownership, movement and variety of companion animals, both within the UK and across international borders. This poses a potential for increased risks for intra and inter-specific disease, irresponsible ownership, and accidental loss of companion animals.

2.1.5 It is for the above concerns that it was considered that identification was a topic worthy of further research.

## **2.2 Advantages of Companion Animal Identification**

There was a consensus of opinion from the evidence that Companion Animal Identification had benefits for the animal, the owner and society at large. These benefits included:

- Reuniting pets and owners.
- Reduction in the numbers of animals euthanased due to not being claimed by owners who cannot trace them.
- Reduction of stress to the individual animal that may be misplaced.
- Reduction of stress to the individual owner whose animal may be misplaced
- Tracing owners of animals that have been injured or killed.
- Reducing costs to Local Authorities and animal welfare organisations of holding stray animals in care.
- Increases responsible ownership, such as control of the animal and its behaviour
- Detection of fraudulent activities such as misappropriation or misrepresentation.
- Tracing and prediction of disease patterns.

Further data concerning stray, return, euthanasia figures and other relevant information from respondents is presented in the appendices, particularly in Appendix 5 (selection of annual returns).

### **2.2.1 Re-uniting pets and owners and reducing the number of animals euthanased**

2.2.1.1 Over 75% of the stray dogs which pass through local authorities' hands are collected directly, with 12.5% brought in by the public and 8.3% dealt with by police. 40% were reclaimed as a result of owners contacting the local authority. 33% were wearing identification discs (NCDL MORI survey 2000). See tables in appendix 3.

2.2.1.2 The same MORI survey indicates the increase from 7% in 1999 to 11% in 2000 of microchipped dogs returned to their owners. 11% of strays are Euthanased by authorities with a microchip scanner, increasing to 25% among those without such a scanner.

***2.2.1.3 The Council recommends that legislation is introduced to provide local authorities with the power and the duty to carry out microchipping of all stray dogs brought into their custody prior to returning them to their keepers.***

2.2.1.4 It is felt that this partially answers the argument that controls will only affect those who already comply with the tenets of responsible ownership. It will also fit in with the DETR (now DEFRA) Report on the Permanent Identification of Dogs released in December 2000, in which a sustained increase in identified animals is proposed

### **2.2.2 Stress**

2.2.2.1 Animal welfare charities dealing with public enquiry for lost animals relate regular instances of human and animal stress resulting from the difficulties of tracing lost animals through a system which remains poorly understood, which is confusing in its operation and which is variable in different parts of the country. Local schemes have been introduced as a result of the frustrations experienced from a system that includes both Council and Police involvement. The police do not offer enthusiasm for dog control against the demands of their other duties. Cats and horses are subject to only limited legislative control and are therefore even more difficult to trace.

### **2.2.3 Tracing dead animals**

2.2.3.1 Unidentified animals are necessarily regarded as waste by local authorities dealing with a duty to remove dead animals from the streets. Telling people where their dead animals are, allows proper mourning to commence, and removes the uncertainty of not knowing the whereabouts of the animal. Enquiries to public services will reduce from this action.

### **2.2.4 Reducing costs**

2.2.4.1 Costs are dealt with at section 10, and Appendix 15. The DETR Report (Dec. 2000) shows costs of between £6.50 and £7.50 for daily kennelling. Euthanasia costs £30. With 19% rehomed, 16% sent to shelters, and 14% Euthanased, together with average stays for returned, re-homed, sent to shelter and Euthanased dogs given as 2, 30, 30, and 45 days respectively. The reduction of any of these percentages or day rates will produce cost related savings. If identification leads to early return of the animal, not only are cost savings available to Local Authorities and animal welfare charities, but there will also be more kennel space available for other uses more directly related to animal welfare

### **2.2.5 Other**

2.2.5.1 Constantly offending animals, whose owners allow repeated disregard for existing legislation, including a failure to identify their animal, may be offered the benefit of further training and education to themselves and their owners. This is achievable via identification.

2.2.5.2 Moving animals deliberately between areas for the sake of changing ownership will be more difficult to achieve satisfactorily. At present it is possible to take an animal to an adjoining Council area with a reasonable expectation that it will not be located by its owner/keeper. At the end of the seven-day period, the stray may be claimed as a permanent companion for the claimant, or as a temporarily owned commodity available for re-sale. Similarly, police stations may have separately centred offices within a local authority area, and enquiry at one will not reveal information from others within the same jurisdiction.

2.2.5.3 Thousands of animals are needlessly put to sleep every year. Every reasonable attempt to reduce this waste of life should be pursued.

## **2.3 Disadvantages of companion animal identification**

Areas of concern raised included:

- Whether an identification scheme should be voluntary or compulsory
- Existing legislation is not enforced

### **2.3.1 Voluntary or Compulsory Scheme**

2.3.1.1 Although there was a lot of agreement about the need for identification and registration, a key point was the debate about whether there was a need for compulsion in progressing this issue. Therefore the considerations for and against compulsory registration are considered in Section 7.

### **2.3.2 Existing Legislation is not Enforced**

2.3.2.1 There has been a long- standing requirement for people to identify their dogs. Dog licensing operated in this country from the times of the Napoleonic wars until 1988. At this time it was abolished because it became uneconomic for the Treasury to collect the fees. The cost of fee collection exceeded the income produced because the fee had only decreased since the 1700's. The compliance rates were not high at the time of abolition.

2.3.2.2 There is an existing requirement for every dog while on a highway or in a place of public resort to wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it. (The Control of Dogs Order 1992). This is not a permanent form of identification.

2.3.2.3 The requirement for dogs to wear a collar and tag identity was originally rooted in the primary legislation of animal health that was enforced by County Councils. Local Councils took over this duty in the early nineties, but the level of enforcement has not shown high compliance figures as an outcome. Only 33% of dog owners have their dog visibly identified. So why would another form of identification be any different?

2.3.2.4 No legislation is ever 100% successful. Around 5% of people don't pay for their television licence or car tax (see appendix 13.1). It is alleged that 1.5 million drivers are on the road without insurance. The success or failure of legislative intervention is related to the degree of enforcement.

## **3. PERMANENT IDENTIFICATION**

3.1. There was debate over the possible welfare implications of some methods of permanent identification.

3.2. Permanent identification refers to the permanent marking of animals. This has been performed using a variety of methods, such as ear notching, branding, tattooing and, more recently microchipping.

3.3. There are perceived advantages and disadvantages to these methods.

- Advantages: Permanent identification offers less risk of animals being lost, damaged or removed.
- Disadvantages: The welfare implications of implementing various methods.  
Compatibility of different methods of identification – in particular microchips.

#### **4. MEANS OF PERMANENT IDENTIFICATION.**

Various alternative methods were considered: microchips, tattoos, branding, DNA, and Optibrand's visual identification of retinal vascular pattern. Improved methods of identification will be developed in the future, as will improvements in methodology for some of the existing systems. Portability, reliability, minimal invasiveness, accuracy and cheapness are among considerations for identification.

##### **4.1 Microchips**

A microchip is a tiny device (approx 12mm long and 2.1mm wide) that is inserted into the body. Preferred sites vary according to the species. No sedation or anaesthesia is required. The device can hold a range of coded information relating to ownership details, medical and breeding history for example. They are commonly used in horses and are compulsory under the Pets Passport Scheme. Microchips may be "read" by a portable reader in order to identify their content.

###### **4.1.1 Advantages**

- Microchips are easily implanted by trained personnel when the site is subcutaneous, such as in dogs and cats. Other sites would require veterinary expertise to administer.
- Because they are located within the body, removal of microchips requires some form of surgical intervention. This minimises the likelihood of their removal or loss due to the animal's activities. It also reduces the chance of opportunistic removal by thieves.
- There is no need to display personal information that is visible to the public.

###### **4.1.2 Disadvantages**

- The risk of introducing infection to an animal because of the insertion procedure.
- The possibility of migration of the microchip to another part of or from the body.
- The possibility of failure of the microchip to work that would impede the chance of successful return of animal to owner for example.
- No visible means of identification or of informing that the animal has identification. This lack of information does not provide an immediate deterrent to thieves and may impede the chances of a lost animal being returned to its owner.
- Incompatibility of equipment affects the ability to read chips from different manufacturers and countries.

###### **4.1.3 Costs**

Implantation costs may vary, depending upon the operator, from £15-£30 (NCDL evidence submitted 2000). Some animal welfare charities provide subsidised services for microchipping. Bulk purchasing of microchips has already seen downward price movement.

## **4.2 Tattoos and Freeze Marking**

A freeze mark is an identification mark applied with an iron cooled by liquid Nitrogen. A tattoo is the application of an identification mark by puncturing the skin and inserting a pigment. These methods do not require sedation nor anaesthesia

### **4.2.1. Advantages**

- Freeze marks and tattoos are easily administered.
- Tattoo kits, advertised to the Equestrian society, are available by mail order. Freeze marking and tattoos provide a visible means of identification.
- Personal details do not have to be displayed – the information can be coded.

### **4.2.2 Disadvantages**

- Freeze marking causes blistering of the animal's skin. Whilst there is no puncturing of the skin, such blisters take time to heal and can become infected should they burst.
- Freeze marking may cause pain which may be greater depending on the skill of the operator, sensitivity of the animal and how long the 'brand' has to be held against the animal's skin in that the marking of white and grey horses requires the destruction of the hair follicles (<http://www.horseweb.com/kka/>)
- Tattooing requires puncturing the skin which can have infection implications
- The skill of the operator and the sensitivity of the individual animal may have implications for the level of pain experienced
- Both freeze marking and tattooing can be altered by over, or additional, marking or laser.
- "Tattoos tend to fade with age and are capable of alteration as has been evidenced at NCDL rescue centres with greyhounds" (NCDL, submitted evidence 2000). Thus they may not be a deterrent to theft or abandonment and may mean that animals are not reunited with their owner.

### **4.2.3 Costs**

Freeze marking costs around £20 for a horse (Kryo Kinetics Association Inc. <http://www.horseweb.com/kka/>). Tattoos cost are in the region of £15 for a dog (National Dog Tattoo Register (<http://www.dog-register.co.uk/index.htm>))

## **4.3 DNA Profiling**

Individual animals are able to be identified by "genetic fingerprinting" using samples of blood, hair, semen, or saliva. At the moment samples have to go to laboratories for examination and reporting time is 2-4 weeks. When tests become "portable", they will increase in use. Although ideal for some purposes now, such as providing breeders and societies with a tamperproof



method of unique identification (ILPH), they were not considered appropriate for the purposes under discussion.

#### **4.4 Visual Identification of Retinal Vascular Patterns**

Biometric applications are well established e.g. fingerprints. Retinal Vascular Patterns, or iris recognition, identifies persons or animals by patterns in the coloured portion of the eye. It is generating interest because it is a non-intrusive identification process with almost 100% accuracy and declining cost (ID World. Jan/Feb 2000. pps 22-28). Currently being developed by Optibrand, this system is not yet regarded as sufficiently advanced in its development to warrant full assessment at this time. It retains the advantage of being non-invasive to the animal, but needs further field development for portability if it is to be utilised for the purposes under review.

#### **4.5 Summary**

- 4.5.1 It was concluded from the evidence submitted that there was a clear preference for permanent identification over non-permanent identification (collar and tag) or no identification.
- 4.5.2 Following assessment of the evidence, microchips were found to be the preferred option, but tattoos were also seen to be acceptable.
- 4.5.3 It was considered that a visible means of indicating that an animal carried permanent identification was important. This would help provide a deterrent for theft and assist in the reunification of animal and owner. However, personal details need not be made visible to the public.
- 4.5.4 Personal details such as owner's contact details can be held on a database. This requires the animal to be registered with the holder of the database.

#### **4.6 Appropriateness for all species**

- 4.6.1 There was concern raised regarding the appropriateness of individual permanent identification methods being suitable for all species.
- 4.6.2 Whilst permanent identification is feasible for the majority of species using methods outlined above, it became apparent whilst reviewing the evidence that only a few species were considered to be suitable candidates. These were dogs, cats and equines.
- 4.6.3 While some birds, reptiles and amphibians were also considered to have issues that could be addressed by permanent identification such as recovery of lost or stolen animals, it was decided that the remainder of this report should only be concerned with dogs, cats and equines.
- 4.6.4 Because of veterinary concerns regarding implantation requirements in different species, there would be extra costs incurred for animals should it be decided that this is an appropriate policy, in that their expertise is required in carrying out the implantation. For this report, this matter would only affect horses. This would mean that higher costs would be a deterrent to compliance in some instances.

- 4.6.5 The opinion was expressed that whereas identification was suitable for certain types of equines, those of lesser value or with reduced breeding potential, or not competing or racing in high level competition, would be harder to justify.

#### **4.7 Recommendations**

- 4.7.1 *The Council recommends that the methods of identification chosen should be selected on what is judged to be the most humane and efficient means for any particular species, but the use of microchip technology is, in general, the preferred way forward for identification of the species under consideration at the present time. Tattooing remains an acceptable method of identification. In both cases an additional visible indicator (eg “collar and tag” law) should be displayed.*
- 4.7.2 *The Council recommends that all local authorities obtain and use an approved multi-reader for the purpose of reading microchips in animals that stray or otherwise come within their ‘approved officer’s’ jurisdiction.*

#### **5. IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION**

- 5.1 Permanent means of identification where information is coded are only of use if the details and explanation of the code are held on a database. This requires the registration of the animal on a database.
- 5.2 There was strong support from the evidence for both permanent identification and registration. There was concern that the animal’s individual details and the details of the owner should not be accessible to the public.
- 5.3 There was debate, however, as to whether there was a case for a mandatory registration scheme.
- 5.4 Several voluntary schemes are already active in the UK, including the Kennel Club’s “Pet-Log” database, the National Dog Tattoo Register, and the Animalcare Register. The Pet-Log registration system has 1.79 million recorded, with approximately 25,000 new registrations per month. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the infrastructure to maintain a registration system is in place and will not be the cause of start-up costs to any proposed scheme. The cost of registration is £1 for life, with a £3 amendment fee.
- 5.5 RSPCA say every £1 above database running costs which the licence fee raised would provide £11.7m assuming an 80% uptake for dogs and cats. This would help fund the animal warden service to increase its activity, as indicated in section 7.

#### **6. INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF MANDATORY REGISTRATION (See Appendix 11)**

- 6.1 Evidence was requested regarding schemes in other countries. From that provided it became apparent that mandatory schemes were to be found in America, Australasia and Europe. These relate to dogs, cats and horses.

- 6.2 It was also clear that mandatory schemes are most successful when operated in conjunction with sound enforcement policies.

## **7. RATIONALE FOR MANDATORY REGISTRATION (See Appendix 13)**

- 7.1 The law requires local authorities and the police to accept stray dogs. The local authority has a duty to care for the dogs for seven days before rehoming or other measures are allowed (Environmental Protection Act 1990). Police need to make a charge to Local Authorities accepting dogs from them in order to avoid the pitfall of transfer of ownership.
- 7.2 Whilst many dog owners comply with current legislation (Control of Dogs Order 1992 (SI.901)) requiring dogs to wear visible identification in the form of a collar and tag, this is not permanent. A tag may be lost or removed, reducing the chances of the animal being returned within the seven- day statutory period, after which, they are able to be rehomed/euthanased. Dogs not complying with this law may be seized as a stray under the Dogs Act 1906.
- 7.3 The advantages and disadvantages pertaining to a registration scheme are the same as for identification, whether voluntary or mandatory, as given in Section 2.2, with the following additions.

### **7.4 Advantages of a Mandatory Scheme**

- It will raise public perception of owner responsibility
  - Targeted education of owners would be possible, raising animal welfare standards.
  - Monies raised could be “ring fenced” within local government expenditure for use on animal welfare related matters.
  - May reduce pet ownership from amongst the less responsible keepers. Impulse purchase reduced.
  - Increases owner/keeper accountability.
  - Allows national and international tracking of animals (Pet Travel Scheme, disease control, dog shows, lost and stolen animals, improvement of breed standards.)
- 7.4.1 A mandatory scheme would provide a societal view of the need to consider animal ownership as an act with associated responsibilities for the welfare of the animal and of the general public.
- 7.4.2 A mandatory scheme would enable species-specific information to be provided direct to owners/keepers at time of registration and subsequently. Education could also be directed to owners in particular areas where required, for example where there is a local problem or need for a specific type of information such as notification of a local outbreak of infectious disease or parasitic infestation.
- 7.4.3 A proportionate amount of monies raised by income from registration (The DETR (DIG) Report paragraph 60 proposes that a likely raised income of around £10 million should be re-invested in a public education programme) could be ring-fenced as are other income arrangements dealt with by Local Authorities. These could then be used to support education of owners/keepers; enforcement of the scheme; provision of facilities such as dog exercise areas and agility

equipment; dog waste collection bins; and local authority recognised dog training and equestrian classes together with the provision of suitable locations at which to hold them. It must be remembered that this is not a scheme arising from scratch. Existing expenditure by Local Authorities and the police, together with animal welfare charities and registration schemes, means that implementation of these proposals are in many ways a “bolt-on” method to improve working ways and spread costs and responsibilities in a more equitable manner.

- 7.4.4 There may be a reduction in pet ownership in that the casual or ‘impulse purchaser’ may be deterred from ownership which has not been given due consideration. Many animals obtained on impulse or by people with a casual view of welfare may end up abandoned or given to rescue centres.
- 7.4.5 The linking of owner/keeper and animal means that there is potential for tracing those responsible for acts which are not in the interests of the animal’s welfare, such as tethered or stray horses, or acts which result in the contravention of the law such as livestock worrying.
- 7.4.6 A consistent and reputable scheme would provide the basis for tracking animals both nationally, across authority boundaries and internationally. This would assist in the re-uniting of animal and owner if the animal is lost or stolen when on holiday for example, be it at home or abroad. It would also enable tracking of disease – as is the case with the current pet travel scheme.
- 7.4.7 The administrative costs of introducing a new scheme needed to be weighed against the perceived benefits to animal welfare, increased responsible ownership and decreases in existing direct and indirect costs to local authorities, animal welfare charities, public services such as hospitals and the social fabric. Evidence and estimates of costs are provided in Section 10 and Appendix 15. The DETR (DIG) Report paragraphs 47-62 also provide information with which this working group agreed in principle. However, these latter costs are regarded as conservative. It is therefore advantageous to bear these initial costs in the interests of long-term benefits to animal welfare.
- 7.4.8 Compliance is always related to the degree of enforcement, linked in part to the perceived social advantages attaching to any proposal. For example, the use of seat belts in vehicles to help save lives, and wearing protective headgear on motorcycles and cycles to prevent head injuries. Social acceptability is an aid to furthering progress. In the instances of television licensing and car tax active enforcement achieves compliance of around 93-95% (DETR, Air and Environmental Quality Division, September 1999). Success will depend upon improved enforcement and improved enforcement improves social awareness of responsible animal ownership.

## **7.5 Disadvantages of a Mandatory Scheme**

- Any mandatory scheme will require adequate enforcement and will result in greater cost.
- Increase in bureaucratic administrative systems.
- Monies raised may be used to support other Council expenditure
- Animal welfare and education of owners may not follow from this scheme
- Not all people will comply
- Might deter pet ownership
- More animals will be abandoned at the start of a scheme

- This would represent a tax on dogs, and would be too costly, with the likelihood of continuing annual increases once established

- 7.5.1 All mandatory schemes have associated costs, staffing and equipment. Heavy administrative costs would prove burdensome to the introduction of planned benefits.
- 7.5.2 A mandatory scheme will require staffing and infrastructure to fulfil the entering and updating of data and to collect fees, as well as general administration of the central register.
- 7.5.3 Concern was expressed that any monies raised by such a scheme would not be ring-fenced and would be spent on other services. The DIG Report projection is for freed resources of between £9 and £10 million.
- 7.5.4 If sufficient funds are not produced to allow an amount to be used for education, or if ring-fencing is not allowed by central government for local government use, then no funds would be available for improvements in animal welfare.
- 7.5.5 Only those interested in their animal would comply. Those who allowed dogs to stray would have no interest in seeing that their animal was identified. Regular offenders allowing their companions to stray would continue to allow them to stray, with the result that those who did comply would be supporting the system aimed at improving a problem to which they did not contribute
- 7.5.6 Reduction of pet ownership may occur in particular in some groups such as the elderly and those on Social Security benefits as well as from an increase in licensing costs.
- 7.5.7 The sudden imposition of a mandatory scheme, without recognition of the benefits, may give rise to animals being abandoned in the first instance. A gradual introduction would be likely to lessen this impact.
- 7.5.8 There is no justification in paying a licence fee because there is no guarantee of improved animal welfare. There should be some benefit to the owners rather than just a penalty. The addition of a licence and registration fee would only be an additional cost for dog owners to bear. They pay VAT on animal food already. This would be an unfair payment, payable only by those who are responsible owners anyway. Once the fee is in place, there would be constant increases every year.

## **8. PRESENT POSITION**

- 8.1 The law is complex, for dogs particularly, and it is therefore understandable that it is not often properly known even by many involved in the day-to-day administration of its related operations. It bears repeating that the 1906 Dogs Act was amended to allow Councils to share in that which was a police duty until 1988. The Environmental Protection Act transferred most of these duties to Councils in 1990, but the basic format of the 1906 and 1990 Acts are the same in as much as seven days is the period for stray detention unless a “finder” is certificated by the police or written to by the local authority. In this instance it is for the finder to keep the dog for a

minimum of one month. Councils may be regarded as 'finders' if no payment is made to the police on receipt of dogs from police stations.

- 8.2 The provision for a £25 fixed penalty exists under The Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992 for the return of a seized dog. An extension of this policy to cover compliance with the requirement for permanent identification would greatly assist enforcement, which is seen as key to the satisfactory operation of legislation. Legislative change should deal with the shortcomings needed to be overcome to help dog wardens enforce the law. Government should review the position regarding the ability of local authorities to retain fixed penalties arising from their work in animal control. Such sums would act as a safeguard to concerns about lack of funds shown in 7.5 above, and would also reward those who were more active in this field. Such sums should be spent within this service area and not be used for other purposes.
- 8.3 The fact that all strays must be taken to the owner, local authority or the police, is not yet widely recognised. Many animals are taken directly to unauthorised organisations that 'sell-on' to new owners without involvement of prescribed bodies. This makes tracing of lost animals impossible, and remains illegal. The RSPCA, Local Government Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, National Dog Wardens Association and Association of Chief Police Officers started an information campaign "Lost or Found A Dog?" in February 2002 in recognition of this problem. There is no evidence that a voluntary scheme would support the infrastructure needed to make it workable. A voluntary register has no need to meet restrictive operational standards.
- 8.4 Appendices 3-7 show that whereas 135,000 dogs pass through Local Authority hands in one year, 87,000 pass through the membership of ABDCH. With 21% allegedly passing from Councils to Charities, and no indication as to who these charities may be, a further 61,000 needs to be added to this total. Other charities come into this equation and an unknown additional sum must also be added for this area. If Police costs exceed Local Authority costs, and there is no information as to how many dogs pass to Councils, Charities, or are returned to the public, then yet another variable is added to this sum. Given that it is unlikely that these totals represent 100% of all stray dogs within society, then it not unreasonable to concur with the estimate of 1.2 million missing pets postulated in The Daily Echo (Southampton, Feb 23, 2002). It must also be borne in mind that different dogs stray at different times.
- 8.5 Telephonic communication is also considerable. RSPCA deal with 1.8 million calls on this issue in a year. Just one call per day for each working day for all Councils would give rise to about 120,000 calls. Some Councils record several hundred calls per annum on this issue. Adding on Police and Charity enquiries would take this figure beyond 5 million calls per annum.
- 8.6 As discussed in Appendix 13.1 the evidence on microchip usage suggests that early extension of this method of permanent identification would strongly favour animal welfare. Without the force of law there is no need for Councils to obtain or use reading equipment.
- 8.7 The evidence from the DETR (Dog Identification Group DIG) report has proposed a five- year voluntary period to assess uptake of microchips with the aim of 75% of dogs becoming chipped at the end of that time period. Animal Welfare Charities are doing tremendous work in adding to

the market base. It seems likely that an assessment will have to be made during progress of the DIG proposal regarding its evidence of success. Already 1 in 6 dogs are microchipped.

- 8.8 The main cat charities recognise the benefits of identification and carry out programmes of microchipping, but they are not all of the belief that a mandatory scheme should be introduced at this moment in time. While their schemes progress they think it reasonable to monitor the position of voluntary chipping with a view to further assessment particularly with regard to any dog scheme which may be introduced. At present about 1 in 12 cats are microchipped. They are keen to stress the equality of value that should be placed on the life of a cat compared to that of a dog, and are eager to see proper protection of this species.
- 8.9 The Council are also mindful of the duality of ownership that often pertains to cats due to their propensity to share themselves amongst different owners/keepers.
- 8.10 Appendix 12.3 discusses the numbers of existing registers in operation for different purposes within the horse world. The advantages of registration across these varying fields are highlighted. Approximately 1 in 4 UK equines are currently identified. Similarly to proposals on dogs, it would be reasonable to continue identification voluntarily as well as where it is already a requirement. The need to have registers “talking” to each other is something the operators should be encouraged to investigate in the interim period prior to the establishment of a compulsory system so that “one point of contact” remains a sound basis for progress. Commencement of a scheme as a statutory requirement should be with foals in the first instance.

#### **8.11 Recommendations**

- 8.11.1 *The Council recommends that all dogs should be identified individually by microchip, or tattoo, together with a visible means of identification. This information should be kept on a register for both owners and dogs. In order to alleviate the concerns regarding the difficulties of immediate compulsory registration, a scheme should be introduced as from a set date whereby all puppies of a set age are so identified and registered. This should commence in three years time following publication of this report.*
- 8.11.2 *Where the required means of identification are not present, the addition of a fixed penalty system should be introduced to assist with the proper enforcement of attaining full take-up of the registration and identification procedures. Local Authorities should be given the power to retain fixed penalties, which should be ring-fenced to aid their work to improve animal welfare.*
- 8.11.3 *Voluntary registration using microchip or tattoo should be encouraged for all dogs in the intervening period. Local Authorities should be encouraged to enforce the existing requirement for visible identification.*
- 8.11.4 *The Council recommends that all equines should be microchipped and records held on a nationally accessible computer database system. That fixed penalties and power of seizure should be applied equally to equines as to dogs once microchipping becomes a requirement. Microchipping should commence at the same time and manner as planned for dogs, starting with foals. Existing databases will undoubtedly continue, but the benefits of co-operation, to*

*reduce costs and improve information availability through a single access point, should be examined by the providers as a matter of high priority in order to improve animal welfare.*

- 8.11.5** *The Council recommends that voluntary microchipping of cats should be encouraged with a review of the position being carried out in five years time to assess progress both within the species and as a comparison to the success of any comparable mandatory scheme such as dog / horse identification.*

## **9 CENTRAL DATABASE**

- 9.1 The Kennel Club supplied information on their Pet-Log database registration system (29 July. 2000) that stated 1,241,558 animals were on their register at that time. An average of 32,000 new registrations per month were being added between Jan. and May 2000. Response times to enquiries and notifications of change of address were 1-3 days from date of receipt. Response time to initial registration was 1-2 days from date received. Recent figures (March 2002) reveal an increase to 1,798,900 animals on the register, with an average monthly increase of 25,000 new registrations at this time. 99.9% of these are microchipped, of which 63% are dogs (1.13m) and 35% (0.63m) cats.
- 9.2 Animalcare Ltd, of York operates a register for animals. They also market the Destron microchip. They have experience of 700,000 implantations in the UK. The range of species is not specified.
- 9.3 There are several minor attempts to deal with a problem of relocating lost and stolen pets. For example, Lostpets UK acts as a central point to link organisations by acting as a UK- wide database of lost and found pets. Pet Detectives covers the whole of the UK in the search for missing and stolen dogs.
- 9.4 This fragmentation and multiplication of resources occurs as a result of a perceived inadequacy on a national scale. The detail of available resources, be they private or public or commercial, are not being effectively publicised. The need for one centrally accessed point of reference becomes greater by the day.

### **9.5 Areas for consideration**

- **Centrally accessible**
- **Quality control**
- **Disaster control**
- **Benchmarking**

- 9.5.1 Opinions were expressed that the success of a registration scheme would require a centrally accessible database or databases. With the advance of technology, it was considered acceptable to have a centrally accessed point without a specific need for one database. Databases can be linked. However, it was considered essential that a single phone call is all that should be required by the person wishing to access the database/s to link animal and owner.



- 9.5.2 There is a need to protect data from unforeseen circumstances, such as bankruptcy, and it is important to safeguard the users interests by guaranteeing the safety of the register whatever happens to a company providing this service. An approved body that is separate from the operator must keep all information needed to keep a register operational, together with the ability to access that information.
- 9.5.3 The consistency of operation to an agreed standard that satisfied the demands of the public gave rise to proposals that a standard of operational detail should be brought forward as a Code of Practice by those involved in the industry. This should include input from users as well as providers. Response times, control on marketing, data protection and other procedures should be included in a code of practice. Restrictions on marketing were necessary.
- 9.5.4 Response times need to be quick. Concern was expressed that increase in size would introduce administrative delays to the system. Delays between chipping the animal and details being available on the computer must be overcome. Use of the Internet may be helpful in speeding up the procedure once the chip has been placed into the animal.
- 9.5.5 A variety of matters were presented for helping to ensure control did not lie with the operator alone. Keeping a complete record of all work in duplication, and in a safe and remote place was essential. An independent body experienced in this field should therefore investigate “Disaster control”.
- 9.5.6 A regular audit would be required against standard benchmarks to confirm the technical capabilities and performance of the databases in order to confirm their satisfactory compliance with the Code of Practice mentioned in paragraph 9.3.3.
- 9.5.7 The appointment of an “exterior” public body in the nature of OFWAT, OFSTED, etc. would add an independence and rigour seen to be essential to the success of aiding the continuation of databases which may otherwise be subject to random access from less experienced bodies with an eye to quick profits. This would also keep operators up to scratch with the demands of providing a service which must not be dominated by singular interests which preclude the benefits of animal welfare that will follow from a successful system of this nature.
- 9.5.8 There is no reason why other providers should not enter the marketplace, but they should do so on an equal footing with those following existing obligations. Central Government, Local Government and Animal Welfare Charities would be useful members of an animal “OFWAT” to help ensure that user satisfaction is being met.
- 9.5.9 Twenty-four hour service is a prerequisite for such a service

## **9.6 Recommendations**

- 9.6.1 *The Council recommends that the Government appoint a body to be responsible for auditing the performance of databases, and approving new entrants into the marketplace to ensure they meet the agreed operational requirements applicable to existing databases.***

**9.6.2** *A Code of Practice should be produced by the industry, with input from users to ensure an equitable review of operational procedures.*

**9.6.3** *All database information shall be kept in safekeeping to ensure continued operation irrespective of what might occur to the providing company.*

## **10. COSTS - DOGS**

- Total Local Authority costs for providing Animal Warden Services require detailed review.
- The evidence provided was in agreement in principle with those expounded in the DETR (DIG) report.
- However, it was considered that the DETR projections of costs were conservative, as explained below.
- Potential savings resulting from a mandatory identification and registration scheme are substantial

**10.1** There is a need to consider costs in the “round”. The areas that may involve cost include:

- Provision of site: this may include purchase of land, building of kennels and provision of staff.
- Provision of Service: Dog wardens, vans, equipment, Poop-Scoop bins, signs, byelaw implementation, office space, administrative support.
- Operation of service: write off costs for capital, on-costs of wages, maintenance, replacement costs of equipment, waste collection service, legal and administrative costs, education, training, collection and disposal of strays, and other services, such as local schemes for neutering or identification.
- “External” costs: dog bites (Accident & Emergency, outpatients), accidents (injuries, damage to property, in-patients), charitable subsidy from animal welfare organisations, livestock deaths and injuries, education, obedience and agility training, police costs, legal costs (inc. damages and liability).

However, most references to local authority costs are much more restrictive and tend to only deal with running costs for dog warden services.

**10.2** Costs are notoriously difficult to identify and quantify. Accurate information is scarce and difficult to obtain. There is a wide variation in range for estimated costs as specified in section 10, which shows a range of local authority costs between £25 and £60 million per annum, according to the source.

**10.3** The DETR report (Report of the working party on the identification of dogs. Available for viewing on DETR website: [www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk)) indicates the costs over the next ten years to run the dog warden service as £65-72 million. In any of the circumstances described above this seems to be seriously underestimating costs.

- 10.4 The DETR draft report includes costs for different areas: cost per incident for accidents involving strays, £1210 (442 accidents); costs of attacks on livestock, £2m; costs of treating attacks on humans, £9m; annual local authority costs £11.3m; annual police costs, £15m; cost of permanent identification £25; daily kennelling cost, £6.50 – £7.50; euthanasia costs £30.
- 10.5 There is a danger in assuming that identification will have considerable affect on accidents, attacks, dog bites, and hospital emergency treatment costs. Because of the likelihood of these matters continuing, we have not taken their costs into account. Any improvements ensuing will be a bonus.
- 10.6 RSPCA indicate that bulk purchase of microchips allows large organisations to purchase at a cost of approx. £3. Common charges elsewhere may be around £15-30. In all cases this includes a registration fee paid to the database holder that registers the animal for life. The cost for cats being microchipped is the same as for dogs, but as local authorities do not have legislative control for cats, they are unlikely to become involved in chipping cats unless advised to do so.
- 10.7 In many areas the local dog warden has been trained to implant the microchip into dogs. This is a cost effective way to increase uptake. Not only is it likely that special chipping days will be provided, often in publicly accessible areas, but the overhead costs will be less.
- 10.8 Identification of horses, approximate costs: Freeze marking, £47 initially, then £10 pa; chipping, £23.50 + vet's fee; DNA typing £35 each; Lip tattooing, £35 each horse.
- 10.9 Horse database registration at Weatherby's is £44 -123 + £66 to name a horse. Re-registration fee for change of ownership is £100-250.

**Note: There are no similar costings for cats and horses as have been provided for dogs.**

## **11. REGISTRATION FEE**

- 11.1. As seen in the previous paragraph, the costs for operating existing services are exceedingly high. Arguments that this scheme is a taxation on dogs do not bear close examination. Any beliefs that continuing our present position will lead to short term solutions are not realistic.
- 11.2. A fee should not be looked at as something to provide full financial backing to running a scheme. Any such fee would need to be very high, and this is not the aim of identification.
- 11.3. Fees should contribute to the costs of helping to better control the problems introduced to society by existing populations. Too high a fee would be counterproductive, in that people would have less incentive to comply. Equally neglecting an introductory fee for two hundred years is also counterproductive.
- 11.4. The aim of identification and registration should be to improve animal welfare, and increasing the likelihood of owners being able to track down their lost pets in a far more effective, and therefore easier, way. There is a cost / benefit relationship to owners which is far removed from the belief of an unnecessary cost being levied against the interests of dogs.

- 11.5. Owners of pets should accept responsibility, but better organisation is also needed to offer help, rather than obstruction, to those owners who do take responsibility, and do wish to see the early return of their pets when they are lost.
- 11.6. The fee should be set at a level which is not a deterrent to ownership, and which has no need to cover the costs that are already in operation. Existing costs are high, and this should not be forgotten in the equation of sharing costs throughout society.
- 11.7. Various schemes are operated in other countries whereby reductions to the licence fee are offered in return for activities felt to justify such assistance, such as neutering, vaccinations, deworming, microchipping, dog training on approved courses etc. These schemes have a lot to recommend them, as they aim to produce socially acceptable welfare of the animal that is likely to benefit society. Although not discussed as a basis for going forward immediately, it should not be forgotten for the future.
- 11.8. It is anticipated that a licence fee would incorporate the cost of the chip, the cost of entering on the register, the cost of updating the register, the cost of some of the enforcement needed to ensure constant compliance, and some of the educational costs for training and advising owners regarding responsible pet ownership.
- 11.9. These costs are likely to be variable, and in the case of the registers, likely to include a profit element. If chip costs are reduced because of volume sales, this will also be a factor. The range anticipated is of the order of £15-25 to cover the above process.
- 11.10. Already the increased use of microchips has allowed market forces to bring the price down to around £3 for chip purchase. Local authorities already bear substantial costs, and recovery of all expenditure would not be necessary.
- 11.11. The value of an independent Board, recommended earlier in this report, would include its capacity to oversee relevant expenditure in an impartial manner.
- 11.12. Local authorities should be able to retain elements of recovered revenue from enforcement.
- 11.13. Arguments have been made that the previous licence system for dogs was discarded because it suffered from poor take up of licences. In reality, this was the only fee to reduce over time, so that it eventually became uneconomic for the Treasury to collect the revenue. It may be seen that worries over continually large increases are not borne out by history.
- 11.14. It is possible that a cat registration fee would be slightly less than that for a dog. Experience of other systems and operational procedures should be reviewed in the interim period, prior to introducing a cat scheme.
- 11.15. Market forces would come into play for other species due to the uncertainty of numbers and the need for veterinary input. Horses from the bottom end of the market may prove to require a fee that may inhibit ready compliance. The present fees to microchip a horse are £23.50 + £25 vets fee.

11.16. As stated above, this report has deferred to the principles of the DETR (DIG) Report (Appendix F and paragraphs 47-62) for cost detail. All the estimated costs are at present values over ten years discounted at a rate of 6 % (HM Treasury Guide to Policy Appraisal in Central Government).

11.17. As a reminder to those who may not have seen this report, the following costs were included:

- To do nothing - £185m.
- Cost of permanent ID - £138m
- Costs to Local Authorities (less costs of kennelling £65-£72m), freed resources - £9-10m
- Costs to Police £110m - freed resources £66m

#### **11.18. Recommendation**

*11.18.1 The council recommends that the Secretary of State should set an annual registration fee that should be the subject of regular and periodic review. Consultation with organisations and representative interests who may be substantially affected by this issue should be a part of the process.*

#### **12. USE OF REVENUE (See Appendix 16)**

12.1 A part of the revenue from an identification and registration system should be allocated to education of the animal keeper and the animal.

12.2 The law does not make it a mandatory duty for local authorities to expend money for educational purposes. This law should be reviewed.

12.3 Ring-fencing of revenue should ensure it is used on animal welfare issues and not incorporated within the general pot of local government expenditure.

12.4 Dog Wardens should undergo approved training before practising their work. Revenue may be used for the establishment of agreed training levels and for officer training.

#### **12.5 Recommendations**

*12.5.1 The Council recommends that appropriate education regarding responsible pet ownership should become a legislative requirement empowering Local Authorities in tandem with the law for enforcement.*

*12.5.2 The central “board” offering checks on effective procedures should also consider the reasonable costs of performing the database activities, and determine a percentage for local authority use in the areas of enforcement and education.*

#### **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX**

1. Examples of identification of animal movements
2. Identification
  - 2.1 Microchips
  - 2.2 Freeze marking and tattooing
  - 2.3 Visual identification of retinal vascular patterns
3. Mori surveys for NCDL 1996-2000
4. NDWA surveys 1994-1999
5. Selection of annual returns 1996-1999
6. PFMA figures 1994-1999
7. ABDCH figures 1996-1999
8. List of Organizations Contributing Evidence
9. Documents Submitted in Evidence
10. Presentation of Oral Evidence
11. International position of mandatory registration
  - 11.1 Dogs
  - 11.2 Cats
  - 11.3 Horses
12. Debate about registration
  - 12.1 Dogs
  - 12.2 Cats
  - 12.3 Horses
13. Debate about a mandatory scheme
  - 13.1 Advantages
  - 13.2 Disadvantages
14. Debate about Database Provision
15. Debate about Costs
16. Debate about the Use of Revenue
17. Debate about the Use of Microchips
18. References

**EXAMPLES OF IDENTIFICATION**

**Examples of identification for animal movements** include:

- European controls on the exportation of livestock. (“Animo”: (abbreviation for “Animal movement”), computer database information system for farm animals
- Similarly the "Balai" directive requires identification of traded imported animals. (The “Balai arrangements” provide a specific exception from quarantine for dogs and cats being moved commercially from other member states under EU rules implemented in the UK in 1994. Council Directive 92/65/EEC introduced new arrangements which were implemented in the UK by the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats, and Other Mammals) (Amendment) Order 1994.)
- The need for accurate identification of dogs and cats admitted to the UK now that the quarantine requirements have undergone change. (MAFF, Pet Travel Scheme, 3 Aug. 1999. See also <http://maff.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/default.htm>)
- The Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999. (30 Dec. 1999) (The Sale of Dogs (Identification Tag) Regulations 1999.) (Statutory Instrument. 30 Dec. 1999).

## IDENTIFICATION

### 2.1 Microchips

- A microchip is a tiny device (approx 12mm long and 2.1mm wide) that is inserted into the body. Preferred sites vary according to the species. No sedation or anaesthesia is required.
- The device can hold a range of coded information relating to ownership details, medical and breeding history for example. They are commonly used in horses and are compulsory under the Pets Passport Scheme.
- Microchips may be “read” by a portable reader in order to identify their content.
- Microchip readers are around 300-400 grams and will fit into the pocket. Through the use of “SMART” software, some readers will read current and future technologies in 13 languages; 6400 codes may be memorised in one reader.
- Various manufacturers produce equipment which satisfies the requirements of ISO standards 11784 and 11785, and the recommendations laid down by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA):
  - AVID ([http://www.avidid.com/technology/tech\\_english.html](http://www.avidid.com/technology/tech_english.html))
  - Destron-Fearing (<http://www.destronfearing.com>)
  - Trovan (<http://www.an.com/transponders.html>)
  - Bayer (<http://www.datamars.com>).
- Destron-Fearing market RFID (radio frequency identification) companion animal products in countries including 'Lifechip' in Australia and Japan, 'PETNET' in Canada, 'Identichip' in South Africa and the UK, 'Indexel' in Europe, and 'Home Again' in the US.
- Trovan microchips are used in over 300 zoos worldwide, by 80 government agencies in 20 countries, and are endorsed by the Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of the International Union of Conservation of Nature ([www.an.com/transponders.html](http://www.an.com/transponders.html)).
- Information provided by the chip manufacturers indicated that once implanted, the identity tag is virtually impossible to retrieve. Surgical removal, using the most advanced radiograph techniques available, is extremely difficult. The number can never be altered ([http://www.ology/tech\\_English.html](http://www.ology/tech_English.html)). Each identity tag is manufactured and programmed under computer control to ensure against duplication of I.D. codes. No two animals would have the same number. Chip reading time is measured in milliseconds.
- Concern has been raised regarding the migration of microchips around an animal's body.
- A small study in the USA, (Plunkett R.K.1998. Migration of microchips in cats and dogs. Vet. Rec.143.28.) involved 33 dogs and 16 cats to check out sensitivity and specificity of microchips one year after implantation. Migration occurred in one dog, but in all cats things worked well, with no migration.
- BSAVA, in conjunction with FECAVA, run an “Adverse Reactions Scheme” to record information on microchips. Started in September 1997, a report was made covering the period to September 1999. During this two-year period a total of 61 reports of adverse reaction were received: 49 from UK, 7 from Denmark, 4 from Belgium, and 1 from Sweden. Migration, infection, failure to work, or loss from the body, were included.
- Reaction time varied from immediately (loss of chip) to three years. Most reactions were within the year and of the 61, 47 were due to migration.



- With 973,588 registrations at this time, a reaction rate of one per 19,869 implants resulted. Animalcare (Identichip) had a rate of 1 per 69,202; Avid (Pettrac) 1 per 9,789; and Bayer (Tracer) 1 per 8,616. An overall rate of 0.00005%.
- “Microchips represent a safe and reliable method of pet identification” was BSAVA’s conclusion. It is important to follow the manufacturer’s instructions (Journal of Small Animal Practice. Vol.41. May 2000).
- The ILPH point out that chips may be used at an earlier age in horses than other methods, they are difficult to tamper with and quick to inject.
- However they are not a visible means of identification and there is therefore no immediate deterrent to thieves. Reading a microchip in a wild or unruly horse may be difficult.
- The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has indicated that microchipping may be carried out by trained personnel in dogs and cats, but horses and reptiles, where a route other than the subcutaneous route, or where need for repair of the entry site is required, should be done by veterinary surgeons (Statement on implantation. 26 May 2000). This, if followed, would be likely to impact on the respective charges for microchipping, and would work against identification of species requiring veterinary input on the grounds of cost.

## **2.2 Freeze Marking and Tattooing**

- A freeze mark is an identification mark applied with an iron that has been frozen in liquid nitrogen. Alteration without detection is possible.
- A tattoo is the application of an identification mark by puncturing the skin and inserting a pigment.
- These methods do not require sedation nor anaesthesia
- Tattoos on horses can be applied by almost anyone (Kryo Kinetics Assoc. inc.) with kits available by mail order. Tattoos are very easily altered. They do not work on horses under two years old because of growth dilution and resorption of ink; the ink is swept to the lymph nodes by the immune system. They can be hard to read on a pigmented lip. Some fade as the horse ages.
- The National Dog Tattoo Register (<http://www.dog-register.co.uk/index.htm>) claims a permanent & visible means of identification is provided by tattoos. They require no anaesthetic or sedation and are applied in seconds. They charge £5 for tattooing a puppy, £15 for an adult animal. Change of address is free. The site does not detail equipment or techniques. There is no information available on rates of failures or problems.
- Tattoos can be disfigured or removed. They may fade or be temporarily masked. There were also concerns raised regarding the welfare aspects of the procedure.
- Countries practising ear tattooing include, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.
- About 15,000 dogs are tattooed annually in the UK.
- Tattoos are easily altered, do not work satisfactorily in horses under two years of age, may fade or be temporarily masked

## **2.3 Visual Identification of Retinal Vascular Patterns**

- Biometric applications are well established e.g. fingerprints. Retinal Vascular Patterns, or iris recognition, identifies persons or animals by patterns in the coloured portion of the eye. It is

generating interest because it is a non-intrusive identification process with almost 100% accuracy and declining cost (ID World. Jan/Feb 2000. pps 22-28).

- Currently being developed by Optibrand this system is not yet regarded as sufficiently advanced in its development to warrant full assessment at this time. It will doubtless have a use in certain circumstances, such as work at transit ports, where it is reasonable for numbers of animals to access one point for the purpose of identification. It retains the advantage of being non-invasive to the animal, but needs further field development for portability if it is to be utilised for the purposes under review.
- The technology involves capturing a photo of the coloured part of the eye, mapping the combination of pits, freckles, coronas and other distinguishing characteristics, encoding the information and storing it in a database. Enrolment into the system requires a picture to be taken of the eye, often at a self-service device. For recognition purposes, three video cameras scan the eye and a match is found approximately 5 seconds later. Eye patterns are more distinctive than DNA, and they do not change with age. Even twins have different iris readings.
- The false accept and reject rate for iris recognition is less than 1 in 1.2 million. The next most accurate biometric is believed to be fingerprints (1 in 100000 rejected). However, the system is not portable and is expensive
- The system is still too early in its development to be considered further at this time.

**MORI SURVEYS ON BEHALF OF NCDL**

MORI survey figures carried out for the NCDL 1996-2000

<b>NCDL</b>	<b>1995/6</b>	<b>1996/7</b>	<b>1997/8</b>	<b>1998/9</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>
Total	94,000	136,500	135,000	133,500	122,000
Seized by L/A		106,470 (78%)	105,300 (78%)	102,795 (77%)	93,940 (77%)
Brought by police		0	0	10,680 (8%)	8,540 (7%)
Brought by public		13,650 (10%)	14,850 (11%)	16,020 (12%)	15,860 (13%)
Brought by other		16,380 (12%)	14,850 (11%)	4,005 (3%)	3,660 (3%)
Dogs per L/A		312	310	306	280
Reclaim during 7 days		45,045 (33%)	44,550 (33%)	43,200 (32%)	42,700 (35%)
RTO-direct		20,475 (15%)	17,550 (13%)	16,200 (12%)	15,860 (13%)
Passed to Charities		31,395 (23%)	25,650 (19%)	28,014 (21%)	25,620 (21%)
Rehomed by L/A		13,650 (10%)	20,250 (15%)	18,900 (14%)	17,080 (14%)
Put to sleep (PTS)		21,840 (16%)	20,250 (15%)	21,600 (16%)	17,080 (14%)
L/A cost per annum		£11.3m	£21.3m	£19.3m	£24.6m

It is to be noted that MORI state that the apparent decrease in stray dogs between the last two years is based on returns from different local authorities, and that when 'like' authorities are compared, there is an apparent increase in the number of strays. This highlights the need to interpret statistics with discretion before reaching for

conclusions. This is particularly so for trying to obtain trends within restrictive time periods.

## NDWA SURVEYS

The National Dog Warden Association survey returns 1994/99: -

NDWA	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Strays: Respondents figures	83,082	89,165	75,091	No report	55,876	45,550
Extrapolation to <b>all</b> L/As (Dogs per L/A)	148,361 (318)	139,976 (300)	139,594 (279)	147,042	145,465 (312)	126,528 (294)
PTS	15.9% 23,589	13.9% 19,730	11.7% 16,228		14.0% 20,365	10% 12,653
RECLAIMED by owner	29.7% 44,078	32.8% 46,465	33.4% 46,473		32.0% 46,549	34% 43,019
REHOMED	20.5% 30,458	18.7% 26,424	18.5% 25,670		22.0% 32,002	21% 26,570
RTO (Return to owner)	21.5% 31,838	18.5% 26,183	17.8% 24,766		16.0% 23,274	14% 17,714
TO SHELTERS	12.4% 18,352	16.1% 22,730	18.6% 25,906		16.0% 23,274	21% 26,570

It is difficult to find consistency amongst recorded information. Because some Councils do not return their figures, there remains some uncertainty. (Response rate reduced from 63% to 36%). Some dogs will be passed to smaller kennels where figures are not included in returns. Following figures through to their ultimate outcome is not clearly indicated. It would be reasonable to conclude from the above figures that around 300 dogs per local authority are collected every year. As there are 437 authorities included in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, this would equate to approx. 131,000 dogs per annum.

## ANNUAL RETURNS

A selection of known organisations that co-operated in forwarding their figures are included in the tables below:

<b>1999</b>	--	<b>DOGS</b>	--	--	<b>CATS</b>	--	--	<b>OTHE R</b>	--
	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Battersea	8,556	1,907	10,284	3,346	302	3,635	0	0	0
Blue X	2,283	0	2,406	4,477	0	4,723	1,020	0	1,305
Cats Protection	0	0	0	65,000	0	65,000	0	0	0
Cheltenham	799	27	863	422	4	436	265	0	317
Edinburgh	1,748	133	1,881	390	10	400	0	0	0
Manchester	5,514	3,566	9,101	0	0	0	0	0	0
NCDL	9,358	157	9,510	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	3,598	928	4,706	952	49	1,111	80	7	89
RSPCA	29,322	11,141	40,463	45,864	18,886	64,730	24,121	57,864	81,985
SSPCA	6,714	1,095	7,803	3,384	550	3,919	2,851	1,730	4,599
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,892</b>	<b>18,954</b>	<b>87,017</b>	<b>123,835</b>	<b>19,801</b>	<b>143,954</b>	<b>28,337</b>	<b>59,601</b>	<b>88,295</b>

<b>1998</b>	--	<b>DOGS</b>	--	--	<b>CATS</b>	--	--	<b>OTHE R</b>	--
	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Battersea	6,996	2,083	9,103	2,308	284	2,613	0	0	0
Blue X	2,652	0	2,862	5,045	0	5,022	1,118	0	1,443
Cats Protection	0	0	0	72,576	3,860	79,436	0	0	0
Cheltenham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	1,801	184	1,985	450	17	467	0	0	0
Manchester	4,970	5,321	10,271	0	0	0	0	0	0
NCDL	8,631	150	8,781	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	4,311	1,002	5,487	909	26	1,015	84	4	100
RSPCA	28,959	13,730	42,689	46,786	23,712	70,498	23,874	53,384	77,207
SSPCA	6,425	1,556	7,948	3,083	555	3,655	2,763	2,002	4,722
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,745</b>	<b>24,026</b>	<b>89,126</b>	<b>131,157</b>	<b>28,454</b>	<b>159,706</b>	<b>27,839</b>	<b>55,390</b>	<b>83,472</b>

**APPENDIX 5 (continued)**

<b>1997</b>	--	<b>DOGS</b>	--	--	<b>CATS</b>	--	--	<b>OTHE R</b>	--
	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Battersea	6,474	2,039	8,561	1,879	303	2,169	0	0	0
Blue X	2,870	0	3,074	5,434	0	5,414	723	0	1,114
Cats Protection	0	0	0	70,761	4,030	74,791	0	0	0
Cheltenham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	1,608	132	1,740	414	7	421	0	0	0
Manchester	4,894	5,280	10,183	0	0	0	0	0	0
NCDL	8,613	120	8,733	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	4,287	1,232	5,735	56	3	70	0	0	0
RSPCA	28,696	13,498	42,194	44,232	25,494	69,726	18,042	51,696	69,738
SSPCA	7,461	1,658	9,179	3,374	647	4,029	2,415	1,636	4,102
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,903</b>	<b>23,959</b>	<b>89,399</b>	<b>126,150</b>	<b>30,484</b>	<b>156,620</b>	<b>21,180</b>	<b>53,332</b>	<b>74,954</b>

<b>1996</b>	--	<b>DOGS</b>	--	--	<b>CATS</b>	--	--	<b>OTHE R</b>	--
	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Homed</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Battersea	6,056	1,871	8,068	1,166	174	1,386	0	0	0
Blue X	3,144	0	3,357	4,693	0	5,136	685	0	1,029
Cats Protection	0	0	0	74,379	4,169	78,548	0	0	0
Cheltenham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	1,574	166	1,740	410	16	426	0	0	0
Manchester	4,844	5,411	10,296	0	0	0	0	0	0
NCDL	8,560	141	8,701	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	0	0	5,166	0	0	55	0	0	0

RSPCA	27,239	13,795	41,034	36,536	19,614	56,150	15,717	46,260	61,977
SSPCA	6,877	1,851	8,791	3,227	729	4,047	2,021	1,600	3,578
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,294</b>	<b>23,235</b>	<b>87,153</b>	<b>120,411</b>	<b>24,702</b>	<b>145,748</b>	<b>18,423</b>	<b>47,860</b>	<b>66,584</b>



**PFMA FIGURES**

As a comparative basis for the overall population, the figures below are provided by the Pet Food Manufacturers Association (See PFMA Profile. Annual reports)

Figures are in millions

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dogs</b>	<b>Cats</b>	<b>Budgie</b>	<b>Rabbit</b>	<b>Fish</b>	<b>Guinea Pig</b>	<b>Hamster</b>	<b>Canary</b>	<b>Other Birds</b>
<b>1999</b>	6.9	8.0	1.1	1.4	28.2	0.8	1.0	0.5	1.4
<b>1998</b>	6.6	7.7	1.1	1.6	30.0	0.7	0.98	0.3	1.2
<b>1997</b>	6.9	7.7	1.3	1.3	29.9	0.7	0.96	0.4	1.3
<b>1996</b>	6.55	7.23	1.42	1.42	29.5	0.62	0.88		
<b>1995</b>	6.65	7.18	1.42	1.35	24.38	0.61	0.73		
<b>1994</b>	6.9	7.05	1.5	1.4	28.8	0.6	0.6		

## ABDCH FIGURES

ABDCH (The Association of British Dog and Cat Homes) members also keep account of animals passing through their hands

	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>Homed</b>	43,429	45,391	46,387	50,461
<b>PTS</b>	15,973	15,789	15,607	15,224
<b>Total</b>	59,342	61,180	61,994	64,680

Contributors to ABCDH returns include, Battersea Dogs Home, Blue Cross, National Canine Defence League, Birmingham Dogs Home, Plymouth Dogs home, Edinburgh Dogs Home, Manchester Dogs Home, Wood Green Animal Shelters, Newcastle Dog and Cat Home, and Bolton Dogs Home. The organisation consists of around 25 homes, some of which have recently joined. Not all figures are included in the table. There is no indication why there should be increasing figures, but possibly the addition of new organisations may have contributed to this.

**LIST OF ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTING EVIDENCE**

Aberdeenshire Council  
Animalcare  
Animal Health Trust  
Association of Chief Police Officers  
Avid  
Bayer  
Birmingham City Council  
Blue Cross  
Bowers, Mrs F  
British Small Animal Veterinary Association  
British Veterinary Association  
Cherwell District Council  
Donkey Sanctuary  
Fraser, MCK (Veterinary Surgeon)  
Governing Council of the Cat Fancy  
Hearing Dogs for the Deaf  
International League for the Protection of Horses  
Larne Borough Council  
Lewes District Council  
Local Government Association  
National Association of Private Animal Keepers  
National Canine Defence League  
National Dog Warden Association  
National Equine Welfare Council  
Optibrand  
Oxford City Council  
People's Dispensary for Sick Animals  
Pet Advisory Committee  
Pet Care Trust  
Plymouth Council  
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons  
Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals  
Scottish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals  
Silveira (Individual)  
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare  
WA Rangers Association, Western Australia  
Warnham Animal Sanctuary  
Weymouth and Portland Council  
One contribution – name withheld

**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN EVIDENCE**

Report of the PAC Working Party on Dog Registration. Oct. 1998

Dog Population and Control in Europe, a review. Eurogroup for Animal Welfare. 2000.

DETR Paper on Methods of Enforcing Vehicle Excise Duty and Television Licence.

The Cost of Stray Dogs in the UK and the need for a National Registration Scheme. Economists Advisory Group, London. (Joint RSPCA/Kennel Club funded research). Mar. 1998.

**PRESENTATION OF ORAL EVIDENCE**

RSPCA

National Canine Defence League

Pettrac

National Equine Welfare Council

National Dog Wardens Association: i.) English Local Authority Dog Warden  
ii.) Northern Ireland Local Authority Dog Warden

Animalcare

National Association Of Private Animal Keepers

SSPCA

BSAVA

Optibrand

## INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF MANDATORY REGISTRATION

## 11.1 Dogs

- 11.1.1 Evidence from an RSPCA survey (1999) on dog population, control and legislation of 17 countries show that 12 of these have a form of mandatory scheme in operation. (Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, Cyprus (not enforced), Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece (not enforced), Italy, Malta (not enforced), Portugal, Spain (regional), Switzerland) (see RSPCA submission)
- 11.1.2 Switzerland have an annual tax for owning a dog, (£50. 1995), “to discourage superficial ownership”. Unclaimed strays are neutered before rehoming.
- 11.1.3 In Italy a regional canine registry office was set up following legislation in August 1981. “Overview Law Concerning Pets and the Prevention of Strays. No 281.” This is run by Local Authorities who require tattooing of the animal, and the issuing of a registration certificate. Information on both the owner and the dog are recorded. Local Authorities also run the dogs homes to rehome unwanted or abandoned dogs. They operate free registration, but apply fines for abandonment or non-registration.
- 11.1.4 Concerns were expressed regarding the possibility of animals being discarded following the introduction of mandatory schemes of identification. Australia and USA were suggested as providing evidence for this concern, however this was contra-indicated by other submissions.
- 11.1.5 Evidence was given of successful schemes in Australia and Bermuda. One respondent who had visited both areas thought neither scheme was successful.
- 11.1.6 Western Australia operates the Dog Act 1976 and “Local Laws Relating to Cats.” Permanent ID is maintained through one and three year tags with some microchipping. All dogs in W.Australia must be registered at three months of age. Each Council in W.Australia collects registration fees and records details on computer. It is their experience that registration and identification is the only way to keep effective control of companion animals, and, in many cases, other domestic animals (WA Rangers Assoc. Subiaco Council, North Beach, W.Australia. Mar. 2000).
- 11.1.7 In New Zealand, The Dog Control Act 1994 requires compulsory identification of all dogs by “collar and tag”. Failure to register carries a £500 fine together with seizure of the dog and disqualification from dog ownership. A “selected owner” scheme operates in Wellington; if the property is secure, dogs are neutered, prompt payment of the annual fee has been made for the last two years, and no conviction has occurred for animal related offences, the licence fee is reduced from £30 to £15 (1995). (Submission to Council from Mrs F.Bowers).
- 11.1.8 The Los Angeles Animal Services (<http://www.cityofla.org/ANI/index.htm>) have six shelters. They issue dog (\$100 unsterilised; increased from \$30 in Nov. 2000, and \$10 sterilised) and equine licences (\$14). Cats do not require a licence. Permits are issued for pet shops, grooming parlours, kennels, stables and other premises. All dogs over four months must be licensed. Any fee not paid within 30 days incurs an automatic \$10 late fee penalty.

- 11.1.9 The County of Sacramento, US (<http://www.co.sacramento.ca.us>) issues dog and cat licences. They organise “TEAM” (teaching everyone animals matter.), with targets that include, increasing animal redemptions, expanding humane education and humane law enforcement capabilities, and maintaining a consistent, well- trained corps of volunteers.
- 11.1.10 The American Kennel Club Incorporated (AKC) runs a Companion Animal Recovery service (CAR) (<http://www.akc.org/registration/index.cfm>). To encourage an updated register so that pets may be quickly returned to their owners, they allow unlimited free updates, including phone number and address changes. Temporary holiday addresses are welcomed. A one-time enrolment fee covers the life of the pet. (\$12.50) Transfer of ownership costs \$6. Vets’ charges for chipping vary between \$20-\$50. AKC accepts microchips as a sole means of identification. Health registries (OFA, CERF) require permanent identification at the time of testing. Enrolment is free for all assistance dogs. Animals adopted from shelters are half price (\$6.25). 50 such enrolments qualify for a reduced fee of \$5.00.
- 11.1.11 In 1989 Datamars won a national tender for electronic identification of all dogs on the Italian island of Sardinia. More than 65000 dogs were marked electronically (<http://www.datamars.com>). No follow up data is available
- 11.1.12 It would appear from the evidence that mandatory schemes are most successful when operated in conjunction with sound enforcement policies.

## 11.2 CATS

- 11.2.1 From the evidence submitted, mandatory registration schemes for cats are present in Australia and some areas of the USA such as the County of Sacramento.
- 11.2.2 The Companion Animals Act 1998, New South Wales, Australia, includes cats, dogs and any other animal within its definition of “Companion Animal”. The “other animal” may be prescribed by regulation. Compulsory identification is required, but options exist between collar and tag, a microchip, or any form laid down by regulation. The 1999 Regulations do, however, require “...a subcutaneous full duplex electronic radio transponder (a microchip) of a kind...approved...by order...”.
- 11.2.3 The Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (81/1994), Victoria, Australia, allows for reduced fees for desexed cats, cats over 10 years old, breeding cats on registered premises, cats registered by approved Councils, and cats that are permanently identified in the approved manner. The 1996 Regulations (S.R.No. 25/1996.) prescribe microchips as the manner of permanent identification.
- 11.2.4 The New South Wales Act provides for a three-year “introduction” period, wherein all dogs and cats which are born or which change hands after a specified date must be microchipped and registered. The stated aim is to help reduce the number of lost or stray cats and dogs that are unnecessarily put to sleep every year in New South Wales. “By registering your animal you can help to make sure that both your pet and your community have the benefit of information, assistance and regulation to ensure that their rights and needs are protected.”

- 11.2.5 The Cat Report, Brisbane City Council, Australia, 1992, resulted from a cat problem in the city. The Task Force categorized cats into four groups; domestic owned, domestic un-owned, semi-feral, and feral. No cats in the fourth category were thought to exist. Problems were classified to include threats to local fauna, roaming, becoming lost, attacking other cats, spraying, noise, mating (producing unwanted litters), and nuisance. They recommended compulsory desexing, confining between sunrise and sunset, and compulsory identification and registration
- 11.2.6 The Brisbane City Cat Report recommends, as part of its Community Education Programme, that owners of cats should be encouraged to place a collar on their cats to which is attached two bells to forewarn prey. They also believe that compulsory identification and registration should be uniform across the State and be legislated for by the State Government. (p.34.)

### **11.3 HORSES**

- 11.3.1 Electronic implantable devices used in pet animals do not have to provide data to the Centre for Veterinary Medicine. Should a food animal be involved, it is necessary to ensure there is no risk to human health (CVM. Office of Management, Communications and Education Branch, HFV-12. Jan. 17. 1996).
- 11.3.2 The FDA considers microchips to be food additives, and the horse to be a food animal.
- 11.3.3 Some microchips will have the facility to hold supplementary information which may be added to registers to more tightly define individual animals, particularly where competition or high value are paramount, or even where owners may wish to be protective to their valued companion.
- 11.3.4 Horse laundering has been reported upon in the US (Kryo Kinetics Assoc.Inc; <http://www.horseweb.com/client/kka/laund.htm> ) where horses are stolen in various areas and shipped to holding areas. Unbranded animals have a brand applied; ownership brands are altered and rebranded with the brand registered to the thief. They are subsequently sold to new owners or are shipped to slaughter.
- 11.3.5 <http://www.horseweb.com/client/kka/whyid.htm> includes reasons why horses should be identified and lists animal health and disease control, theft prevention (slaughter, custom thefts, personal use, laundering) national disasters (including fires and floods), fraud prevention (shows/competitions, sales and auctions, breeding, racing, insurance).
- 11.3.6 Some reasons for County Fair entrance denial in the New York area include, testing requirements not fulfilled, forged documents, required vaccinations not met, inadequate proof of vaccination, lack of or incomplete identification, and identification between documents varies for same animal. Permanent identification would serve both parties as an improvement for validating the integrity of the entrants. Much time and anguish would be saved.  
<http://humber.northnet.org/lewiscountyfair/animalhealth.html>

- 11.3.7 Mandatory registration schemes exist within the horse racing fraternity such as all thoroughbreds that are to be raced Under Rules must be registered with Weatherbys in the UK.
- 11.3.8 “All Thoroughbred foals born from 1999 must be micro-chipped and blood typed before registration can go ahead. All parentage must be registered in the General Stud Book or the Non-Thoroughbred Register. To be able to compete at County level all show stock must be registered with the relevant society” (Submission Evidence from National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC))



## DEBATE ABOUT REGISTRATION

### 12.1 Dogs

- 12.1.1 Of the 5.4 million households owning dogs, 79.5% have only one dog and the remainder have two or more.
- 12.1.2 The law allows animals that are not claimed within a seven- day period to be re-homed. The animal has to adjust to this new relationship. A percentage of animals are returned to kennels because their new owners cannot get along with them.
- 12.1.3 The experience of being incarcerated in kennels can traumatise some dogs for the rest of their lives. Some dogs will inevitably not survive their escape. Every opportunity taken to return a lost pet quickly represents not just economic benefit, but immeasurable benefit to the owners by relaxing them from their concerns.
- 12.1.4 Some relationships are very close and have been described by some owners as similar to bereavement when their pet goes missing. A survey of some years ago (Friskies Pet Foods) indicated that lost pets were the single biggest worry for their owners. Around 60% were in agreement about this concern.
- 12.1.5 There is no legal definition of “stray dog”, but different views as indicated in the EAG (Economists Advisory Group Ltd) Report commissioned jointly by The Kennel Club and the RSPCA in May 1998 are consistent enough to present the opinion that a stray must be outside the confines of its owners or keepers property, and outside the effective control of its owner or keeper, if it has one. It is not adequate to claim control based upon a concept of experienced reactions within the keepers knowledge. There is a need to be aware of the likely reactions involved with environmental, sexual and breed characteristics of the species
- 12.1.6 It is clear that there remains a stray problem, even though it has reduced in size over the last decade.
- 12.1.7 Figures to indicate the numbers of dogs which are "caught "on the street, or are returned to owner, or sent to kennels which are Local Authority or Police operated, are not collected in any agreed format, nor are they "returned" to a national body. Consequently there is a reliance on the best available information. (See appendices 1-3 & 5.)
- 12.1.8 The National Dog Warden Association (NDWA) sends a questionnaire to Local Councils and collates the returns.
- 12.1.9 The National Canine Defence League (NCDL) employs MORI to carry out a similar survey on their behalf. Their results are published annually in the national press. “The health and happiness of every dog is at the heart of all our efforts. It’s unacceptable that dogs should be needlessly put to sleep, when there are simple ways to tackle the root causes of the stray dog

problem”, say NCDL in its 2000 review. 7,097 dogs were microchipped and 5,585 neutered in 1999, with their “Give a Dog a Life” campaign.

- 12.1.10 Appendix 3 shows the MORI survey figures carried out for the National Canine Defence League 1997-2000. There is a similarity between the annual figures in general terms. The variation of local authority costs suggests room for further research.
- 12.1.11 Appendix 4 shows the National Dog Warden Association survey returns for 1994-1999. There is no clear trend showing from the figures available.
- 12.1.12 Appendix 5 shows the figures for a selection of organizations that made annual returns available for 1996-1999.
- 12.1.13 Appendix 6 shows overall population figures for different species as provided by the Pet Food Manufacturers Association between 1994-1999.
- 12.1.14 Appendix 7 shows the Association of British Cat and Dog Homes' figures for animals passing through their hands between 1996-1999.
- 12.1.15 In general these figures are not kept to a specific standard, and recent years have seen a gradual improvement in their accuracy. Trends are hard to determine, but interesting pictures are recorded in the sidelines of the hard work put in by animal charities.
- 12.1.16 NCDL records the outcome from their work with one local Council: “The senior Environmental Health Officer reports that he can now return 20% of dogs direct to their owners and destruction is down by 48%. Costs to the Local Authority have reduced. All this on a voluntary scheme, and after only one year in operation.”
- 12.1.17 Besides strays, there are costs for fouling, dog bites, accidents, and kennelling. L/A’s have to provide infrastructure to control animals through legislation, including dog wardens and kennelling facilities, office space and vehicles.
- 12.1.18 Figures from Battersea Dogs Home estimate that only 40-45% of untagged dogs entering as strays are returned to their owners. This suggests that these are indeed lost animals belonging to concerned owners. The remaining 55-60% either belong to uncaring owners or to people who have not thought to contact Battersea Dogs Home, perhaps the most famous rescue centre in its catchment area. Registration would increase both the likelihood of returning those animals to the caring owners and of tracking those owners who have abandoned the animal. Abandonment is an offence (Abandonment of Animals Act 1960).
- 12.1.19 The use by many Councils of their dog warden to carry out microchip implants could be extended further if the law allowed for compulsory microchipping of all dogs which stray, and call their service into use, prior to the dogs return to its keeper.
- 12.1.20 Enforcement is key to any proposal for registration and identification. Charities are concerned that they would be asked to have a role in this when they ought not to do so. It is important to remember that stray dogs must be taken to the Council or the Police. Where Charities

become involved in this, they can only do so as an agent for the Local Authority. This is a contract arrangement, and concerns should be included within the contract detail.

- 12.1.21 Over 75% of stray dogs which pass through local authority hands are collected directly, with 12.5% brought in by the public and 8.3% dealt with by police. 40% were reclaimed as a result of owners contacting the local authority. 33% were wearing identification discs. (NCDL MORI survey 2000.)
- 12.1.22 The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 was introduced in line with the recommendations of the UK Interdepartmental Working Party on dogs, 1976. There is a fixed penalty of £25 for keeping a dog without a licence. £1000 max. fine if the case goes to court (Fixed Penalty Regulations. 1983). Identification discs of prescribed colours are required (Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations. 1997), together with an owner detailed ID disc. A one- year paper licence is issued (Cardwell NJ. Sept 1999.Sec. NDWA). Licensed dogs are approx. 25%-30% of the population. The current criminal burden of proof “beyond reasonable doubt”, should be changed to “on the balance of probabilities”. This would provide the basis for more effective enforcement.
- 12.1.23 Cardwell proposes a more simplified, unified, customer friendly model centred on improving the care of dogs nationwide, together with control provisions. Perhaps a minimum age for ownership, compulsory third party insurance to cover medical cost recovery and a “ highway code” as guidance for care and control standards.
- 12.1.24 The NDWA claim that the number of dogs reclaimed by their owner has stayed around the 50% mark of total dogs dealt with, and they do not wish to be a “taxi service”. The possibility of repeated offences has been recognised elsewhere as requiring particular additional action to prevent people choosing to ignore the message behind the return of stray dogs. The law allows additional action, and if this proves inadequate, additional laws should be sought when evidence of the problem is reviewed and detailed.
- 12.1.25 The chairman of Ashbourne & District Animal Welfare Society is concerned that infringement of the present law requiring dogs to wear identification is common without evidence of enforcement. With less visible identity there is a risk that greater numbers will cease to comply. A central register must be kept up to date to be effective. A compulsory microchipping system may alienate the owners who are concerned about the costs of keeping their pets. Introducing a system of gradual progress has merits. Starting with puppies at the point of breeding and sale would allow the dog owning population to get used to the idea, and is less drastic than introducing a compulsory system directly. (Letter 14 April 2000.)
- 12.1.26 General advantages listed from the same respondents included, decrease in numbers of strays, lost or stolen dogs, nuisance, and kennel costs to Councils. Increase in welfare, trace and return rates. Notification of deaths to owners of dogs that may have been lost. Better animal warden service financing. Verification of parentage. Enabling disease monitoring. Increase in insured animals. Decrease in fraud, impulse buying, abandonment, and euthanasia. Identification of similar looking animals and those not cared for. No redress if the scheme was voluntary.

- 12.1.27 RSPCA say every £1 above database running costs which the licence fee raised would provide £11.7m assuming an 80% uptake for dogs and cats. This would help fund the animal warden service to increase its activity.
- 12.1.28 The Animal Health Trust says that proper identification of animals for pedigree purposes and the elimination of hereditary disease must link with DNA testing. The Kennel Club must ultimately make permanent identification of dogs a mandatory requirement for registration for breeding. The American KC is introducing compulsory DNA testing for stud dogs. Recent falsifications of pedigrees undermine the credibility and integrity of the studbook.
- 12.1.29 Hearing Dogs For Deaf People, Oxon, have around 600 dogs that they are in the process of microchipping. (Jan. 2000) at a cost of around £15 per dog. Owners also carry an ID card, which is laminated and holds a photo of the dog.
- 12.1.30 Petplan, insurance for pets, offers free lifetime membership of Petsafe, worth £12, when you take out a policy with them. The unique registration number on each tag relates directly to your contact information. It is surprising that insurance companies do not mandatorily require the animals they are insuring to be more permanently identifiable.

## **12.2 Cats**

- 12.2.1 Of the 5.1 million households with cats, 62.6% have one cat and the remainder have two or more. (PFMA.) The highest level of dog and cat ownership is amongst the 45-54 age group. Slightly more cats than dogs are put to sleep every year.
- 12.2.2 There is no legal requirement to identify cats and they are far less recognisable by neighbours as belonging to anybody in particular. There is an apparent lack of a link which would help non-owners to appreciate the role of the cat in society, and which would allow them to talk to owners about their own concerns. The cat remains a free spirit who goes to places unknown to its owner, while the owner steadfastly refuses to accept the benefit of considering the effects his cat might have on other people. Registration and identification should help in opening up this field of general concern, as well as offering the same benefits detailed for other species, in particular dogs.
- 12.2.3 Each year in Britain more than 10000 cats are maimed or killed after being shot with airguns. This figure is increasing (PDSA. Southern Daily Echo. Sat. Jan 27 2001). Identification of such victims would allow the owners to be notified, and for the uncertainty which surrounds such losses normally, to be reduced.
- 12.2.4 It is a possibility that shooting of cats is a reflection of the apparent lack of social responsibility on behalf of the owner, the natural instincts of the species, and the frustration of the affected neighbour who is unable to identify the culprit's owner to discuss joint concerns for improvement. An angry resident is believed to have poisoned 70 cats in one village because his flowerbeds were being ruined by cats (Times, May 20 2000).
- 12.2.5 A lost animal faces an outside world that is usually beyond its normal experience. Regular meals are not available. Food it receives will be different from its usual menu. The chances of

attack from other animals are increased. It may wander over local authority and police boundaries, decreasing its chances of being found. It may attempt to cross roads and be directly or indirectly involved in accidents. The potential for the animal incurring physical and mental distress under such circumstances should not be underestimated.

- 12.2.6 Whilst figures have not been found on the proportion of dogs killed on the roads, it is estimated that 12% of all pet cats in the UK are killed on the road (Rochlitz, 2000). The owners of these animals would more easily be notified if the animals were permanently identified.
- 12.2.7 In a bid to reunite a higher percentage of lost cats with their owners, Cats Protection has equipped 200 of its UK voluntary Branches with hand held scanners capable of detecting microchips in cats. The chief executive of CP said: “Chipping is a valuable aid to our rescue work, as it minimises the distress involved when a pet goes missing. A higher proportion of stray cats will be reunited with their owner, leaving valuable space in Shelters and Branches for unwanted and abandoned pets.” (Cats Protection Works Miracles With Microchip Moggies, [www.cats.org.uk/news/mchip.html](http://www.cats.org.uk/news/mchip.html)).
- 12.2.8 “Microchipping – Hi-tech Identification” (CP, Same web site), mentions the time consuming and frustrating detective work necessary to trace cats which have been handed in, sometimes with signs of a recent operation, wearing collars but no ID tag, or an ID barrel with the contents missing. All too often enquiries and local advertisements prove fruitless. It would be more satisfying if they could identify strays and return them to their owners.
- 12.2.9 Some of the ownership issues relating to cats include, failure to de-sex, failure to confine at night, attacks on wildlife, neighbourhood disputes (digging in gardens, stealing food, harassing neighbour’s pets, and spraying.) and the need for better education of cat owners.
- 12.2.10 Cats Protection, a major cats charity, is now operating a voluntary scheme on microchipping cats. Many thousands have been chipped and recorded on Pet-Log. RSPCA does microchipping of cats rehomed from its shelters.
- 12.2.11 Species such as cats, dogs and horses are also implicated as causal factors in traffic accidents, often as people swerve to avoid them. Whilst their contribution to human injury/fatalities may not be as great as other causes, such as drink driving, any reduction in accident frequency should be applauded.
- 12.2.12 The main cat charities felt that while their voluntary schemes were at a relatively early stage, it would not be beneficial to introduce a mandatory scheme.
- 12.2.13 Cat owners are frequently unaware of the whereabouts of their companion and do not know if it has been killed. Many local authorities pick up dead cats with refuse vehicles and they are unable to trace ownership to keep the owner in the picture. Identification would help reduce this extended period of concern.
- 12.2.14 Cats should not be seen as a lesser value companion than dogs. If identification will benefit dogs, then cats should be extended the same benefits.

- 12.2.15 If cats were identifiable, there would be less definitive action by persons affected deleteriously, and they would be able to track an owner rather than being forced into extreme action caused by frustration.

### **12.3 Horses**

- 12.3.1 The number of abandoned and seized ponies doubled to 60 across Wales in the past year (Times, 17 July 2000. p.11). They have been found tethered by the roadside or left on common land. Dozens are left to wander in the hills of Wales over winter, with nobody taking any interest in them until the spring. Horses escape every year and are the cause of many accidents involving motor vehicles. Some have recently been shot in order to avoid a serious road accident. Some local authorities run pounds to deal with the particular problems of horses in their area. With identification, owners who do not care for the welfare of their animals will be discouraged from temporary abandonment, while escapees will be traceable and the owner involved in recovery.
- 12.3.2 Customs and Excise figures show that the number of carcasses sold abroad has almost doubled in the past five years. Ponies that are less than 14.2 hands make up 70% of the market. Last year about twelve thousand pony and horse carcasses were sold to the French and the Belgians to be served up in fondues, stews and “horse tartar” .The Horse and Pony Rescue Association believe most people in this country would be appalled by this business. But traders claim it is unrealistic to believe that every 20-year-old horse will sell to a new home (Sunday Times. Aug 20. 2000.”Pony owners fear rise in meat trade”).
- 12.3.3 Registration may reduce the likelihood of a pet being used for food abroad. The outcome of continuing this trade will be the clear acceptance that what does happen is acknowledged as reasonable by all involved in the process. There would be costs to owners in following this change, but its very existence should make participants think through their intentions from the outset.
- 12.3.4 It was pointed out by respondents that transportation of live horses for slaughter should not be confused with the humane slaughter of horses, followed by their export as a legitimate product as chilled or frozen meat. Many semi-feral horses are specifically bred as a cash crop for the meat trade. Only a small number of horses are slaughtered through abattoirs. Under the recent Meat By-Product legislation the vast majority of horse carcasses can only be disposed of by knackers and hunts for incineration, rendering or feed (hounds and zoo animals). British legislation states that horses can only be exported if they are over £400 in value.
- 12.3.5 Agencies deal with significant numbers of horses where tethering is a particular problem. Compulsory identification of such horses could enable better connection to be made between owner and horse that would allow better control. There would be an advantage to enforcement officers if they were able to use fixed penalties, and be allowed to confiscate a horse in default, in cases of horse tethering which gave rise to problems.
- 12.3.6 Visible identification is regarded as important as a deterrent to theft. Slaughterhouse, sales yard and export ports are able to see visible identification. Visible marking aligned to

microchipping increases the care of persons involved in handling, and ascertains legal ownership more quickly and more thoroughly. Freeze marking is not liked by the industry and is not suitable for some horses.

- 12.3.7 ILPH (International League for the Protection of Horses.) say identification is advantageous for tracing abandoned animals, those straying, those involved in accidents or causing damage. Disputes over ownership would be easier to settle. Diseases may be controlled better. Insurance frauds could be deterred. Problem horses could be better identified, thereby reducing their travels from pillar to post. Veterinary histories could be traced and unsuitable purchases avoided.
- 12.3.8 The National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) is a grouping of 60 equine charities that expressed concern regarding the number of registration databases that exist at present. Weatherby's, Breed Society and competition databases will not be using the same number. Veterinary surgeon costs will add considerably to the process of identification
- 12.3.9 The New Forest ponies are mandatorily identified with owners' brands (over 1000 different marks) that allow the Verderers to trace owners of injured or distressed ponies. Other common land, such as Dartmoor or Bodmin moors present difficulties tracing owners.
- 12.3.10 The British Equestrian Trade Association's (BETA) 1999 survey estimated there were 900.000 equines in the UK. With ILPH owning 2000 equines they may face considerable initial cost. As with other animals there is a similarity of concern: indiscriminate breeding is a precursor to welfare problems; the "offender" would be the last to comply; rigorous enforcement necessary.
- 12.3.11 For horses the reasons given for needing registration are (<http://www.horseweb.com>) animal health and disease control; theft prevention (inc. Slaughter, "Custom" thefts, personal use, and horse laundering schemes.); natural disasters (floods, fires.); and fraud prevention, (shows and competitions, sales and auctions, breeding, racing, insurance.)
- 12.3.12 There are more distinct levels of value pertaining to horses. Existing systems of identification are in place where the value of the animal is high, or where the means of competition justifies it. How far this should be extended to other areas of horse ownership is open to debate.
- 12.3.13 Identification encourages responsible ownership and supply. It aids in raising standards and allows for stock improvement. Breeding controls will help with providing information on genetic defects and will ultimately indicate where diseases or physical defects may be approached to improve the stock quality.
- 12.3.14 Illegal importation may be monitored more closely. Over-breeding, illegal sales, and theft are more easily deterred where permanent identification is available.
- 12.3.15 Problem areas of tethering, and particular areas such as horse fairs and local geographical gatherings of horses are operated within lesser value arenas. The benefits of identification within this section of the community are where animal welfare benefits would be gained, but where enforcement and compliance would remain difficult.

- 12.3.16 On 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2002, DEFRA News Release 65/02 had Rural Affairs Minister, Alun Michael, announcing that all horses and ponies in England and Wales are to be given a unique registration number and a “passport” for life. This will implement European Commission Decision 2000/68 so that by 31 December 2003, all horses and ponies must have passports. The British Horse Industry Confederation supports this proposal. Beyond recording veterinary medicines in horses which may ultimately be used for human consumption, additional points indicated include,
- Reduction of over-breeding in pony areas (Brecon Beacons, New Forest, Dartmoor)
  - Lessen the incentive to keep poor quality meat in poor quality condition.
  - Help equine industry to use the breeding data to improve the quality of the British herd.  
(As per Netherlands, France & Germany) (See: [www.defra.gov.uk/news/2002/020214c.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2002/020214c.htm))



## DEBATE ABOUT A MANDATORY SCHEME

### 13.1 Advantages

- 13.1.1 If only some people comply via a voluntary scheme, they will be subsidising those who ignore the means for speedy animal recovery. The reduction of identified animals will lead to disinterest amongst enforcement and charitable organisations, with a resulting diminution in the willingness to look for microchips when strays are found.
- 13.1.2 Those who act in an irresponsible manner will not have any incentive to improve their behaviour. They will merely have to abandon their animal (as they do now), to absolve themselves of any duty of care should a voluntary scheme continue.
- 13.1.3 Many dogs are lost, rehomed, or put to sleep without effective policing being possible on those intent on dumping an animal they don't like. They are able to visit a rehoming organisation, which might still hold the animal they have discarded, in order to take home a different animal.
- 13.1.4 The lack of clarity regarding stray dog collection from the authorities means that it may be very difficult, and sometimes impossible, for those losing their companions to be able to trace them. Boundaries may be crossed without effort being made to inform those still searching for their animal. Police stations in an area may not know whether a stray is held by an adjoining station within the same area. Councils and police do not necessarily tell each other about lost dogs in their care. Fragmented activity means less chance to trace a lost animal.
- 13.1.5 It is believed that most owners want to find their lost animal, and they do not readily abandon them. The only way to help this cause is to have a centrally accessed database so that animals travelling a distance from home will still be identified. This increases the chances of survival and subsequent return to owner. This is of immense benefit to the welfare of the animal.
- 13.1.6 The most recent MORI survey carried out on behalf of the National Canine Defence League indicates that there is an apparent increase in the number of stray dogs. The existing voluntary efforts, which are considerable, are not always able to improve the situation (NCDL MORI survey, June 2000 p.4.).
- 13.1.7 The same report also indicates the increase from 7% in 1999, to 11% in 2000, of microchipped dogs returned to their owners. "There appears to be a link between the proportion of dogs rehomed and the possession of a scanner; far stronger is that not as many are destroyed. 11% of strays are put to sleep by authorities who possess a scanner, increasing to 25% among those without a scanner". This infers that the greater the spread of microchip usage, the better it will be for lost animals. A strong consideration for animal welfare.
- 13.1.8 Any voluntary scheme would reach a point where uptake would cease. If it were not mandatory, there would be no need for local authorities to provide microchip reading

equipment. There would be no enforcement. Incentive to participate would wane. The position obtaining with the previous licence system would re-occur.

- 13.1.9 The evidence provided for Television Licensing and for Vehicle Taxation indicated that percentage uptake is dependent upon active enforcement. Figures within 6-7% of full compliance were achievable given thorough enforcement.
- 13.1.10 Following 10 years of dog warden activity introduced by the Control of Pollution Act, it remains a national problem that stray dogs are costing the nation considerable sums of money (see “Costs” below). Present day figures are not varying much outside the addition of chipping benefits highlighted above. A new look is required to take fresh impetus into altering the status quo.
- 13.1.11 Amongst the reasons given for needing identification for horses are (<http://www.horseweb.com>) animal health and disease control; theft prevention (inc. Slaughter, “Custom” thefts, personal use, and horse laundering schemes.); natural disasters (floods, fires.); and fraud prevention, (shows and competitions, sales and auctions, breeding, racing, insurance.)
- 13.1.12 The cost of identification and registration has been compared to the cost of two weeks “keeping” for a dog. If this is not affordable, will the animal be properly cared for in the ordinary course of events? Doesn’t the protection offered by the ability to trace a lost animal far outweigh the minimal cost involved?

## **13.2 Disadvantages**

- 13.2.1 General disadvantages of mandatory registration given by respondents included costs, bureaucratic administrative systems, concerns over whether the irresponsible owner would be “caught” by the scheme, need for compatible identification systems, possible increase in abandonment, possibility of the need for more dog wardens - who might be more like police, and that it might deter ownership of pets.
- 13.2.2 The Control of Dogs Order 1992 requires that dogs be identifiable by the wearing of a collar and tag which is inscribed with the owner’s name and address. It was contended that this was neither complied with by the majority of dog keepers nor enforced by the Local Authorities, with only 35% of them actually prosecuting for offences under the order (NDWA Survey 1998)
- 13.2.3 It was contended that further legislation, namely a compulsory registration scheme, would not improve this situation.
- 13.2.4 A central register must be kept up to date to be effective. Previous systems have not demonstrated success in this area. People do not notify animal deaths, sales or changes of address.
- 13.2.5 A compulsory microchipping system may alienate the owners who are concerned about the costs of keeping their animals.

- 13.2.6 Compulsory introduction of a scheme suggests introduction at one time. This would be difficult, and introducing a scheme gradually has merits.
- 13.2.7 The same people who forget collar and tag requirements now will be asked to remember to update microchip information.
- 13.2.8 If dog wardens don't have the power to require name / address of keepers, or have the protection of "obstruction" laws, it will be difficult to enforce.
- 13.2.9 Access to database must be done in a way to help animal tracing, with authorised users being more widespread than at present.
- 13.2.10 Compulsory registration would enhance animal welfare, but if implementation and enforcement were the responsibility of District Councils, resource implications would be considerable. It is unlikely that government would fund this adequately, and many Councils would not have the spare capacity to fulfil their responsibilities.

**DEBATE ABOUT A DATABASE PROVISION**

- 14.1 The probability of further companies wishing to access the open marketplace with a simple database requirement, or with cheap imported chips that do not have proper quality control in place, gave rise to concerns that entrepreneurial advantage might ensue from an uncontrolled admission by any interested party.
- 14.2 This is not simply a database; it carries with it the responsibility to take actions beyond the purely routine if satisfactory service provision is to be made.
- 14.3 Proper controls must be exercised to ensure adequate protection of existing players who had endeavoured to comply with standards at cost to themselves, but who now faced the possibility of uncontrolled competition if safeguards are not quickly established. The dangers of flooding the market with sub-standard equipment for a quick profit, while leaving databases to pick up the pieces, should not be ignored.
- 14.4 Clarification of the effective enforcement by local authorities of the existing legislation would balance the objective view of both sides of this arrangement. We not only need to see the database works well, but also that councils carry out their obligations in as equal a way as is possible given their great diversity of constitution.
- 14.5 Actions needed to prevent the decline in live information require review. Movement of people, death of animals (and vice-versa), ability to hold information for two chips, etc must be included in database possibilities. Mailing entrants to keep the base active should be considered.

## DEBATE ABOUT COSTS

- 15.1 Price Waterhouse reported in July 1991 (Resource implications of ss 149-151 of the Environmental Protection Act (Dog Control), that the cost for a sample of 10 Councils covering a representative selection of various sizes of Council would be over £1 million. If extrapolated to all Councils, this would approximate to **£41 million**.
- 15.2 We do not know the number of wardens in this country. An approximate cost for 750 dog wardens would be around £21 million. The NDWA estimate 1200 employees providing services as a dog warden and a further 500 in managerial or supervisory roles. (Local Authority Dog / Animal Warden Services: A Report. Unpublished 2001). This would represent approximate costs of **£50 million**.
- 15.3 **The RSPCA / Kennel Club** Report provided by the Economists Advisory Group in 1998 (The costs of stray dogs in the UK and the need for a National Registration Scheme) set out a range of costs which exclude disease treatment and the cost to animal welfare organisations, and still reach a figure of **£60 million** per annum as the implied cost for stray dogs in the UK.
- 15.4 A MORI survey carried out for NCDL for 1999 found that “ local authorities across the country spent **£24.6million** last year on stray dogs.” The average amount spent by a council was about £56500 per year. There is no indication that officers responsible for finance completed the returns, and given the variables above, it is quite likely that the figures would benefit from a more rigorous examination. The fact that expenditure was reported as increasing by 22% over the previous year is more likely to indicate increasing reliability of financial review, rather than an actual increase in expenditure in this particular area.
- 15.5 Given that Local Authorities vary 100 fold in population and 400 fold in area, and given the above variables of cost considerations, it is not surprising that the cost range remains difficult for people to grasp. Survey details are not usually clear in pinpointing the accuracy required to give precise information.
- 15.6 As local authorities deal with 75% of stray dogs, and the police deal with 8.3% only, the hypothesised figures (£11.3m L/A: £15m Police) provided in section 10.4 of the main report, would seem unreasonable in placing police costs at a higher figure. With local authority costs between £25m and £60m per annum, it would seem feasible to prefer a figure of at least £30m on the evidence provided. It follows that the projections of £65 – 72m over a ten year period are underestimated
- 15.7 The PDSA were concerned about the cost of any mandatory scheme being heavily discounted for needy people. Currently, the Society uses Local Authority means tested benefits (Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit) to establish eligibility for its charitable service. A national pet register would provide specific advantages by assisting in the control of fraudulent abuse of the Society’s charitable service. It would help to identify the unscrupulous people who temporarily transfer ownership of their pets to persons who are eligible for assistance in order to avoid having to pay private veterinary fees.

- 15.8 Benefit fraud is soaring and is now costing the taxpayer as much as £7bn a year – a sum equivalent to 3p on the standard rate for every taxpayer (Sunday Times, May 14 2000). Frank Field MP recently obtained from Jeff Rooker, Minister for Welfare Reform, the fact that there are now 81million national insurance numbers in Britain – over 20 million more than the country’s population. DSS staff believe the amount of fraud detected is only a fraction of the true figure. It is therefore another cause for concern, that people presenting benefits documentation are likely to be well beyond the figures accurately reflecting those in need. Any suggestions for selectively relaxing fees will require detailed consideration.
- 15.9 “Responsibility” is the key word in animal welfare. Where a small fee is to be charged on an annual basis which keepers find hard to fund, one must question the ability of such keepers to be responsible for the lifetime feeding, caring and treatment of their pets
- 15.10 Using the figures prepared by the DETR report, which stated that dogs were held for the average period shown in the table, and allowing for the fact that local authorities only “ keep” dogs for seven days, it becomes apparent from the table that an average cost per authority is around £10 thousand per annum for kennelling dogs. There is an additional cost of around £1.3 thousand for euthanasia, not all of which will be borne by Councils.

Assume 301 dogs	Ave. days held	%	Number	Cols.2 x 4 “Dog Days” (L/A share)	Cost at £7 per day
Returned/ Reclaimed	2	48	144	288 (288)	2,016 (2,016)
Re-homed	30	22	66	1,980 (462)	13,860 (3,234)
Sent to shelter	30	16	48	1,440 (336)	10,080 (2,352)
Put to sleep	45	14	43	1,935 (301)	13,545 (2,107)
Totals		100	301	5,643 (1387)	39,501 (9,709)

Multiplying these figures by the number of Councils dealing with dogs (say 436), one arrives at costs of slightly over £4m for kennelling (0.6m “dog days”) and slightly over £0.5m for euthanasia in a year for the UK. The additional burden falling on shelters is almost £13m.

## DEBATE ABOUT THE USE OF REVENUE

- 16.1 Enforcement is essential for a scheme to operate effectively. Vehicle Excise Duty is enforced with the aid of publicity campaigns costing around £1m, and costs of £25m for staff and offices. Evasion rate is around 5-6% from approx. 29m vehicles. Television licences have an enforcement cost of £18m, with an evasion rate of 5.9% (BBC. July 2000).
- 16.2 One correspondent favoured the introduction of an independent body to implement the mandatory identification of animals, with statutory powers similar to the Danish dog register. In Denmark the scheme is based on an annual licence fee set by the DDR and approved by the Danish Government. If local authorities were used, their use of funds for dogs should be separated from all other funding. L/A's should provide a 24-hour service. Database operators should follow a Code of Practice, with an independent body set up to oversee and direct the activities of the central register (Mrs Bowers, Derbyshire).
- 16.3 The Council concurs with the DETR draft report in indicating the principle of likely expenditure savings that would ensue from identification and registration. Savings that do result from this activity should not disregard the need for education and improvement of animal training for the benefit of society. Dog Wardens are not required to obtain any specific training before carrying out their work at present. This is anomalous when considering their role. There should be an approved qualification to obtain before they practice as a Dog Warden.
- 16.4 It is important that some part of the revenue is allocated for educational purposes. Responsible pet ownership remains an important tenet of educational requirement. At present there is no need for councils to spend money on this service, and yet it could contribute substantially to the future improvement of attitude and standards in this country. The law should be reviewed so that the cost effective benefits of education are utilised within the overall control system offered by the introduction of identification.
- 16.5 Concerns were expressed about financial systems within local government that saw monies enter into one general pot. It is recognised as being outside the realms of this report, but it was thought important to raise the issue of ring-fencing monies for the specified purpose of educating pet owners about animal welfare issues. The benefits of even small courses for behaviour control are substantial and evident. Better-behaved pets will benefit their owners and the general public alike.
- 16.6 At the present time, Councils have a legislative requirement to deal with stray dogs. There has not been a similar demand for them to carry out education of animals/ keepers. Some Councils have therefore excluded education from their budgets because, when forced to cut their overheads, they seek to carry out only those duties that are compulsory. This is understandable in the circumstances prevailing, but it is missing the chance to be economic in the longer term. Animals that are well-behaved save on enforcement and ancillary costs.
- 16.7 Cash restricted local authorities may 'share' Dog Warden duties with existing staff, such as rodent control officers, in order to keep costs down. Awareness of likely legal costs, where

untrained staff effect inappropriate actions, should be fully considered before adopting this approach to temporary savings. Agreed training practices and relevant qualifications for staff dealing with animal welfare would be a useful gain from the appropriate use of revenue.

- 16.8 Education may be general, such as the Government's advisory leaflet on Dog Barking, or advice on Dog Fouling in order to improve upon issues of major public concern, or about Diseases and Dog Bites to improve public health and save expenditure involved on treatment. It may also be specific, such as setting up training courses in local areas.
- 16.9 Training courses require an agreed standard of content and should be introduced at varying levels of ability (basic, intermediate and advanced) on a national basis. There are often training clubs prepared to do this work locally, but they may be deterred by the lack of available facilities. Local authorities should encourage training by helping to provide a training centre, area or room where this good work may become established.
- 16.10 Part of the fee would pay for operation of the register including updating information through notification of changes of address, sale or death of an animal. Holiday addresses should also be part of the system. Use of the Internet for these purposes would encourage an up-to-date register.
- 16.11 The provision of facilities to benefit animal welfare (training courses, exercise areas, agility equipment) would be a positive action by those otherwise involved purely in enforcement.
- 16.12 Magistrates Courts should be allowed to send offenders on approved training courses as an improved and constructive penalty. Imprisonment is rarely used and continuous fines do not add to improving problems. DEFRA should include this proposal in its present review of animal welfare legislation.



**DEBATE ABOUT THE USE OF MICROCHIPS**

- 17.1 Evidence from an international survey conducted by The British Small Animals Veterinary Association (BSAVA) and the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), suggests that migration occurs at a rate of 0.00005% (Journal of Small Animal Practice, Vol. 41,p232.2000.)
- 17.2 A visible means of informing that the animal has been microchipped could be incorporated into the “collar and tag” requirement for dogs, which could also be made applicable to cats. A brand would serve this purpose in the case of horses. It has always been a consistent argument of identification that a visible sign must be used in tandem with other methods.
- 17.3 The need to increase the microchipping costs for horses by the involvement of veterinary surgeons appears to be disadvantageous.
- 17.4 There are regularised procedures, including sterilisation, for trained implanters to follow. This should minimise any risk of infection.
- 17.5 Incompatibility was an initial concern but this matter has now been addressed by laying down ISO standards (11784/5 in 1996). These standards are adhered to by several manufacturers. SMART technology has enabled the development of readers which can read microchip-held data coded in 13 languages and a single reader can recognise over 6,000 codes.

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## GLOSSARY

**'Approved Officer':** A person appointed by a District Council to fulfill the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This may be any officer and does not have to be a dog warden.

**Biometrics:** The application of statistical analysis to biological data.

**CAWC:** Companion Animal Welfare Council. (See par. 1.1 of Report for detail.) An independently selected committee that conducts studies into the welfare, care and treatment of companion animals.

**DEFRA:** Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs - a new Government department which has assumed responsibility for the two named below.

**DETR:** The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

**MAFF:** The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food

**DNA Profiling:** DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) is one of the building blocks of living animals, forming the chromosomes. Each chromosome contains genetic instructions for characteristics of the animal. The chances of similar patterns are remote. Dogs have approximately 100,000 different genes that are arranged along the length of the DNA molecule, rather like beads on a piece of string. Embedded within each dogs DNA is a unique DNA signature commonly referred to as its DNA profile that can be used for identification. Thus the DNA profile not only uniquely identifies the dog, but also carries information as to its parents. (Kennel Club submission to Dog Identification Working Group, 17 June 1999)

**Euthanasia:** The process of bringing about a gentle and easy death.

**ISO:** The International Organisation for Standardisation is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies, such as the British Standards Institution. They form technical committees of each member body interested in a subject, and produce guidelines on technical topics that only become accepted when approved by at least 75% of the member bodies casting a vote.

**MORI:** An independent market research organisation that is bound by the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

**Non-permanent identification:** The addition of a collar and tag which may hold information regarding the animal, but which is easily removable.

**Permanent identification:** Marking of animals by a variety of methods, such as ear notching, branding, tattooing, or microchipping. Sampling the DNA of an animal, or identifying the retinal vascular pattern, are other methods.

**Stray dog:** An animal that is outside the confines of its owner's property, and outside the effective control of its owner or keeper, if it has one.

