Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), has clarified that dogs with docked tails may take part in all agility trials in England and Wales, including those where the public have paid for admission. There is no change to the position in Scotland where legally docked dogs have never been banned from events where the public pay to enter.

The clarification confirms that 'legally docked dogs' taking part in agility qualify for an exemption from a general ban on the showing of docked dogs. It means that working dogs do not have to be excluded from the various agility shows which are held within larger events such as country fairs, where the public pay for admission. They are also able to participate in agility finals at events such as Crufts, Olympia, and Discover Dogs.

The Animal Welfare Act banned the docking of dogs' tails after 6 April 2007 (after 28 March 2007 in Wales, and 30 April 2007 in Scotland). In England and Wales (but not Scotland), docking is still allowed for certain types of working dog – essentially spaniels, terriers and hunt, point and retrieve (HPR) breeds – if carried out by a vet who has been given specific evidence that the dogs will be used for certain types of work, primarily as gundogs.

The Act also banned the showing of dogs with 'legally docked' tails at shows in England and Wales where members of the public pay an admission charge (in Scotland there is a total ban on docking but no prohibition on showing dogs with docked tails). However there is an exemption (in England and Wales) if the dog is
shown ‘only for the purpose of demonstrating their working ability’, even where the public pay an entrance charge.

The clarification from Defra reads: ‘As you are aware, there is a ban on the showing of docked dogs at events to which members of the public are admitted on payment of a fee, however, there are exemptions from this ban. The ban does not apply to certified docked working dogs being shown only for the purpose of demonstrating their working ability (for example, in agility trials). A certified docked working dog cannot be shown for any other purpose.’

Dogs which were docked earlier than 6 April 2007 (or the equivalent dates in Wales and Scotland) are unaffected by the legislation and can be shown at any type of show. Illegally docked dogs may not be entered in any Kennel Club event.

ENDS
30th September 2009
[321.09]
For further press information, images or interview requests please contact:
The Kennel Club Press Office
020 7518 1008
press.office@thekennelclub.org.uk
www.thekennelclub.org.uk