

## **Note to the Agility Liaison Council**

### **AHSWG Progress Report – May 2015**

#### **Meta-analysis of Research into Jumping Kinematics (Report due December 2015)**

The Sub-Group discussed preparation of the meta-analysis on jumping kinematics to be completed by the end of this year. It was agreed the report would provide an update on the lines of enquiry relating to jumping kinematics as noted in the January 2015 progress report. The report will aim to summarise the research already available, provide an update on the completed and on-going research and to summarise what conclusions could be drawn from the information then available. (It was likely that the report would be multi-sectioned in nature as there would be separate sections relating to the studies being carried out by Nottingham Trent University and the Royal Veterinary College).

It was accepted that there were many variables involved and that it would not be possible for research to provide a simple answer to the questions currently being asked by a section of the agility community regarding jump heights.

#### **Jumping Kinematics Study**

Data collection for this study was carried out as planned in April under the supervision of Dr Thilo Pfau at the Royal Veterinary College. (The research is being funded with the support of from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust.)

#### **Funding for Research Projects**

The Sub-Group highlighted the lack of adequate funding available to it. It was recommended that this could be addressed by ring-fencing a sum of the money donated to the Kennel Club Charitable Trust for the purposes of research by the Sub-Group into 'Activities' health and welfare issues. It was suggested this should be sufficient to allow research into two projects each year and allow the Sub-Group to progress its work more effectively.

(Note: The Chairman of the AHSWG has made this recommendation to the General Committee via the Activities Sub-Committee and it is now under consideration).

#### **Incident Reports**

It was noted that the Agility Liaison Council had requested that incident forms should be provided for judges at all shows. The Sub-Group was in agreement with this policy and accordingly it was agreed that a modified (more concise) version of the form used at the Festival would be made available for judges at all agility shows. A revised draft will be presented and reviewed by the Sub-Group at its next meeting. However, in the meantime the current form could be used by show societies if they so wished.

It was suggested that incident surveys should be instigated in the other activity disciplines such as Heelwork to Music and Obedience to ascertain how many dogs were taking part. It was suggested that such surveys should be carried out on weekends in the summer where a number of events were taking place in the particular discipline, noting the number of dogs taking part.

Such surveys would enable the sub group to identify what constituted a 'normal' or 'acceptable' level of risk. Risks identified from the incident surveys could then be assessed and where examples of 'unacceptable' risk were identified these could be more easily categorised and addressed.

### **Canine Sport Science Seminar**

The Sub-Group noted an update on plans for the Canine Sports Science Seminar to be held on 1 November 2015. It considered ways in which the Seminar could be publicised, noting that it was advertised on the Kennel Club website and publications, and via the Liaison Councils.

### **KC Code of Practice for the Management & Training of Dogs Taking Part in Canine Activities**

The Sub-Group noted the views of the Obedience Liaison Council, the Agility Liaison Council, and the Activities Sub-Committee at their meetings held on 21 January 2015, 22 January 2015 and 19 March 2015 respectively regarding the document. The KCAI Board had also provided feedback prior to the meeting.

The feedback was wide ranging and varied and it was agreed this should be addressed at the next meeting. At the same time the Sub-Group will also consider re-titling the document as 'Guidelines' instead of 'Code of Practice'.

### **Impact of Colour of Agility Obstacles**

The Sub-Group noted that the Agility Liaison Council had discussed this issue at its meeting on 22 January 2015 but did not consider itself qualified to address the issue and referred the matter to the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group for further consideration.

The Sub-Group reviewed existing literature on the subject and accepted that colours of contrast to the human eye may not be perceived in the same way by dogs. However, it is not possible for the Sub-Group to make recommendations about the colour or colours of obstacles without more specific evidence.

The Sub-Group agreed to adopt the issue as it considered that it warranted further detailed investigation. (It was noted that Nottingham Trent University was carrying out related research about the design and placement of jump poles and this could provide some supporting information in due course). This issue has now been formally adopted by the Sub-Group and will be investigated as and when the necessary resources can be found.

### **Impact Absorbing Materials - the See Saw**

The Sub-Group noted the contents of a recent magazine article that had been brought to its attention. The article suggested that some form of impact absorbing material should be placed at the end of the See Saw as this may have some long-term benefits. (It was noted the Agility Liaison Council had rejected a similar proposal in 2001 based on a short research study that had been done then into the use of impact absorbing materials).

Concerns were expressed about the magazine article because it did not appear to have been peer reviewed, and the conclusions were not considered to be entirely logical. It was also noted that the surface on which the See Saw was placed would affect its performance, and if shock-absorbing material was used, its effects may vary over time and in different conditions and so may not be consistent.

It was agreed that no further action was necessary at present. However, it was agreed that the issue should be referred to the Agility Liaison Council to decide whether it wished the Sub-Group to undertake further investigation. If so the matter would be placed on the Sub-Group's list of issues to be prioritised and dealt with in due course.

Steve Croxford, Chairman, Activities Health & Welfare Sub Group