

# **CFDC POLICIES**

## *California Federation of Dog Clubs' Policy Statements*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following are CFDC policy statements. They are based in large part upon the Legislation Policies of the American Kennel Club. We endorse the following AKC Legislation Policies as stated in the 3-95 issue of The American Kennel Club Policy Manual.

Pure-Bred Dog Rescue  
Dog Auctions  
Breeding Restrictions  
Canine Population  
Use of Dogs in Sporting and Competition Activities  
"Dangerous Dog" Control Legislation  
Proper Care and Humane Treatment of Dogs  
"Puppy Mills" and Sale of Puppies Through Pet Shops  
Animal Terrorism  
Enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act  
The Right to Keep and Enjoy Dogs  
Dog Fighting  
Use of Dogs for Assistance and Service  
Spaying and Neutering  
Pure-Bred vs. Mixed Breed Dogs  
Use of Animals in Research  
Tail Docking  
Ear Cropping

### **ANIMAL WELFARE**

The California Federation of Dog Clubs supports animal welfare. Animal welfare is the concept that people should treat animals in a kindly manner, protect them and prevent them from suffering. We support the definition on animal protection as defined in the Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association, JAVMA, Vol.196, No.1, January 1, 1990 which states: "all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and when necessary, humane euthanasia."

### **PURE-BRED DOG RESCUE**

The California Federation of Dog Clubs supports and encourages the effort by clubs, organizations and individuals to rescue adoptable pure-bred dogs from animal shelters, from owners who can no longer care for their dogs in a responsible manner, or strays found wandering at large. CFDC encourages all such groups or individuals, after exhausting all possible means to contact the breeder of such animals, to spay or neuter all adoptable pure-bred dogs prior to placing them with a responsible owner.

### **DOG AUCTIONS**

The California Federation of Dog Clubs strongly opposes disposing of dogs by offering them as prizes or giveaways in auctions, raffles, contests or promotional events. Many

animals acquired in this manner end up in shelters after the novelty of ownership has worn off. The acquisition of a dog should be an informed and educated decision on the part of the owner to be, not the result of a game. Remember, a dog is for life.

### **BREEDING RESTRICTIONS**

The California Federation of Dog Clubs has always been concerned with the problem of euthanizing healthy adoptable dogs. The CFDC believes this problem results from irresponsible owners, inadequate animal control and the irresponsible breeding and marketing practices of those who do not emphasize proper care or owner responsibility.

There will always be animals which cannot be placed in homes because of extenuating circumstances, i.e., extreme old age, owner-requested euthanasia, disease, irreparable injuries, aggressive behavior, etc. However, when these unadoptable animals are euthanized they artificially inflate euthanasia numbers.

In many cases, euthanasia rates are a result of inconvenient and limited shelter and staff hours available to the public seeking to adopt an animal. Adoption can also be deterred by severely restrictive adoption policies that must be met by a prospective owner.

The CFDC strongly supports and actively promotes a wide range of programs to educate the public about responsible breeding practices and the responsibilities of pet ownership. We endorse and encourage reasonable and enforceable laws that protect the welfare, health and well being of dogs. The CFDC does not approve of the concept of breeding permits. Such restrictions take away the rights of breeders and owners who take their responsibilities seriously and who contribute to animal welfare at a local and national level.

A large percentage of the 137 plus AKC recognized breeds are relatively rare and endangered. The rare breeds have only a limited number of specimens in the total canine population. Approximately 80 of the 137 plus breeds register less than 500 dogs per year. These 80 breeds are so rare that if they were wild breeds, they would be protected by the Endangered Species Act as either endangered or threatened species. Therefore, responsible pure-bred dog breeders are domestic animal preservationists. Without planned breeding programs, these rare breeds would be in danger of extinction.

Domestic animal preservationists are those responsible breeders who perpetuate and protect the heritage and desirable physical and personality traits of non-wild animal species through selective mating of pedigreed animals within recognized breeds along with the official registry of their offspring.

Breeding permits are discriminatory against hobby breeders as well as specific breeds of dogs. Specifically the rare breeds and their owners. Toy breeds commonly produce one to three puppies, while larger canine breeds may produce 8 to 12 puppies. The number of litters produced does not determine either the quality of care or the responsibility factor of the owner. Responsible breeders can raise several litters, giving them the highest quality of care, seeing that each of the offspring is placed in well-researched homes and

to responsible pet buyers on spay/neuter contracts. An irresponsible breeder may raise only one litter in squalid conditions, with poor care, no attention to preventing the breeding of animals with genetic defects, no concern as to the qualifications of buyers, and no spay/neuter contract.

#### CANINE POPULATION

The California Federation of Dog Clubs recognizes that there is a problem of unwanted dogs in many communities in California. This problem is the result of irresponsible ownership. Breeding done accidentally, due to the dogs running loose, and breeding to teach the children the "miracle of birth" and the marketing of dogs by "commercially" motivated people coupled with a lack of understanding among the general public about the responsibilities of dog ownership are major contributors to the problem.

Families that want to use dogs to teach the "miracle of birth" should fulfill their responsibility to their children by showing them the facts of death - let them also witness euthanasia. Life is precious; there are plenty of videos available to teach the "miracle of life" without creating more unwanted dogs.

CFDC believes that breeding programs should only be undertaken responsibly for the purpose of improving the breed and that puppies should be placed only in homes where owners are committed to responsible dog ownership. Responsible pure-bred dog breeders are domestic animal preservationists. We are opposed to the production of dogs by "breeders" who do so without regard to the quality of the dogs they produce and without accepting responsibility for placing puppies in homes where owners understand and are prepared to undertake their commitment to responsible dog ownership.

CFDC considers the euthanasia of adoptable dogs abhorrent. We believe euthanasia should be employed only as a last resort when all reasonable efforts to place adoptable dogs have failed. We believe the goal of all responsible breeders and dog fanciers should be to eliminate the need for euthanizing adoptable dogs through educating the public and breeders about long term commitments and responsibilities.

There will always be animals which cannot be placed in homes because of extenuating circumstances, i.e., extreme old age, owner-requested euthanasia, disease, irreparable injuries, aggressive behavior, etc. However, these unadoptable animals artificially inflate euthanasia numbers.

In many cases, euthanasia rates are a result of inconvenient and limited shelter and staff hours available to the public seeking to adopt an animal. In addition severely restrictive adoption policies that must be met by a prospective owner can deter adoption.

Two major deterrents to adoption are laws which limit the number of pets per household and pet forbiddance in rental housing.

As a result of breeder education there has been a steady downward trend in the number of pure-bred dogs registered each year with the American Kennel Club. AKC has been

removing the registration privileges from anyone convicted of cruelty to animals or in violation of registration regulations - this action has removed the source of many unwanted dogs.

There has been a steady year by year downward trend in both nation wide and state wide euthanasia rates over the past 25 years due to increased responsible ownership brought about by education of the dog buying public. This downward trend has been occurring without legislation and even though the human population has been increasing.

#### USE OF DOGS IN SPORTING AND COMPETITION ACTIVITIES

The California Federation of Dog Clubs encourages and strongly supports the interaction and mutual enjoyment of man and dog in sporting activities such as hunting and field trials, in working circumstances such as herding, tracking, and pulling, and in competitive events such as dog shows, obedience trials, and other performance tests. We believe dogs should be properly cared for and humanely trained, and not pushed beyond reasonable limits for which they were bred. We oppose competitive events that test or encourage aggressive behavior of dogs towards persons or other dogs, such as dog fighting and so-called "protection" training.

#### "DANGEROUS DOG" CONTROL LEGISLATION

The California Federation of Dog Clubs fully supports the adoption of reasonable, enforceable, non-discriminatory laws to govern the ownership of dogs. CFDC believes that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs and that laws should impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners and establish a well-defined procedure for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous which includes, if necessary, the destruction of such animals. Such legislation should not single out specific breeds or phenotypic classes of dogs.

#### PROPER CARE AND HUMANE TREATMENT OF DOGS

Dog owners bear a special responsibility to their canine companions to provide proper care and humane treatment at all times. Proper care and humane treatment includes an adequate and nutritious diet, clean water, clean comfortable living conditions, regular veterinary care, kind and responsive human companionship, and training in appropriate behavior. We do not believe dogs should be kept in circumstances where all of these needs cannot be adequately fulfilled. Anyone convicted of charges of animal cruelty to a canine will have all privileges suspended by the American Kennel Club.

#### "PUPPY MILLS" AND SALE OF PUPPIES THROUGH PET SHOPS

The California Federation of Dog Clubs endorses breeding of dogs by responsible breeders for the purpose of improving breeds of pure-bred dogs. We oppose random, large scale breeding of dogs for commercial purposes. We believe all breeders bear a responsibility to assure that those who purchase their stock understand and are capable of carrying out their responsibilities as pet owners. We are opposed to the impulse marketing of puppies to unwitting buyers. We believe the solution of the problem of random, large scale breeding for commercial purposes is two-fold. First, scrupulous enforcement of the Federal Animal Welfare Act, and state and local regulation governing

the humane care of animals. Second, enactment and enforcement of reasonable consumer protection laws for dog buyers. We further recommend and support education of the public to avoid impulse buying of dogs and to encourage the purchase of puppies from responsible breeders.

#### **ANIMAL TERRORISM**

The California Federation of Dog Clubs abhors acts of violence against dogs, dog owners, kennels and research facilities committed by those who object to the keeping of animals. We respect the right to express and advocate personal opinions in lawful ways; however, we do not condone illegal actions such as the "liberation" of dogs, or destruction of property. We have the right as Americans to own, enjoy, engage in performance activities, and exhibit responsibly cared for pets without interference. We also have the right to conduct responsible breeding programs without interference.

#### **ENFORCEMENT OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT**

The Federal Animal Welfare Act administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is intended to regulate commercial breeders, dealers and caretakers of dogs. USDA recently issued new regulations strengthening the standards for humane care and treatment of dogs and other animals by persons regulated under the Act. The California Federation of Dog Clubs supports increasing the number of USDA enforcement personnel dealing with commercial dog operations and we also support strong enforcement of the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act.

#### **THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND ENJOY DOGS**

The human-canine bond pre-dates recorded history. Since the dawn of civilization, man has enjoyed the companionship and assistance of dogs. Dog ownership has existed in all cultures, races, climates and economic situations. The dog as a species exists only in close proximity to human settlement.

The California Federation of Dog Clubs strongly endorses the right to own, keep and breed dogs in a responsible and humane manner. We are convinced that responsible dog ownership can be compatible with virtually any living environment. We support responsible pet ownership, for example by residents of senior citizen and government subsidized housing facilities.

CFDC recognizes the special obligation of dog owners not only to their pets but to their neighbors and society. We support "curbing" and clean up ordinances, leash laws and other regulations designed to ensure that dogs and their owners do not become a nuisance or a threat to public health and safety.

We believe that people should be allowed to own as many dogs as they can responsibly care for. We oppose artificial limits on the number of pets a person may own. We believe that neighborhood problems arising from irresponsible dog ownership such as pet odor and noise should be addressed through strict enforcement of nuisance ordinances. Presently there is adequate legislation covering nuisances and risks to public health and safety.

Laws that criminalize pet ownership based on numbers do not address the need to control nuisances or provide for the health and safety of residents.

Pet limits are difficult to enforce without increased presence of pet licensing to prevent cross-referencing of license records. This increased control presence sets up an adversarial relationship between the animal control agency and the responsible pet owners. When this adversarial relationship is removed responsible pet owners are the strongest supporters of animal control. If the limits are enforced only upon complaint, it further erodes confidence in legislative bodies and leads to "spite" complaints.

Numbers of pets owned by an individual have no relationship to nuisances. A person with one dog that runs loose or barks at night is a greater nuisance than a person with a dozen dogs that are quiet, clean, and kept at home.

Limiting people to five dogs (or less) puts an unreasonable strain on people who raise show dogs, compete in performance trials, participate in canine rescue operations, foster dogs for service dog organizations, participate with therapy dogs in hospitals, etc. and leads to those responsible dog owners leaving the community.

#### Legal Background on Unlimited Pet Ownership

*Kadash vs City of Williamsport*: "What is not an infringement upon public safety and is not a nuisance cannot be made one by legislative fiat and then prohibited. Even legitimate legislative goals cannot be pursued by means which stifle fundamental personal liberty when the goals can be otherwise more reasonably achieved. "

The Commonwealth Court in the State of Pennsylvania recently struck down a county limit on the number of animals a resident can own. In so deciding, the court found that ordinances regulating nuisances must define the existence of a nuisance and establish that an ordinance protects the community from such nuisance. The law limiting pet ownership exceeded the county's authority, according to the court, because it did not specify why the presence of more than five pets in a household qualifies as a nuisance or a risk to public health and safety.

#### DOG FIGHTING

The California Federation of Dog Clubs unequivocally opposes the "sport" of dog fighting and the breeding and/or training of dogs for fighting. We support state laws making any form of participation in organized dog fights a felony. We oppose the training of dogs for aggressive behavior toward other dogs and people in all circumstances except by recognized law enforcement agencies under carefully supervised conditions.

#### USE OF DOGS FOR ASSISTANCE AND SERVICE

The California Federation of Dog Clubs strongly supports the training and use of dogs to provide assistance and service to humans. Dogs provide valuable service as seeing eye, hearing, therapy, handicapped assistance, drug, bomb, and arson detection, search and rescue dogs, and dogs for tracking and locating missing persons and fugitives. This

association of man and dog is one modern day manifestation of the age old relationship between man and dog that gives rise to the adage "Man's Best Friend." We oppose those who seek to define the assistance and service dogs provide to mankind as exploitive, and encourage the continuation and further development of use of dogs for these purposes.

#### SPAYING AND NEUTERING

The California Federation of Dog Clubs encourages pet owners to spay or neuter their dogs as a responsible means to prevent accidental breeding resulting in unwanted puppies. Spaying and neutering are simple, safe surgical procedures that have no adverse effect on the health and temperament of the dog.

CFDC encourages breeders to breed only for the improvement of the breed and only when the produce of the breeding can be assured proper homes and care. CFDC recommends that breeders encourage puppy purchasers to have their pets spayed or neutered to prevent accidental breeding and to avoid breeding merely to produce puppies or to have their children witness the "miracle of birth."

#### PURE-BRED VS. MIXED BREED DOGS

For thousands of years, man has bred strains of dogs with desired characteristics and/or abilities and instincts to perpetuate and enhance these characteristics. Pure-bred dogs breed true to type, i.e., their offspring are relatively predictable in appearance, temperament and instinct.

Various breeds of pure-bred dogs have appeared and disappeared throughout history. The American Kennel Club currently (7/95) recognizes and includes in its stud book 137 breeds. Various dog registries throughout the world recognize more than 400 pure breeds. Some of these are of relatively recent origin, while others have existed for centuries.

A large percentage of the AKC recognized breeds are relatively rare as there are only a limited number of specimens in the total canine population. They are so rare that if they were wild breeds they would be protected by the Endangered Species Act as either threatened or endangered species.

Many mixed breed dogs and dogs of indeterminate breeding are capable of providing excellent canine companionship and in some cases even human service and assistance, just as pure-bred dogs do. However neither the appearance nor genetic characteristics of mixed breed dogs are predictable, nor can they be perpetuated.

The belief that mixed breed or mongrel dogs are more vigorous, healthy, or well-adjusted than properly bred pure-bred dogs is a myth. The choice of a pure-bred dog permits the prospective dog owner to select the size, appearance, disposition and instincts that the owner desires with assurance that a puppy purchased from a responsible breeder will possess those characteristics.

#### USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH

The California Federation of Dog Clubs recognizes the invaluable contributions to both

human and veterinary medical knowledge that have resulted from medical research on animal subjects. We believe that all efficacious alternatives to the use of animal subjects should be explored before using animal subjects, that the value of research results should clearly merit use of animal subjects, and that standards of humane care and treatment of animals should be scrupulously observed. Further, we believe strongly that users of animals for research bear full responsibility for ascertaining the source of their animals, and for assuring that suppliers comply with Federal, state and local regulations.

#### TAIL DOCKING

The California Federation of Dog Clubs supports those parent breed clubs which permit tail docking in their Standards. Tail docking is done for both health and cosmetic reasons. Tail docking is normally done when the puppies are a few days old, before the nerves are mature enough to register pain.

Some Terriers which "go to ground" require the docked tail to provide a firm handle to grasp to remove them from a burrow. Some breeds, such as Boxers, Dobermans and Rottweilers are docked so that an intruder does not have a tail to hold on to. Hunting breeds such as Cockers and Springers are docked to avoid serious and painful tail injury when hunting in bramble thickets. Many docked tail breeds, such as the spaniels, are severe tail wagers - their tails would be susceptible to injury as they beat fences and any other objects during the normal course of a day.

#### EAR CROPPING

The California Federation of Dog Clubs supports those parent breed clubs which permit ear cropping in their Standards. Ear cropping is done for both health and cosmetic reasons. Some croppings are done to present a more formidable appearance. Some croppings increase the air circulation and thus prevent ear infections. Some breeders, in those breeds where ear cropping is traditional, do not crop pet puppies.



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