

P-04-555 Stop the unethical and draconian proposed compulsory micro chipping of dogs – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 27.11.14.

Dear petition panel,

Thank you for sending on the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food's correspondence. It seems that the Minister has not yet grasped the points that have been previously sent regarding all the major flaws in the compulsory microchipping petition. I'll reply as briefly as possible to her points, with the Minister's points marked out in bold, and hope that this will once more be of constructive help in demonstrating why I believe this proposed bill is flawed.

Ms Evans states that microchipping will improve animal welfare through more responsible ownership.

As explained in my previous reply, microchipping will not improve animal welfare or encourage more responsible ownership. It will very likely actually physically harm the animal and increase its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits. It will also likely drive illegal breeding underground creating more harm to dogs and the public in general.

The Minister mentions that having a reliable method of identifying dogs and reuniting them with their owners should contribute significantly to improving dog welfare.

The present methods of identifying dogs through a collar and tag and/or tattoo works perfectly well without causing harm to the dog and means no extra costs to dog owners, the Welsh Government or Local Authorities. As previously mentioned, microchipping will very likely do the opposite of improving the welfare of the dog. Microchipping will increase the likelihood that the animal will be physically harmed and increase its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits.

The Minister mentions that there are additional benefits in identification beyond the benefit of reunification as microchipping will contribute to the traceability of dogs produced out of commercial breeding kennels, facilitating the identification of owners where powers under the antisocial behaviour, crime and policing act 2014 have to be used.

The same answer as above applies – the present methods of identifying dogs through a collar and tag and/or tattoo work perfectly well without causing harm to the dog and means no extra costs to dog owners/breeders, the Welsh Government

or Local Authorities. As stated above, microchipping will very likely do the opposite of improving the welfare of the dog, potentially physically harming the animal and increasing its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits.

Additionally it will also likely drive illegal breeding underground creating more harm to dogs in general (it has already been established that microchipping will not stop dogs being harmed and will not make dangerous dogs any less dangerous in any way whatsoever)

As mentioned, the Minister admits that microchipping in some laboratory animal has led to cancerous tumour formation, meaning that microchipping has been shown to increase cancer risk.

As well as the unethical and intrusive factors surrounding the compulsory microchipping of animals, this admission alone should prevent both the Minister for Farming and Food and the Welsh government from carrying on with this microchipping plan under the basic scientific precautionary principle. If millions of dogs have been micro chipped as the Minister suggest, it is simply not yet known how the microchips will affect the health of these animals in the long term. I would be very grateful if the Minister could provide information as to where these millions of microchipped dogs are and what long term studies are being conducted on their health.

As also previously stated, under this proposed bill, the dog and owners' details will also be registered on an authorised commercial database, providing authorities with yet more information about people's whereabouts and activities at a time when civil liberty groups are campaigning against increased invasions of privacy.

And as pointed out in the previous reply, the government consultation responses (Question 1, page 11), showed that in a 2009 Welsh local authorities survey regarding microchipping, only seven authorities responded from the 12 asked (not all 22 authorities were asked for reasons unknown). A similar unclear picture can be seen with the responses of Welsh vets although many of the veterinary corporations and dog charities that are in favour of dog chipping also stand to benefit from their association with the scheme.

ChipMeNot (<http://www.chipmenot.org.uk/default.asp>) also point out that the intrusive microchipping procedure means responsible pet owners have to risk the health of their animal in a futile act that might well be in breach of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. As evidence emerges that chips can cause cancer and other illnesses, it might be presently possible to prosecute those who implant chips for

causing unnecessary suffering to animals. ChipMeNot states that according to The Animal Welfare Act 2006 [7] Section 4(3)(b), rather troublingly, if chipping becomes compulsory, any suffering will be state sanctioned and as a result, those who implant chips will have immunity from prosecution and cannot be prosecuted. In other words, owners and chip manufacturers will be allowed to potentially freely harm animals.

It would be astonishing and very worrying if the Welsh Government ignored the basic scientific precautionary principle in regards to the health risks of microchipping and carried on with this bill. As I hope I've shown, there isn't overwhelming support for this bill at all by the general public or by official bodies and groups. People in general have also simply not been made fully aware of the health risks, or indeed of the pointlessness of this draconian and unethical bill. For Ms Evans to admit that evidence shows that microchips causes tumours in animals whilst going ahead with this bill goes against all scientific precautionary principles recognised internationally and could seriously damage the international reputation of the Welsh Government and it's members. I would urge Ms Rebecca Evans the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food to make sure that she adheres to these scientific precautionary principles and the ethics involved in general, and rejects this bill outright.

G.Meredith