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The creation of the Doping and Medication Advisory Panel has brought a wind of change blowing through the corridors of power. Changes have taken place in the field of medicine usage in our sport which, relative to the customary sedate pace of progress in the greyhound industry, appear cataclysmic. There is much to applaud here.

On March 23rd this year the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, in conjunction with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, announced a new protocol which would permit the use of norethisterone as an oestrus suppressant in race bitches. This is a welcome recognition that there may be some substance to the widely-held perception that progestagen oestrus suppressants are unsuitable for use in the racing greyhound. It is recognition too of the potential unwanted side effects and welfare concerns surrounding the use of androgens to suppress heat and the first sign of the probable phasing out of such anabolic agents in racing greyhounds. That said, much of the evidence for the safe and efficacious use of norethisterone in greyhounds is anecdotal, and that that which does have a scientific basis is drawn from studies involving small numbers of bitches and carried out nearly forty years ago. If the V.M.D is happy to accept that norethisterone could be reasonably used under the cascade when other canine licenced drugs are thought to be unsuitable then what other medications could also be so used if similar standards were to be applied? The prescribing cascade may be something of a chore at times but it has served the profession well over the years. Now some might see it as being overriden or set aside in the interests of political expediency. The genii has been let out of the bottle here, and it may not be so easily confined in the future.

The concept of a notional medicines box, a list of medications which could be used in greyhounds around the time of racing without becessitating their withdrawal from competition, has also been mooted of late. This too must be a welcome forward step. Surely the application of a topical styptic to a broken dew claw can be done without compromising the welfare of the afflicted dog or the integrity of the race in which he is due to compete? Further reflections might lead readers to conclude however that there are relatively few medications which might reasonably be used in such situations. At present drug control policy in the G.B.G.B sector is pretty black and white. A move from an almost drug free sport to one in which rather more drugs are allowed in some circumstances may be fraught with danger and even the first steps down that road will likely prove hard to retrace. Pandora’s box is not lightly opened.

This long-overdue, and it is hoped long-awaited, edition of the Society’s newsletter is rather different from any other, being in the form more or a collage or scrapbook than a conventional journal. This is not simply a matter of laziness on the part of the editorial staff. Partly this is so as to convey important information about significant changes in the working lives of greyhound industry vets as rapidly as possible. Perhaps more importantly it is to permit each and every S.G.V. member to read the relevant documents in their original form and form their own opinion of the validity of the arguments being advanced here without any emphasis or spin being superimposed upon them. What is important here is that the membership at the coalface reaches a consensus on these crucial matters, not that they more or less willingly accept a diklat from on high. In unity lies strength, and lone voices crying the wilderness oft go unheard.
THE USE OF NORETHISTERONE TO SUPPRESS OESTRUS IN GREYHOUND BITCHES

The following Guidance Notes were issued by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain at a press conference in Procter House on 23rd March 2011:
GUIDANCE FOR VETERINARY SURGEONS

Use of norethisterone for oestrus suppression in racing bitches in Great Britain

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has confirmed that norethisterone, an authorised human medication, may be used under the provisions of the Cascade (see 1.3 below) by greyhound veterinarians exercising their clinical judgement to provide long-term suppression of oestrus.

In the light of informed opinion that products currently licensed for oestrus suppression may affect the health and performance of the racing bitch and further that testosterone, as an androgenic anabolic steroid, is considered inappropriate for this purpose on welfare, efficacy and integrity grounds, the GBGB has discussed various options with the VMD.

Norethisterone was identified as meeting the requirements of the Cascade and is therefore a candidate for oestrus suppression when authorised products do not produce a satisfactory clinical outcome. Veterinary surgeons may therefore use their clinical judgement on an individual case basis and prescribe norethisterone in racing bitches in Great Britain under the Cascade. Veterinary surgeons are required to record their prescription of norethisterone to a trainer for the treatment of a specific greyhound. However, it is the responsibility of the trainer to ensure that the GBGB Treatment Book is correctly maintained and gives full details of the prescribing veterinary surgeon as required under the GBGB Rules of Racing.

Veterinary surgeons must report to VMD any adverse reactions associated with the use of the currently licensed authorised products to suppress oestrus, and any that may occur when administering norethisterone under the Cascade.

NB. Norethisterone may only be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon. Failure to keep adequate records will be a breach of UK Legislation (Veterinary Medicines Regulations) and a trainer’s failure to maintain his/her GBGB Treatment Book satisfactorily will be a breach of the GBGB Rules of Racing. Further it is stressed that the Cascade only permits the use of norethisterone which has a UK Authorisation for human use.

1. UK Legislation (Veterinary Medicines Regulations)

1.1 Possession and storage of norethisterone for use under the Cascade. Legal requirements.

A veterinary surgeon may have in his possession a human medicinal product such as norethisterone intended for administration to animals under the Cascade.
However, an offence is committed if the veterinary surgeon has in his/her possession more product than is proportionate to the amount expected to be used under the Cascade. VMD would expect these quantities to correspond with the records of receipt or supply of these products prescribed under the Cascade.

1.2 Special notes for the use of norethisterone for the suppression of oestrus in racing greyhound bitches

Where a veterinary surgeon concludes that in an individual case, other available methods for control of oestrus are unsuitable for a particular bitch for reasons such as the potential side-effects of using a licensed veterinary preparation (now or for future breeding), he/she may prescribe the human contraceptive progestogen norethisterone for oral use. In this case the following must be recorded by the veterinary surgeon:

(a) date of examination;
(b) owner’s name and address;
(c) identification of the animal treated;
(d) name of the prescribing veterinary surgeon;
(e) trade name of the product(s) prescribed;
(f) manufacturer’s batch number;
(g) name and quantity of the active substance;
(h) quantity prescribed;

Where client or other records contain this information, this will be acceptable. It is not necessary to maintain additional separate records as long as the information is accessible. (Notwithstanding the legal requirements, it is good practice for veterinary surgeons to keep records of all unauthorised and off-label treatments.)

In all cases, veterinary surgeons should explain to clients what they are doing, and why, and secure their agreement to the treatment in the form of written consent.

1.3 The Cascade

The following information is provided by the VMD as an aide memoire. For the prescribing of norethisterone to racing greyhound bitches (b) – LEVEL 2 applies.

1. Where there is no suitable authorised veterinary medicinal product in the United Kingdom for a condition in a particular species, veterinary surgeons may exercise their clinical judgement according to the 'Cascade', whereby they select in the following order:
(a) LEVEL 1 - a veterinary medicinal product authorised in the United Kingdom for use with another animal species, or for another condition in the same species (off-label use).

If, and only if, there is no such product that is suitable,

(b) LEVEL 2 - a medicinal product authorised in the United Kingdom for human use or a veterinary medicinal product not authorised in the United Kingdom but authorised in another European Member State for use with any animal species.

If, and only if, there is no such product that is suitable,

(c) LEVEL 3 - a veterinary medicinal product prepared extemporaneously by a pharmacist, a veterinary surgeon or a person holding a manufacturing authorisation for the manufacture of that type of product.

2. A decision to use a medicine which is not authorised for the condition in the species being treated should not be taken lightly or without justification. In such cases clients should be made aware of the intended use of the unauthorised medicine and given a clear indication of potential side effects. Their consent should be obtained in writing.

1.4 Associated responsibilities

In deciding to use a medicine under the Cascade, a veterinary surgeon must:

(a) be satisfied that the person who will use the product is competent to use it safely and intends to use it for a use for which it is authorised;

(b) advise on the safe administration of the product;

(c) advise as necessary on any warnings or contra-indications on the label or package leaflet; and

(d) not prescribe more than the minimum quantity required for the treatment. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations do not define 'minimum amount' and the RCVS considers this must be a matter for the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon in the individual case.

(e) Veterinary medicinal products must be supplied in appropriate containers and with appropriate labelling.

(f) Only UK Authorised norethisterone may be prescribed. Supply and/or use of any product sourced from outside the UK is contrary to Veterinary Medicine Regulations and is illegal.
1.5 Dispensing guidelines

The following information should be included on labels for products administered under the Cascade. If it is not feasible to include all of the information on the label due to the size of the packaging it must be included on a separate sheet.

(a) the name and address of the veterinary surgery supplying the veterinary medicinal product;

(b) the name of the veterinary surgeon who has prescribed the product;

(c) the name and address of the animal owner;

(d) the identification of the animal;

(e) the date of supply;

(f) the expiry date of the product, if applicable;

(g) the name or description of the product, including the name and quantity of active ingredients;

(h) dosage and administration instructions;

(i) any special storage precautions;

(j) any necessary warnings for the user, target species, administration or disposal of the product;

(k) The words “Keep out of reach of children” and “For animal treatment only.”

1.6 Records

Veterinary surgeons are reminded that they should keep a full record of all incoming and outgoing medicinal products and at least once a year carry out a detailed audit reconciling these with stock, recording any discrepancies. The records should be retained for at least 5 years and be made available on request to a duly authorised person.

1.7 Accountability

It is worth stressing that it is the prescribing veterinary surgeon’s duty to ensure that they understand the risks of resorting to the Cascade in all its forms; their duty to ensure their client is made aware of the risks; and the need to take due precaution to reduce those risks as far as possible. The advice from the VMD setting out the likelihood of prosecution where a veterinary surgeon does not follow the Cascade rules is not intended to be a threat but an attempt to make veterinary surgeons aware that, should they be challenged about a prescribed medication, their defence could be heard in a court of law. For it is the courts that will ultimately interpret the legislation and the most likely route to the courts will arise through a challenge from
an aggrieved client. At all times therefore, a veterinary surgeon should be prepared to defend their prescription by demonstrating compliance with the law and acceptability of their clinical choice through support from peer or expert opinion. Such defence may not be readily available where a human generic product has been used instead of the authorised veterinary medicinal product.

A medicine prescribed in accordance with the Cascade may be administered by the prescribing veterinary surgeon or by a person acting under their direction. Responsibility for the prescription and use of the medicine remains with the prescribing veterinary surgeon.

2. GBGB Rules of Racing and use of norethisterone

It is a requirement of the GBGB Rules of Racing that an entry is made by the trainer in the GBGB Treatment Book (or other treatment recording system currently in use) clearly recording the name of the dog, the date of administration, the dose and route given and with full details of the veterinary surgeon prescribing norethisterone.

GBGB-licensed veterinary surgeons are reminded that they have a responsibility to read and abide by the Rules of Racing.

Rule 216 Greyhound Treatment Books and Kennel Books

Trainers shall maintain their GBGB Greyhound Treatment Books and GBGB Kennel Books in accordance with the requirements set out in such books.

Rule 217 Administration of medicaments to Greyhounds

A Greyhound when taking part in a Race or Trial must at that time be free of medicines, tonics or substances that could affect its performance or well being, the origin of which could not be traced to normal and ordinary feeding. The only permitted exceptions to this Rule are:-

i medicinal products which have been authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate for the suppression of a bitch’s season, prescribed by a Veterinary Surgeon.

ii medicinal products which have been authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate as anti-parasitic drugs (for internal/external) parasites or as vaccines.

The application of any substance, for any purpose on a Greyhound in the Racing Paddock, unless supplied, administered by and applied under the direct supervision of a licensed Veterinary Surgeon, is prohibited.

Any tonics, medicaments or other substances administered or applied to a Greyhound by a Trainer or Veterinary Surgeon shall be duly recorded in the Trainer's Greyhound Treatment Book, and that Greyhound must not Race or Trial for seven Days thereafter.
Note for information: Although most prohibited substances will clear the Greyhound’s system within seven Days, some products may still be detectable more than seven Days after administration. However, it is the responsibility of Owners and Trainers to satisfy themselves in every case that a Greyhound complies with Rule 217 when taking part in a Race or Trial.

3. Sample Testing

GBGB will continue to sample racing bitches for the presence of norethisterone as part of the Board’s Anti-Doping and Medication Control programme. Audits will take place to ensure the prescribing chain is correct and Stipendiary Stewards will be required to notify the Director of Regulation if treatment records have not been maintained. VMD will also be informed so the prescribing veterinary surgeon’s records may be checked. Trainers whose treatment books are incorrectly completed will be liable to disciplinary action.

4. Contacts

For further information contact:

Veterinary Medicines Directorate
Woodham Lane
New Haw
Surrey
KT15 3LS

Telephone 01932 336911
Email postmaster@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.vmd.gov.uk

Greyhound Board of Great Britain
Procter House
1 Procter Street
London
WC1V 6DW

Telephone 020 7421 3770
Veterinary Advice Line 020 7421 3799
Email welfare@gbgb.org.uk
www.gbgb.org.uk
IN CONCLUSION

The decision whether it is legal, ethical or sensible to prescribe Norethisterone to any individual bitch entrusted to your care is a very difficult one. The S.G.V Council and Executive have sought the guidance of almost every body and individual they could think of that might reasonably be expected to have a view on the subject. Some responded in a manner we found helpful, others sadly were less forthcoming. We discussed the subject among ourselves for a protracted period and finally agreed that we could not recommend any one approach that could with safety be applied by every veterinary surgeon to the treatment of every greyhound bitch. When faced with this dilemma, we would encourage every Member to consider all the angles and all the options carefully before arriving at a decision.

Putting his neck on the block, the Editor would make so bold as to suggest that before prescribing Norethisterone to any individual bitch you might like to consider the following:

- There is very little published data on the efficacy of Norethisterone as an oestrus suppressant in bitches and none has been published recently.
- There appears to be no published data on the toxicity of Norethisterone in greyhounds.
- A number of slightly different treatment regimens have been developed empirically but there are no published large-scale studies to assess their efficacy or safety.
- To comply with the normal constraints imposed by the Cascade, a veterinary surgeon might reasonably think that Norethisterone may only be prescribed for use in a bitch in which the existing licensed have been tried and found unsuitable in some respect.
- The Powers-that-Be have suggested that a veterinary surgeon can ethically and legally prescribe Norethisterone for use in a bitch in which other oestrus suppressants have not previously been used if the clinical judgement of the prescriber it is the most appropriate drug to use.
- In the absence of efficacy and safety data, it might not unreasonably be questioned if a veterinary surgeon with no prior experience of using Norethisterone can make a reasoned clinical judgement as to its proper use in any individual case.
- The Word On The Street is that the GBGB and VMD have no appetite for pursuing those whose prescribing practices with regard to Norethisterone might at first sight appear to some to breach the Cascade requirements. When the chips are down, it might however prove unwise to rely on them taking such a charitable view.
- Given that Norethisterone is approved by the VMD for use as an oestrus suppressant in greyhound bitches, the Veterinary Defence Society is prepared to defend its members against accusations of malpractice involving its use.
- At the time of going to press the B.V.A. had not informed S.G.V. of its stance on the issues surrounding the prescription of norethisterone.
- Those who wish to learn the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons view of the use of Norethisteron as an oestrus suppressant are advised to contact the College themselves. That is what £299 per annum buys you.
- Whatever you decide to do, keep proper records.

Let’s be careful out there!
OESTRUS SUPPRESSION IN GREYHOUND BITCHES

The following Power Point Presentation reviewing oestrus suppression in racing greyhounds was delivered by G.B.G.B Veterinary Director Simon Gower at the meeting in Procter House on 23rd March 2011:
Oestrus Suppression

Simon Gower BVSc MRCVS
Veterinary Director GBGB

Why?
- Welfare
- Integrity of Racing
- Mis-mating

How?
- Run with lay-off
- Oestrus Suppression
- Spay

Run with Lay-off
- 21 day rule
- Rule 56
- Inconsistent Form
- Value of Bitch
- Welfare Concern?
- Unwanted pregnancy
Spay

- Performance?
- Breeding?
- Research?

Suppression

- Durateston
- Ovarid
- Delvosteron
- Promone E
- Nandrolone
- Ethylestrenol
- Norethisterone
- Gonazon

Durateston

- Testosterone
- Perception
- Data Sheet
- Side-effects
- Efficacy
- Availability
- Injection
  - Sharps
  - Trainer administration

Ovarid

- Megestrol acetate
- Potent Progestagen
- Unreliable
- Side-effects
  - Lethargy
  - Weight gain
Delvosteron
- Proligestone
- Administration
  - Injection
- Breeding
- Side-effects
  - Weight gain
  - Lethargy
  - Increased appetite
  - Poor Performance
  - Adrenal Suppression

Promone E
- Medroxyprogesterone
- Data sheet
- Breeding
- Side-effects
  - Lactation
  - Mammary Tumours
  - Pyometra

Nandrolone
- Anabolic steroid
- Similar to Testosterone
- Side effects
  - Muscle growth
  - Appetite stimulation
  - GBGB Banned substance

Ethylestrenol
- Australia
- Availability
- License
Gonazon
- In development
- Cost?
- License?
- Safety?

Norethisterone
- Progesterone
- License
  - VMD
- Availability
- Safety
- Administration

Presentation and Dosage
- 5mg tablets (e.g. Primolut-N)
- Low Dose
  - 2.5mg per os daily
- Clinical Judgement
- Individual Case

Guidance
- The Cascade
- G.B.G.B Rules of Racing
- Dispensing Guidelines
- Records
- Associated Responsibilities
- Suspected Adverse Reactions (SARS)
OESTRUS SUPPRESSION: THE AUSTRALIAN VIEW

The following Press Release issued by Greyhounds Australasia on 7th November 2010 is included here to show a different approach to a familiar problem:
OUTCOME OF ETHYLOESTRENOL REVIEW

Greyhounds Australasia (GA) advises that it has conducted its review of the racing rule, which allows oral administration of ethyloestrenol for the female racing greyhound, on the basis that it is prescribed by a registered veterinarian, for the sole purpose of regulating or preventing oestrus.

The GA Board acknowledges and thanks industry participants, veterinarians, racing analysts and a like, that took the time to provide a submission to the review.

After taking account all of the information that had been received and assessing this against the terms of reference, the GA Board RESOLVED at its 12 March 2010 Board meeting that:

- The existing rule which only allows ethyloestrenol for female racing greyhounds is to remain unchanged.

The Board highlights that this decision was based on the following:

- GA’s position remains the same; that it is preferable that racing greyhounds are to be free of prohibited substances, in this case anabolic steroids.
- Based on jurisdictional data it was concluded that:
  - The rule change has not impacted significantly on the number of bitches that raced during the period under review. During the period 1/7/08 to 30/6/09 44.03% of runners were bitches compared with 44.67% during the period 1/7/07 to 30/6/08. An overall decrease nationally of .64%
  - The rule has not significantly affected the percentage of bitches that won a race during the period under review. During the period 1/7/08 to 30/6/09 41.37% of bitches won a race compared with 41.83% during the period 1/7/07 to 30/6/08. An overall decrease nationally of .46%
- The low number of participant responses (i.e. less than .001% of registered participants) made validation and any potential alteration to the current rule extremely difficult for the Board.
- The review indicated that ethyloestrenol has had a minimal impact on breeding; as well bred greyhounds will always be in demand and sell well. It was however noted that some professional trainers are becoming selective in training bitches.
- The long term supply of ethyloestrenol seems relatively stable.

Mr Russell Ware, GA Chairman said:

“The decision of the Board regarding ethyloestrenol was an extremely difficult one.”

“Views on the subject are divided and judgment differs between participants and experts. This was highlighted in the questionnaires and independent opinion received where 10 alternative oestrus suppression products were recommended. Australasia is not alone with this dilemma as Britain is facing a similar problem.”
In making its determination, the GA Board acknowledged and agreed that:

- **There was sufficient information in the review to suggest that further investigation is required into the complicated matter of oestrus control in the female racing greyhound.**

- **Concerns raised by only allowing one suppressant product was taken into consideration and as a result a GA Committee consisting of Australian Greyhound Veterinary Association members, breeders, trainers and some GA representatives will be formed to:**
  - Seek full registration of an ethyloestrenol oestrus prevention medication with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority including undertaking some research; and
  - The Committee to suggest further research to the GA Board which may allow it to be in a position to consider an alternative oestrus control product.

- **The GA CEO will continue to work closely with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain and assess if any collaborative research could be undertaken in respect of oestrus suppression.**

- **Industry education is a key to assist with the future management of racing bitches, and during 2010 GA members have committed to providing information on this topic at industry based forums.**

For any inquiries please contact.

**CRAIG TABERNER**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
PH: 03 9548 3500

**About Greyhounds Australasia (GA)**

Greyhounds Australasia (GA) comprises representatives from jurisdictional controlling bodies in Australian States and Territories and New Zealand (the GA Directors).

The charter of GA is to support these jurisdictions via encouragement of a holistic approach to the Australasian greyhound racing industry creating uniformity with the brand.

GA provides its stakeholders with value-added services and industry practices that support industry integrity, maximize returns and ensures a sustainable future.

By virtue of the state/federal political system, individual jurisdictional controlling bodies control the regulation and governance of racing, clubs and the functions and commercial activities of greyhound racing under a local Racing Act of Parliament or like legislation.

Thus while all jurisdictions are represented on the GA Board, in general, the ultimate determination to either accept or reject a GA recommendation is a decision for the individual jurisdiction. An exception occurs when a GA Board resolution is passed by a certain majority as a “Compulsive Resolution”, in which case the resolution is binding on all GA member bodies.
Dear Sir,

RE: EXPORT OF GREYHOUNDS TO CHINA

We the members of the Society of Greyhound Veterinarians, the Specialist Division of the British Veterinary Association dedicated to the veterinary care and welfare of greyhounds before during and after their racing careers, being veterinary surgeons working within the greyhound industry in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, wish to voice our concerns over proposals to export greyhounds from Ireland to the People’s Republic of China for racing purposes.

It is our belief that the use of greyhounds in sport is only morally and ethically acceptable if proper consideration is given to their welfare needs when in training, when on breeders’ premises and when no longer required for racing or breeding. Recent articles in the veterinary trade press have drawn attention to widely held concerns about many aspects of animal welfare in China. Before the export of Irish-bred greyhounds to China is seriously considered therefore, we would like be satisfied that effective welfare safeguards are in place there.

Yours in Sport

Michael Watts MVB MSc Dip Food Sci MRCVS
Secretary,
Society of Greyhound Veterinarians,
38 Manse Road,
Kircubbin,
Co.Down BT22 1DR

13th April 2011
“The export of Irish greyhounds to the People's Republic of China”

Minister of State, Shane McEntee, TD

Importance of the greyhound industry
The greyhound racing and breeding industry sustains 11,000 full and part time jobs directly and indirectly, many in rural communities. It contributes an estimated €500 million into local economies around the tracks, which are spread throughout the country. An independent review completed by Farrell Grant Sparks (FGS) in 2009 states that there is adequate direct and indirect evidence to support a strong argument that the greyhound industry constitutes a major source of direct and indirect employment, gives rise to considerable domestic and export earnings and is a key driver of substantial economic activity, especially in rural areas.

There are a total of 17 greyhound tracks licensed by Bord na gCon. Of these, Bord na gCon owns Shelbourne Park, Harold’s Cross, Cork, Tralee, Waterford, Youghal, Limerick and Galway (8 tracks) and also has a 51% share in the Mullingar track.

The greyhound breeding industry is very successful with over 75% of greyhounds now running in the UK being Irish bred.

Bord na gCon

Bord na gCon is a commercial state body established under the Greyhound Industry Act, 1958, chiefly to control greyhound racing and to improve and develop the greyhound industry.

Responsibility for Bord na gCon transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in May 2010.

The Board of Bord na gCon is responsible for leading and directing the activities of the Company. Bord na gCon has repeatedly confirmed its commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare in the greyhound industry.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is aware that Bord na gCon is exploring possible business opportunities in China and has been in contact with the Department in this
regard. I would like to inform the House that today I met the Chairman and Chief Executive of Bord na gCon to discuss the proposal. I made it clear to Bord na gCon that I am not in a position to approve the project as presented. It was agreed that Bord na gCon would modify its proposal to exclude the export of greyhounds from Ireland but would continue to explore possibilities of developing the proposal to assist in the management of greyhound racing in China.

Deputies will be pleased to note that Bord na gCon has demonstrated its commitment to greyhound welfare and in this regard has a number of initiatives in place to ensure consistent and appropriate welfare standards are met. These include the attendance of veterinary surgeons at racing and at sales trials, employment of personnel to oversee greyhound welfare and the employment of a Welfare Manager. Bord na gCon is also an active member of the International Greyhound Forum- an international group involved in the establishment of welfare standards and education. A guide to best practice as to the care and welfare of greyhounds is available from the Bord na gCon website.

Bord na gCon established a Welfare Committee in July 2009 which seeks to identify ways in which the welfare of greyhounds can be improved.

In addition Bord na gCon also operates the Retired Greyhound Trust which focuses on the adoption and re-homing of greyhounds when they finish racing. In 2011 they launched a campaign, which is on-going, to promote greyhounds as pets.

Officials of Bord na gCon investigate any complaints received regarding greyhound welfare and follow up on any issues of concern that arise through their everyday interaction with trainers or owners either on the racetrack or elsewhere.

Any proposal involving Bord na gCon engaging with the greyhound industry in China would have to give due consideration to animal welfare matters

Welfare
Ireland attaches a high priority to animal welfare and, alongside our EU partners, is working
to promote better animal welfare internationally. With respect to greyhounds, I wish to inform you that the Government is preparing to introduce legislation in the current term which will provide a regime tailored specifically to greyhound welfare with a view to enhancing the welfare of Irish greyhounds.

The commitment of this Government to animal welfare in general is beyond doubt and is reflected among the priorities in the Programme for Government.

There have not been any exports of greyhounds from Ireland to China in recent years. Any proposal to export greyhounds from Ireland to China would require the establishment and agreement of export health certification protocols with the Chinese authorities, and appropriate transport arrangements would have to be put in place to ensure the welfare of the animals in transit.

The Department endeavours to ensure that all exporters comply with Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations.

All Member States of the EU including Ireland are working to promote better animal welfare internationally and in this regard Ireland has introduced national legislation giving effect to Regulation (EC) No. 1523/2007 of the European Parliament and Council dated 11 December 2007.

**The Welfare of Greyhounds Bill 2010**

The “Welfare Of Greyhounds Bill 2010” passed its first reading and was scheduled for Committee and Final Stages in the Seanad but was not enacted before the general election.

The 2010 Bill had cross party support in the Seanad and also had the support of Bord na gCon, the Dog’s Trust and DSPCA. It is the intention of this Government to re-introduce this Bill very shortly.

**Conclusion**

- There have been no exports of greyhounds from Ireland to China in recent years.
• It was agreed at today’s meeting that Bord na gCon would modify its proposal to exclude the export of greyhounds from Ireland but would continue to explore possibilities of developing the proposal to assist in the management of greyhound racing in China.
**RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIETY OF GREYHOUND VETERINARIANS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF GREYHOUND TRACK VETS: MOVES TOWARDS UNITY STALLED**

The Society of Greyhound Veterinarians and the Association of Greyhound Track Vets have been in discussions over the possible amalgamation of the two groups since last summer. After protracted negotiations, on 17th March 2011 the following letter was received by the then S.G.V President Tony Collins from Simon Adams, acting on behalf of the AGTV:~

**Association of Greyhound Track Vets**
Public Contact: emailagtv@gmail.com
Confidential egroup: agtv@googlegroups.com

Tony Collins MRCVS
SGV President.

Via email 17th March 2011

**Dear Tony,**

on behalf of AGTV members we would like to thank you as SGV President, for all you have done to facilitate discussions on this. Unfortunately there has been little time and opportunity to take these discussions forward to agree the all, important details, which it seems clear after the GBGB Training meeting, would be complicated, and no simple task. As you are aware, I ’m afraid I have sadly been taken up with family traumas since then and so there simply has not been the time to resolve this. My apologies to you and SGV, but sadly these were circumstances beyond my control.

I was hoping to attend on Sunday and explain our decision and recommendations for the future in person, but fate has dealt me a slipped disk and I can’t drive , or sit, properly at the moment while I await the surgeons knife. So please read this out to your members at the meeting this Weekend to help explain.

We realise that SGV needed an answer before your AGM, and so we thoroughly discussed the offer from SGV , and then held a democratic vote to ensure we had an answer for SGV before the AGM. The deadline was on Wednesday 16th March.

The vote was unanimously in favour of AGTV remaining Independent from SGV, for the future. In discussions, there were several supportive reasons given for this. Among these were:-

* **Concerns that there was, and still would be a potential conflict of interest on Track Vet vet and welfare issues, and keeping these separate would be advantageous for SGV , AGTV and greyhound welfare.**

* **Lack of an official Track Vet Voice with only 2 votes on SGV council.**

* **Danger that exactly the same divisions which caused the initial split would re-surface. etc etc**

AGTV is a democratic organisation ,and this vote precludes AGTV from re-joining SGV, and confirms our intention to continue as a Track Vet only Association to provide a democratic professional voice . However, as both SGV and AGTV agree that there is considerable advantages for all Track Vets to be united in one organisation. We believe that, as we cannot re-join SGV, the only logical alternative is for all GBGB Licensed Track Vets to join AGTV.

To this end we are delaying our election of the new Executive (Chair and Vice –Chair), to facilitate this, so that any SGV Track vets joining AGTV before May 15th 2011 can then vote for the Executive they wish to represent them democratically.
As the current AGTV Chairman, I appreciate that SGV Track Vets may prefer to democratically elect the new AGTV exec from their own ranks, which will be perfectly acceptable to current AGTV members. The important goal is to democratically unite all Track vets, names and ego’s are irrelevant we feel. If track vets do not unite and remain split between the two organisations then this is detrimental to greyhound welfare and track vet interests and the only winner is the greyhound industry and GBGB who can exploit the differences and continue, in the main part, to ignore us all!

AGTV membership is open to all GBGB Licensed Track vets, please contact emailagtv@gmail.com to apply.

Please extend our best wishes on behalf of all AGTV members to all at SGV and we hope to collaborate in a mutually supportive environment to help promote greyhound welfare and medicine in the future.

Yours Faithfully,

Simon Adams
Poole Track Vet
AGTV Chairman
07846 022700
siradams@gmail.com

Accordingly for the present at least the two groups agree to differ and go their separate if in many respects parallel ways.
SOCIETY OF GREYHOUND VETERINARIANS AGM 2011 & COUNCIL MEETING 21ST APRIL 2011: RAY’S RECOLLECTIONS

What follows is a gallop around who and what was talked about at the AGM on 20th March, and the first meeting of the new Council of the SGV on 21st March. Please note that this is not meant to be a Hansard-type verbatim record, more the author’s impressions and recollections.

Election of a New Council and Officers:

The main task of the AGM was the election a new council and officers. The following persons were elected to serve for the next twelve months:

- Richard Lockyer - President
- Anthony Collins - Senior Vice President
- Michael Watts - Secretary
- Chris Laurence - Hon Treasurer
- Andrew Bartholomew
- Hazel Bentall
- Harry Coulthard
- Diana Hodson
- Raymond Gee
- Frances Allen

Amendment to the Constitution:

An amendment to the Society’s constitution was proposed, to permit the establishment of a Track Sub-Committee designed to answer concerns that track vets’ voices were not being heard. The amendment was passed, and the following members of the Sub-Committee elected:

- Frances Allen
- Andrew Bartholomew (Chair)
- Olivia Cook
- Harry Coulthard
- Diana Hodson

Relations with the AGTV:

A meeting was held last summer between members of the SGV Council and AGTV Chairman, Simon Adams, to discuss the possible amalgamation of the two groups. After prolonged discussions and much heart searching it was finally decided that unification was not the road to take and that the two groups should continue to go their separate ways.

Treasurer’s Report

There are currently fifty-three paid up members. The Society has a reasonable amount of cash in the bank, but need to be prudent with expenditure to avoid depleting our reserve. Self-funding Conferences, and sending newsletters etc, by e-mail rather than by post are two obvious potential money savers.

Future of the SGV

Various models for a leaner and fitter version of SGV were discussed.

Track Vet Training & CPD

Although the Royal College is committed to the notion of ‘working within the areas of a veterinary surgeons competence’, it seems that they do not have much interest in promoting the need for proper training of Track Vets before they stand duty on a track. Our aspiration is to encourage and provide training both for new Track Vets and refresher courses for serving track vets.
Council is looking at ways of providing greyhound specific CPD by an on-line learning system.

**Future Conferences**

With the aim of enlarging our potential target, delegates’ suggestions were of involving other sports/competition animals including, equines, agility and working dogs. Also contact is to be made with BVA concerning their 2010 Congress, and with the organisers of next years’ London Vet Show, There are also ongoing discussions with Liverpool Vet School.

**Dental Project**

It appears that there are three dental projects in gestation. One from Liverpool Vet School, involving students from Liverpool Dental and Vet Schools, and Belle Vue Stadium track vet Diana Hodson. The second is at Kinsley, run by the promoter John Curran, and the third at Bristol Vet School. The scheme at Kinsley seems to be very slow to come to fruition – 4.5 months since it was announced and progress appears stalled. A similar scenario appears to be clouding the Liverpool – Belle Vue project; so much so in fact, that the organisers are thinking of moving their focus from dogs in training to potentially older RGT dogs in the Trust’s kennels.

**Kennel Inspections**

The situation still appears less than perfect. The SGV Council is concerned that the GBGB appears to have no desire to introduce minimum standards for the selection and training inspecting Veterinary Surgeons. The SGV Council has concerns about the new inspection form that still leaves much to be desired. For example it fails to mention the AWA and includes irrelevant material about thyroid function and light.

A recommendation for kennel standards, based on the Charter for the Racing Greyhound, has been sent to GBGB by the UK Greyhound Forum.

Other matters touched on included greyhound racing in China, the lack of inspection and veterinary attendance at schooling tracks, the lack of oversight of retired greyhounds, the DMAP medicines/first aid box, the disposal of unwanted prescription drugs and welfare breaks during race meetings. Don’t forget your views on any of these matters, and anything else about which you may be concerned, may be sent to Council for future discussions.

Raymond Gee
06 April 2011