



Save our Welsh Cats & Dogs from Death on the Roads

This petition is seeking a repeal or an exemption for the Radio Containment Fencing or Hidden Fence device that was included in a blanket law in March 2010 "Animal Welfare (Electronic Devices) 2010." This campaign is supported by Professor Tim Gruffydd-Jones of the Department of Clinical Veterinary Science at the University of Bristol.

1. My petition has about 500 signatures just from Welsh residents, mostly within Ceredigion and over 1,380 Facebook supporters compared to a majority of only 19 respondents (15 + 4) in favour of this law in the Government's 2nd & 3rd Public Consultations combined.

2. Agricultural livestock fencing is legal. The few differences between these live electric fences and the companion pets' fence is that the livestock fence is a wire which produces a live shock with a voltage of up to 10,000 volts to an animal which goes through its whole body to the earth. No warning sound is given.

A transmitter for the pet containment fence emits a radio signal to an electronic collar powered by two 3 volt batteries and is worn by the animal. An audible warning is given well beforehand and in most cases, the small static electric impulse is switched off as owners have found the audible warning to be sufficient. This is amply demonstrated in the 1st short bilingual video (of 2) accompanying this note.

3. The RSPCA strongly supported the introduction of this legislation but 18 months after it became law in Wales, a former Chief Veterinary Officer of this charity (who was also a former Veterinary Director of the Dogs Trust) was exposed by the Daily Mail for using a containment fence to protect his own cat and dog from danger in his garden (copy of article attached). The Charity has also accepted adverts for these containment fences in its RSPCA Wiltshire 2010 Annual Report (copy enclosed).

4. A serious blunder was made by the manufacturer's lobby ECMA, who (as I was told by the Director of Marketing during the throes of my research) invited certain Welsh Assembly members during the public consultation period to visit its training centre in Lincolnshire, of all places.

Another serious misjudgement was made by the officials advising the Welsh Minister at the time as the draft legislation had actually excluded these protective boundary fences, but were included at the last minute to make it easier for the officials to administer the law, which also included dog training collars and anti-bark collars.

All expenditure incurred for this campaign has come out of my own pocket.

These fences are harmless and keep companion pets safe from being squashed on the roads or shot chasing sheep.

I sincerely hope the Committee will favourably view my petition and encourage the Government to redress this.

Monima O'Connor
Petition Author, Ceredigion

Monima O'Connor
8 Jan 2013

Subject: Animal Welfare (Electronic Devices) 2010 legislation

Date: 19 November 2012 23:12:07 GMT

To: nicholas.ramsay@wales.gov.uk

Dear Mr Ramsay,

I am writing to ask you to support a petition which is likely to be debated next year in the Welsh Assembly, calling for the repeal of part of the Animal Welfare (Electronic Devices) 2010 legislation.

The bit that I and hundreds of other dog and cat owners in Wales want repealed relates to the installation and use of concealed, containment boundary fencing, which was made a criminal offence punishable by heavy fines or up to a year in prison. I understand that the Welsh government decided at the last minute, for the sake of convenience, to include these fences in new legislation which was mainly aimed at outlawing the use of electronic training aids for animals. I have no problem with the banning of electronic training aids; their use was undoubtedly cruel, at times.

But electronic containment fences are just the opposite of cruel.

Before I awoke one morning to be told by the BBC's "Today" programme that overnight, the Welsh government had converted me at the stroke of a legislative pen from an innocent person to a criminal, I protected my dog from harm by means of one of these electronic fences. I have several acres of land bordered on one side by a busy road and on another by fields which usually contain sheep or cattle. There is no practical way of conventionally fencing off this area to make it dog proof.

This meant that I had a choice. I could keep the dog indoors at all times and only allow it to go outside when I was able to accompany it. This would be miserable for the dog and burdensome for me. Or I could take a chance and hope that the dog would not escape onto the main road, where it risked death or injury (and where it could cause death or injury to road users) or into fields containing sheep or cattle, where it risked being shot, quite legally, by the farmer. Not much of a choice, I'm sure you will agree.

So when someone told me about electronic containment fences, I could see that here was the answer to the problem. Once the fence was installed and the dog trained (the training took about fifteen minutes), the dog could be allowed outside on her own, to roam around for as long as she wished. She was kept safe from death on the road or at the hand of an outraged farmer.

She could do no harm to road users or to sheep and cattle. And I could stop worrying about her, when she was outside. A perfect solution conferring benefits and happiness both to me and the dog - all stripped away by legislators who were apparently more concerned about their own convenience than that of their constituents and who failed to research properly what electronic containment fences do and how they work. Thoroughly shoddy work by the legislators, of which they should be ashamed.

COPY

If you would like to know more about these fences, you may find a short video helpful. The charity which made the film has given the organisers of the petition to which I refer above permission to use the video in this way.

It can be seen at www.feline-friends.org.uk/video1.htm

Once you have seen the film, I am confident you will understand the distress and anger which this piece of legislation caused and still causes.

I gather that the petition now has close to 400 signatures. I do hope that we can count on your active support in righting this legislative wrong, when the matter is debated in the Assembly.

My grateful thanks to you, for taking the time to read this.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Beels

Shocking hypocrisy from a bunny hugger

By [Quentin Letts](#), Daily Mail

UPDATED: 16:50, 30 July 2011

A leading animal welfare expert has been practising the opposite of what he so insistently preaches.

Chris Laurence is veterinary director of the politically tinged charity Dogs Trust. He used to be chief vet at the RSPCA, another outfit that has become distinctly political.

In animal rights circles, Mr Laurence MBE is a top dog. He is a trustee of the Feline Advisory Bureau. He frequently lobbies British and European parliamentarians and has appeared on telly.

One of the issues on which both Dogs Trust and the RSPCA have pressed politicians is electric fences for pets. These devices are, to my mind, practical and humane. I wrote a feature article about them recently. Many (though not all) readers agreed.

Dogs Trust and the RSPCA argue that 'containment fences' are cruel. Last year they persuaded the Welsh Assembly to ban such devices. Using one in Wales could now cost you £20,000 in fines or six months in prison.

Last week, a pet owner was left £3,000 worse off after such a case. Serves him right, Dogs Trust said. But hang on. Information comes my way that Mr Laurence is himself an enthusiastic user of these electric fences.

Can it be true? After some sucking of gums, Dogs Trust said: 'Chris Laurence does have a containment fence which can be set up to emit electric shocks.

'However, he has never used the fence in this way with his dog and the electric shock component on his dog's collar is permanently turned off.' Believe that if you will.

But what about cats? Pause. Then came a further admission. The charity said that Mr Laurence had indeed used the shock aspect of the fence to stop his cat straying into the road.

'Chris's personal opinion is that for cats this system can be the lesser of two evils. This does not reflect the view of Dogs Trust,' growled the statement.

'Dogs Trust will continue to lobby government in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to ban electric shock devices.'

So a charity, some of whose staff seem to hold an anthropomorphic view of pets, is campaigning for the criminalisation of a device — even though its chief expert himself uses one. What hypocrisy.



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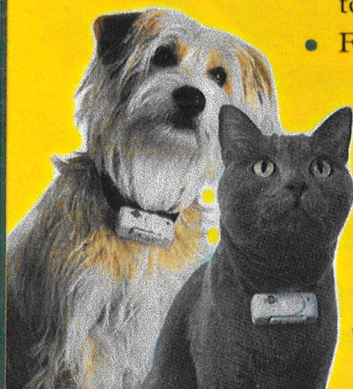
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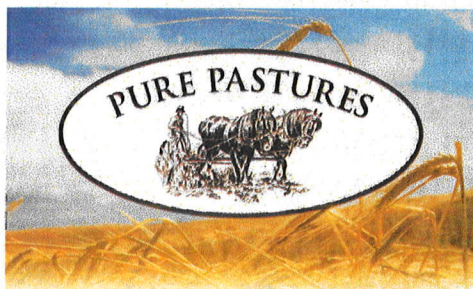
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