

AKC Delegates
Herding, Earthdog, Lure Coursing Committee

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September 30, 2006

Steve Gladstone, Esq.
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RE: Judging Conflict of Interest Policy

Dear Steve:

At the Committee meeting September 11, you requested that the Committee provide you with its recommendation about how the Board should decide the subject policy with respect to performance events represented by the Committee.

We tasked a representative from each activity – herding, earthdog, lure coursing – to analyze the potential effect of the proposed policy on the individual activity affected. We asked for an analysis of the joint licensing of judges, the extent of their involvement in AKC and “competing” event giving clubs, and the potential effect on the AKC program of an imposition by AKC of an exclusionary policy of joint involvement by judges.

Our primary concern is that policies protecting revenue generating events such as conformation and obedience, when applied to our fledgling performance activities, could be life-threatening. The exclusionary policy could debilitate them by forcing our best and brightest to choose between AKC and the stronger and long established predecessors.

The AKC programs rely heavily on more experienced predecessor participants who lend their talents to our clubs in areas of expertise that we just don't have and where the experience and knowledge pool is limited. They also contribute voluntarily and very significantly to our programs.

The pages that follow present the rationale which dovetails into your “organization by organization” exemption policy.

We believe that it would be in the best interest of these three sports if they were exempt from the judges' conflict of interest policy as was done for agility.

If the Board chooses to go the itemization-of-organizations route, we stress that the exemption be total for those organizations listed as exempt. As presently worded, the exemption only permits AKC judges to judge

competing events. (see page 1 of the attached). The exemption must be extended to permit AKC licensed and listed exempt judges to serve as volunteer officers and directors of both the AKC clubs and the potentially competing clubs. This seems to be the practice currently used and a simple language change would clearly delineate the exemption.

The herding sport presents a special circumstance. Under the present scheme, the American Herding Breeds Association is exempt.

The committee is split in its recommendation. A portion of the committee sees as vital the exemption of all herding activities (as has been done for agility performance). Others feel that it is enough to add the United States Border Collie Handlers Association and the Australian Shepherd Club of America to the list of exempt organizations.

The following position paper presents a short discussion about the regulation change, our analysis of the potential conflict of interest for each performance activity, a specific list of the classes of individuals impacted, the effect of the change as contemplated, and our recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Don H. Adams,
Chair