

Dog Aggression Database(DAD) - outline and update

Rick Walduck

The initiative for UAM to develop a database has arisen from expressed need from all sectors of the animal management community.

The aim of the database is to provide all levels of government and educators with accurate national facts relating to aggressive dog incidents, enabling the development of tools to establish a soundly based risk management strategy that enables the benefits of pet ownership to be experienced by the community, whilst minimizing the harm associated with aggressive dog incidents and injury.

It is apparent that the current development and promulgation process of legislation is neither uniform nationally nor based on solid data and statistics.

Emotive segmented opinion, and dramatised reporting whilst highlighting the issue has not provided an adequate framework for the promulgation of effective and workable legislation.

It is anticipated that data collection and analysis will enable accurate information to be available to legislators that will enable appropriate legislation and animal management tools to be developed, that along with appropriate education, will lead to both prevention and lessening in number and severity of dog aggression incidents and injury.

PROGRESS TO DATE

At previous UAM Conferences the scoping exercise and user requirements were explored leading to the culmination at the UAM 2002 Alice Springs Conference where 14 key initiatives and a multiple grading system categorisation of dangerous/aggressive dogs and consequence of that grading was adopted by delegate resolution.

Both the initiatives and grading system will be incorporated into the database.

It is important to realise that the consequence appended to the gradings are advisory only and require enactment in respective state or local government legislation to be effected.

Database operational rules

There are a number of minimum requirements for functionality and integrity of data within the database.

Most of these have been outlined previously but it is appropriate to address the key issues in this paper -

- Data will only be accepted if the dog is identified with a microchip that conforms to Australian Standard AS 5018.
- Data entry of microchip number will only be accepted on a dual entry system to prevent operator error.
- Validation of microchip number will take place at data entry by the database before acceptance.

- Data will be entered via secure access to the dedicated web site by local government officers.
- Only broad detail relating to an aggressive incident will be recorded on the database together with an aggression grading. Fine detail including prosecution details, evidence etc concerning the incident will remain on the municipal/state databases and a reference case number to that data will included on the DAD.
- Unless prior permission is granted by the owner or victim (if human and not animal) then owner/victim name details relating to the incident will not be accepted unless privacy issues are appropriately addressed.
- Location details of incident, attack and victim will be recorded to the extent that is possible with privacy issues addressed.
- Validation of dog species, breed, colour will take place at data entry by the database before acceptance.
- Super validation of all animal details by reference to existing national microchip registries will take place wherever possible.
- Incorporation of existing Local Government Declared Dangerous Dog declarations and State Restricted Breed legislation will be incorporated wherever possible.
- Validation of suburb/ town, city, postcode and municipality will take place at data entry by the database before acceptance.
- Multilevel security will be applied to the database and user access categories will be delineated along with ability to view, add, amend, report on or delete data.
- Detailed user logs will be maintained.
- User access name and password will be stored in an encrypted manner to prevent access by unauthorised users.
- Appropriate firewall's and virus protection software (refreshed daily) will be installed to ensure system integrity.

Stage of development

- Business requirement documents have been prepared defining user functionality of the database.
- Two costed models for development and promulgation have been prepared. One model contains a minimum functionality outline and the second has expanded functionality.
- Performance testing of both models has been completed satisfactorily.

- Planning for attracting involvement and participation of stakeholders is underway.
- Financing avenues to develop the database is being explored.

SUMMARY

Whilst all parties recognise the value of this project, it is hoped that further progress will be made on this important initiative during 2003.

It is important to realise that with wide acceptance and participation and data is added to the database, it will become a progressively more useful tool of animal management both within Australia and overseas.

This will be of ultimate benefit of both the pet and non pet owning community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Rick Walduck, BVSc
Central Animal Records Australia Pty Ltd
570 Springvale Rd
Springvale, Vic 3172

Ph: 03 546 3627

Fx: 03 548 4471

A veterinarian and the founding director of Delta Australia (concerned with human-companion animal bond), Rick is project manager of Central Animal Records Network, suppliers of the TROVAN microchip.