

2015 NARC EVENT HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

From the National Amateur National Board of Directors:

You are being sent this because you are traveling to Montana for the National Amateur Retriever Club Championship and there have been reports of canine upper respiratory infections in the mountain region. These are safety measures to ensure that you enjoy your National Amateur experience.

Precautionary Measures to Deal with Potential Upper Respiratory Infections

FACTS

1. "Canine Cough" exists in the Mountain region where NARC Championship is being held.
2. Etiology (cause of condition) is undetermined.
3. NARC Field Trial Committee is instituting precautionary protocols and requirements as listed below to minimize risk of exposure.
4. Veterinarians are providing supportive medical information and may be contacted as follows prior to the trial;
 - Dr. Jeff Schuett: 414-254-2917
 - Dr. Jennell Appel: 561-927-7811
 - Dr. Uli Sawall-Rodriques: 406-883-5229 (Official Trial Veterinarian)

These veterinarians offered to take your calls to assist with any Canine Cough issues that develop over the next couple of weeks.

PROTOCOLS

1. All dogs that will be on training and test grounds are required to have a Health Certificate stating that at the time of their office visit they were not exhibiting signs of kennel cough or Upper Respiratory Infections. The Health Certificate should be issued no earlier than 7 days prior to their arrival in Ronan. The Health Certificate produced on the Veterinarian's Letterhead needs to state that the dog has received has a current (preferably the same date as the letter) Bordetella vaccination and is clear of any URIs.

We recognize that this may be difficult to achieve from a timing standpoint as you will be traveling, but it is necessary. There are many good veterinarians in Bozeman, Missoula, Ronan and Polson. We will put together a list of veterinarians in the Mission Valley and Missoula area.

2. It is highly recommended to administer an oral vaccine at the time the Health Certificate is issued, even if the dog had one recently. The purpose is to stimulate the dog's immune system to provide greater resistance, if exposed.

3. Linda Harger will be at the Bitch Check and Health Certificate lines to record that you have a Health Certificate.

During the Bitch Check following the National Amateur Meeting, ALL dogs running the Championship Stake will be required to produce a Health Certificate. Health Certificates for male dogs will be presented in a separate line. Please do not bring the male dog with you to the Health Certificate line. We will not be collecting Health Certificates, but rather checking off the dog's number in our book. If you do not present a Health Certificate you will not be allowed to run.

4. All bitches will be kept a safe distance from the dog in front of them -- a minimum distance of fifteen feet is recommended. All dogs will be required to be on lead.

5. Health Certificates for non-competitive dogs will be presented when requested by a member of the Event Committee but only if we suspect that a problem exists. If a problem, in fact, does exist or a Health Certificate(s) is not produced when requested, you will be asked to leave the trial grounds to either have your dog(s) inspected to obtain a confirming/re-affirming Health Certificate or to obtain the necessary Health Certificates.

6. All dogs must be under control at all times do not allow your animals to co-mingle with others, air/exercise away from each other as much as possible. Put your dog on a leash as soon as you head towards judgment. All non-competing dogs must be on leashes at all times. This practice should be adhered to during training, set-up, airing at your motel, or any other time that the dogs could be exposed.

7. Please keep your dog away from other dogs at ALL times.

8. If you suspect that a dog on your truck is infected please leave the grounds immediately and isolate your dog. If the subject dog is a competing dog, immediately contact the Field Trial Chairperson (Linda Harger: 208-890-5386) and arrange for veterinarian exam from the Official Field Trial Veterinarian to produce a new Health Certificate to help determine its status at the event.

9. When visiting the Veterinarian's office, ask the VET to come outside to inspect your dog. Be certain that they have followed a proper safety/sanitary protocol prior to examining your dog.

10. The Event Committee will do everything possible to maintain a safe distance for dogs going to and leaving from the line and during those times they are honoring. We will do everything possible to air-dry birds prior to their re-use. We will attempt to position holding blinds in a more open position.

Medical Information / Questions

Background Information: "Kennel Cough" is a catch all term commonly used to describe infectious upper respiratory infection (URI) in canines. URI in dogs can be caused by viral and/or bacterial infections. Vaccinations currently available to prevent URI in dogs are directed at Bordetella bronchiseptica (a bacterium) and parainfluenza virus, the agents the most commonly associated with URI. Studies indicate the most reliable vaccination strategy is using a combination of the injectable Bordetella in conjunction with an intranasal or intraoral Bordetella + Parainfluenza virus vaccination.

Rarely is the exact cause of URI diagnosed in individual cases as most cases are self-limiting and respond to the typical therapy of doxycycline, humidification and rest. While tests can be performed to identify the infectious agent that is rarely pursued as treatment and prognosis varies little between infection types.

These infections are transmitted from dog to dog by direct contact with an infected dog or by exposure to objects or people that have been in contact with an infected dog. Adhering to the following principles will minimize spread of 'kennel cough' agents:

1. Strategic immunization: injectable Bordetella vaccine administered at least 2 weeks prior to exposure and intraoral/intranasal Bordetella vaccine administered at least 5 days prior to exposure
2. Maintain a minimum of 15 feet between animals at all times
3. Frequent hand washing and use of sanitizers by handlers: before and after touching or tending to a dog
4. Prohibit communal drinking water or feeding containers

It is extremely unlikely the current outbreak is caused by the canine influenza. While symptoms of 'kennel cough' and the canine flu are similar, dogs infected with the flu tend to be more ill with fever and lethargy. In 2004, the first canine flu outbreak was identified in racing greyhounds in Florida. The strain of flu is H3N8. A vaccine was developed against H3N8. Most recently, a new strain of flu was identified in Chicago. This is H3N2. No vaccine is available for this strain. Cross protection from the H3N8 strain vaccine has not been shown.

FAQ

1. **What is the chance this 'kennel cough' outbreak is the canine influenza?** The chance this outbreak is influenza is very low. Reports indicate that dogs are developing coughs but are not developing fevers or pneumonia – signs more typical of the influenza
2. **Should I have my dog vaccinated for influenza?** Currently in the US, two strains of canine influenza have been identified: H3N8 and H3N2. The most recent influenza outbreak (Chicago, spring 2015) involved H3N2, for which there is no vaccination. The available influenza vaccination is against H3N8 and cross protection has not been shown. Whether or not to vaccinate your dog for the canine flu is a conversation that should be had with your dog's veterinarian.
3. **How can I best protect my dog from this outbreak of kennel cough?** Avoid contact with any other competitor's dogs. Maintain at least 15 feet between dogs. Air in an area that others have not used. Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, particularly before and after you handle your dog or any of your dog's gear. Visit with your veterinarian BEFORE heading to the National. Discuss whether the dual vaccination protocol is appropriate for your dog.
4. **How can handlers best protect the National from spread of this outbreak?** As stated above, keep separation between dogs and use hand sanitizer often. Avoid communal areas for airing. Report any symptoms involving sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge or lethargy immediately to the official veterinarian on sight. If your dog is exhibiting symptoms, DO NOT take them to the Sports Vet van. Instead, leave them on your truck and contact the veterinarian who will likely visit your truck, rather than expose the Sports Vet van.

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