

Breeder's Notebook: What About Bobs?

Docking restrictions spur interest in breeding for bobtails.

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To prevent rabies, ancient Romans advocated cutting tails off puppies when they were 40 days old, then pulling out the long tendons. The tendons resembled worms, which were thought to be responsible for rabies.

Tail docking is not a new practice; neither is its opposition. In 1896, The Kennel Club (England) debated, but didn't pass, a motion that would ban any docked dog from winning a prize at a dog show. In late 2008, the American Veterinary Medical Association issued this statement: "The AVMA opposes ear cropping and tail docking of dogs when done solely for cosmetic purposes. The AVMA encourages the elimination of ear cropping and tail docking from breed standards."

Tail docking is prohibited in many countries, and fanciers of docked breeds fear their dogs may lose their tailless look if docking is banned in North America, as well. In Europe, some fanciers are turning to dogs with natural bobtails in an attempt to keep that short-tailed look. Can it be done?

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