

From: [Soring, Keith \[IRGC\]](#)
To: [Ohorilko, Brian \[IRGC\]](#)
Cc: fiveoaksfarms@hotmail.com
Subject: FW: [GreyVets]
Date: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 10:44:02 AM
Attachments: @

Dr. Kirkendall's opinion on kennel sizes for greyhounds...

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From: Marianne M Kirkendall [marianne.kirkendall@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2009 11:04 PM
To: Soring, Keith [IRGC]
Subject: Re: [GreyVets]

Whoops! Clicked the wrong button, and sent that before I attached the files. Here are those attachments.

As to the other topics, I haven't heard much grumbling at my end. It seems like the trainers are most fixated on the kennel issue. Is there any central group that goes around and evaluates track surfaces? And a central injury reporting database would be great, in my opinion. It would make things consistent across the board which would be nice.

Anyway, that's all I have for now. Sorry for getting a bit long-winded in my previous post!

Thanks again, and talk to you later!

Marianne

On Mon, Oct 12, 2009 at 10:53 PM, Marianne M Kirkendall <marianne.kirkendall@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Doc!

Attached is the current Vet's List (I added yet another section.....a small table on year-to-date totals just to make it easier to follow). Fortunately, we only had one injury this week, a dislocated toe. The track surface has been nicely consistent and the times are hovering right where I like to see them.

I also have a few comments on those topics you mentioned about upcoming changes. Of those topics, definitely the most controversial is the kennel issue. Several trainers have come up to me and voiced their irritation at those changes. Most of the complaints seem to boil down to money, as one would expect. I've tried to do a little additional research on the topic to see if there are additional ways to approach this that may make it more palatable. Also, since I am coming at this as someone still very new into the world of greyhound racing, so my observations may be not be fully realistic in a practical setting, but here goes!

Firstly, I think going with the minimum HSUS guidelines is a very good idea. With as much scrutiny as the industry is under (which will only continue to increase), it only makes sense that we can tell the anti-lobby that at least the industry complies with those standards, especially since they are more strict than the federal standards. Ultimately, the voters are the ones who will decide the future of this industry, and the industry needs to be reminded of that.

Secondly, it has been my experience when walking through the kennels that these dogs are very calm and quiet in their cages (as long as it isn't turn-out time). I can't see how giving them a little extra room to move and stretch is going to increase pacing and fretting. We do have a few fretters that I keep an eye on when they are in the lock-out area. We have the trainers bring them to weigh-in last if they can and get them in the earliest possible races to minimize their pre-race anxiety. Those dogs only behave that way before a race. If they had dogs that were constantly doing that in their kennels, they'd never make consistent weights at weigh in.

Additionally, it is my understanding that when greyhounds are being raised, they spend the first several months of their post-weaning lives in large, long runs that gradually get larger as they get bigger. They aren't confined to small crates, and are encouraged to run and sprint in these pens. They are only suddenly put into these much more confining crates in racing facilities. Yes, you're going to see injuries in dogs that are allowed to run around more. However, what about also going from the angle that having dogs in crates that allow them more room to stretch and relax may help reduce injuries? I don't know of any studies that have looked at that, but it may be interesting to explore. I often marvel at these dogs. How can we expect such amazing athletes to sit confined to a small cage for upwards of 3 hours and then put them on a track to sprint without any warm-up except whatever they get trotting over to the box? A very consistent behavior I see in these dogs is, as they are brought out of the lock-out area, is that they jump, stretch and shake very vigorously. This tells me that they are not able to do these things very well in the cages. While we

don't want them doing too much crazy jumping around in their cages (has a height requirement been mentioned?), I think it perfectly reasonable that the dogs should have plenty of room to stretch and shake.

Another thing to consider is the overall size of the greyhounds. I have talked to Joe Gau about this a few times; when he started as a lead-out, the dogs were much smaller. He estimated that they probably averaged in the mid-60s with a few big dogs topping out in the low-70s. Now the dogs are much larger, averaging in the low to mid-70s with some over 80 pounds. And the cages are unchanged from what they were 15 years ago when the dogs were much smaller. I think many of the trainers have been in it so long they don't recognize that change and how big of a difference it makes. Yes, the dogs that weigh 65 pounds are pretty comfortable in the current cages. But those 80 pound dogs look very cramped.

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Marianne Kirkendall, DVM

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Marianne Kirkendall, DVM

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