

# Terms of reference for Review of heights regulations

*NZKC Agility Committee, September 2017*

## **Background information**

In the last eight years there have been two major reviews of dog heights, equipment and competitions mainly related to class structure and graduation. The key considerations driving these changes were stated as being the safety and long-term wellbeing of dogs, and creating an equitable/balanced competition.

There were numerous surveys of members and evidence was gathered on the state of agility in NZ as well as examples from overseas. Meetings were held all over the country and a number of consultation processes were followed before the final regulations were passed.

The changes made have included:-

- 1) the introduction of a micro height category with 4 height categories over all,
- 2) introduction of a split height competition at 15 dogs with mini/micro combination regulations
- 3) New dog height ranges were introduced. Micro: 0 - 325mm, Mini: 326mm - 430mm, Medium: 431mm - 520mm, Maxi: 521+mm
- 4) Maxi jump height was lowered from 675mm to 650mm, long jump shortened, hoop lowered, spread jump altered, A-frame angle standardised.
- 5) Bar width change to 1.2m, diameter no less than 30mm introduced
- 6) Jumpers champion criteria increased from 6 to 8 challenges
- 7) AD and ADXA class availability increased from 6 to 8 per zone
- 8) Qualifying rates of travel introduced for challenges. Minimum rates of travel introduced for all classes
- 9) There was a major financial project with Clubs given choices and financial aid by AC to change their jumps, including buying new jumps and moving to fewer and softer lugs.

### **Impact included:-**

Remeasuring of dogs, changes to procedures for measuring dogs, altering of equipment, changes to club management of events due to split heights, potential costs for clubs and competitors.

## **Rationale and purpose of the review, 2017**

There have been no changes since the last major review was completed approx. four years ago.

In recent times there has been discussion amongst competitors, raising a number of different concerns, and the Agility Committee elected in 2017 has decided the time is right for another review.

## **Scope of the review**

This review will cover aspects of agility that relate to

- safety of competing dogs,
- creating a fair and equitable competition.

It will also look at impacts of the changes on

- competitions, including Inter-Zone teams event and NZDAC finals
- movement through the grades
- acquisition of titles, i.e. maintenance of any desired standards
- financial impact on clubs and individuals

The review will not cover other aspects of agility competitions such as the measuring process or classes that are offered.

## **Objectives of the review**

The critical issues that the AC will be looking to address as part of this review are:

### 1. Dog height classes

- a) Do existing dog height ranges meet requirements for safety/wellbeing for dogs of all heights?
- b) Do existing dog height ranges allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs of all heights and across all zones?
- c) Are there any changes to the dog height classes that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met?

### 2. Jump heights

- a) Do existing jump heights meet requirements for safety/wellbeing for dogs of all heights?
- b) Do existing jump height ranges allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs of all heights and across all zones?
- c) Are there any changes to the jump height that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met??

### 3. Other factors.

Are there other factors that affect the safety of dogs doing agility, in addition to jumping, that could be reviewed?

- a) Regulation and Course design factors
  - i) the number of jumps/obstacles in a course
  - ii) the layout/type of jumps in a course – wings for backside jumps,
  - iii) the number of backside options,
  - iv) minimum standards for spacing between jumps for serpentines etc
- b) training methods such as stopped A-frame contact

#### 4. The education of dog agility participants.

- a) Do agility participants in NZ have ready access to the information and procedures to better ready their dogs for competition agility, and to keep them safe throughout their agility career and beyond? Could this be improved?
- b) Is there information for agility participants so they know how to tell and what to do if their dog gets injured. Could this be improved?
- b) Should we be collecting data on dog injuries in NZ? How is this best done?

#### 5. Split classes

- a) Have the introduction of a split height competition allowed for a fair and equitable competition for dogs of all heights and across all zones?
- b) What, if any, further changes to the splits system would be feasible should it be concluded that fairness has not been adequately addressed?
- c) Evaluate the impact of any changes on splits.

#### 6. Graduation and titles. Look at the different ways dogs can graduate from classes and gain titles and ascertain:-

- b) Are standards being maintained??
- c) Has split class competition impacted on the ability of dogs to move through grades and gain titles?
- d) Is the current structure for class splits the best option to maintain standards and fairness? If not, what structure would best meet these objectives?
- e) Evaluate the impact of any changes on graduation and title acquisition.

### **Methodology for the review**

In order to ensure the achievement of its objectives as well as stakeholder participation and transparency of process, the review will use the following methods to gather/communicate relevant information:

- 1) Formation of a heights review sub-committee - this will include a mix of members from both islands to ensure a good spread of opinions from handlers of all types of dogs.
- 2) Data collection and analyses – information from event results, height databases, class sizes and titles awarded prior to and post the heights changes. This may also include comparisons with international data.
- 2) Surveys – Survey monkey will be used to gather opinion-based information from the agility community.
- 3) Meetings – Meetings will be held across the country to seek opinion and communicate findings and recommendations. These will be attended by a member(s) of the heights review sub-committee.
- 4) Formal submission process – Any proposed changes to regulations that are recommended as part of this review will be subject to a submission process whereby clubs and competitors can provide feedback to the AC.

## Management of the review

The review will be managed by a heights review sub-committee who will report back to the AC. Any changes to regulations that result from the review will be required to be approved by the NZKC Executive Council.

## Composition of the review team

Name	Role
Karen de Wit	Team Leader
Carl Ranford	AC representative
Keri Neilson	External representative
Karen Grant	External representative
Lisa Duff	External representative
Nicola Parmeter	External representative
Kim Nicol	External representative

## Timeframes

Milestone	Expected timeframe	Achieved?
External representation on heights subcommittee confirmed	July 2017	yes
Terms of reference released to clubs and competitors	August 2017	yes
Release of publications and articles relevant to the review	September	
Collection and release of data on heights, show results, class sizes and titles, specifically related to the NZ scene	September	
Collection and release of data related to other Agility organisations	September - December	
Opinion surveys of the agility community carried out	December	
Written report summarising findings and recommendations released to agility community and submissions invited.	January 1 <sup>st</sup> 2018	
Meetings held across zones to communicate findings and seek feedback on recommendations	February/March 2018	
Submission period closes	March 2018	
Feedback to Agility community	April 2018	
If regulation changes are recommended... - Draft regulations prepared (based on report recommendations and submissions received)	April 2018	
- Draft regulations released to agility community for final submissions	May 2018	
- Final regulations prepared and submitted to NZKC Executive Council for approval	June 2018	
- New regulations operative	Jan 2019	