

Terms of reference for Review of Equipment

NZKC Agility Committee, 2017

Background information

In the last ten years there have been few reviews of agility dog equipment in NZ, other than individual COF reviews, alterations to specifications for wing jumps, and heights of hurdles, hoop and long jump as part of the heights review. Specifications on the whole are unchanged since agility began in NZ, and do have in some cases have a large minimum and maximum range of measurements. Innovations including rubber chip contacts, lower slats on contact equipment, weave base changes, wing and tunnel design, introduction of regular COF inspections etc have also taken place, however an overall review has not been done. Recent international concerns regarding safety of the hoop and collapsible tunnel in particular have also impacted NZ agility.

Rationale and purpose of the review, 2017

There has never been a review of all agility equipment from a safety or standardisation point of view. Overseas reactions to collapsible tunnel and hoop incidents, as well as comment regarding length of dogwalk, size of weave poles, breakaway hoops and other agility equipment from the view of standardisation and safety have also been raised by competitors. Variation in equipment currently exists due to differences in specifications and tolerances, and this results in different experiences for dogs around the country.

The Agility Committee 2017 has determined that a review of all equipment is appropriate. The key considerations are :-

- the safety and long-term wellbeing of dogs,
- creating an equitable/balanced competition,
- creating consistency between equipment manufacturers and
- encouraging innovation.

Scope of the review

This review will include:-

- A complete inventory of all clubs competition equipment
- A survey of current NZ manufacturers, what they make, their confidence levels and suggestions
- Investigation into the latest innovations from overseas
- Determine if equipment design and specification impacts on the safety of competing dogs
- Determine if equipment design and specification impact on creating a fair competition for competitors
- Investigation into the consistency or otherwise of existing specifications and design
- Creation of guidelines for manufacturers

- Determine how to encourage innovation & creation of a process to approve new equipment
- Seek suggestions for areas that need innovation/improvement in design.

It will also look at impacts of any change on :-

- finances of AC and clubs
- innovation
- manufacturers
- training and competition of dogs
- COF processes

The review will not cover other aspects of agility equipment such as the judging, the number or type of obstacles required equipment at any level, or the height of hurdles.

Objectives of the review

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

1. Weave poles – bases and poles

- a) Determine if existing weave poles meet requirements for safety for dogs.
- b) Determine if existing weave poles vary too much to allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country.
- c) Investigate any changes to existing weave poles that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met.

2. Collapsible tunnels

- a) Determine if existing Collapsible tunnels meet requirements for safety for dogs.
- b) Determine if existing Collapsible tunnels allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country.
- c) Investigate any changes to the existing Collapsible tunnels that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met.

3. Contact Equipment

- a) Determine if existing Contact Equipment meet requirements for safety for dogs.
- b) Determine if existing Contact Equipment allows for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country.
- c) Investigate any changes to the existing Contact Equipment that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met.

4. Flexible tunnels

- a) Determine if existing Flexible tunnels meet requirements for safety for dogs.
- b) Determine if existing Flexible tunnels allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country.
- c) Investigate any changes to the existing Flexible tunnels that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met??

5. Hoops

- a) Determine if existing Hoops meet requirements for safety for dogs?
- b) Determine if existing Hoops allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country.

c) Investigate any changes to the existing Hoops that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met.

6. Wings

a) Determine if existing Wings meet requirements for safety for dogs.

b) Determine if existing Wings allow for a fair and equitable competition for dogs across all sizes over the country (including stability in differing weather conditions)

c) Investigate any changes to the existing Wings that would improve the safety and fairness of competition, should it be proved they have not been met.

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 an Equipment review sub-committee - this will include a mix of members from both islands to ensure a good spread of knowledge and opinions from all over NZ.
- 2) Identify key stakeholders
- 3) Data collection and analysis – including an equipment profile from clubs, survey of existing equipment manufacturers, information from overseas.
- 4) Surveys – Survey monkey will be used to gather opinion-based information from key stakeholders.
- 5) 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 Equipment review sub-committee.
- 6) Formal submission process – Any proposed changes to regulations, or new processes and procedures that are recommended as part of this review will be subject to a submission process whereby stakeholders can provide feedback to the AC.

Management of the review

The review will be managed by the Equipment 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

Equipment review subcommittee:

Name	Area
Carl Ranford	Eastern NI
Paul Needham	Upper North
Chris Richardson	Upper North
Karen de Wit	Lower North
Wayne Grant	Lower South
Roy Thorndycraft	Lower South

Timeframes

Milestone	Expected timeframe
External representation on Equipment subcommittee confirmed	July 2017
Terms of reference released	August 2017
Opinion surveys of stakeholders carried out	September 2017
Collection and analysis of data on Equipment	Sept-December 2017
Written report summarising findings and recommendations released to stakeholders and submissions invited.	January 1 st 2018
Meetings held across zones to communicate findings and seek feedback on recommendations	February/March 2018
Submission period closes	March 2018
Feedback to stakeholders	April 2018
If required – draft Processes/regulation are prepared (based on report recommendations and submissions received)	April 2018
- Draft regulations/processes released to stakeholders for final submissions	May 2018
- Final regulations prepared and submitted to NZKC Executive Council for approval	June 2018
- New regulations/processes operative	Jan 2019