Submission No 14

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Northern Rivers Veterinary Service

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With reference to the Animal Welfare Bill 2022 in particular

page 9 Division 3 22 (e) declaring surgical artifical insemination of a dog to be a prohibited and restricted procedure.

I strongly disagree with this proposition for many reasons below.

I am a veterinarian with over 25 years experience and have spent the last 20 years in canine reproduction practice. The only alternative to surgical insemination with frozen semen in canines is transcervical insemination (TCI). TCI is an alternative to surgical insemination however the success rate of it is poor even in the most experienced of hands, and depending on what published work you believe. TCI conception rates noted by Stuart Mason in his Elsevier article accepted on 18 June 2014 are 65%. Conception rates in my hands using surgical insemination are over 95%.

The canine breeders using frozen semen as part of their breeding programme are at the pinnacle of breeding. They import semen to increase the genetic pool of their chosen breed, the breed societies or regulatory bodies ie GWIC, QRIC, GRV etc control the breeding life of a bitch and all the approvals to allow breeders to breed and have a breeding licence.

Taking away the option to surgically inseminate a female dog with frozen semen will severely impact the results of breeding programmes, valued bloodlines, valuable frozen semen as the results obtained from using such semen via TCI will be reflected in poorer conception rates, poorer litter size and increased non pregnancies.

TCI requires a bitch to be heavily sedated to allow the invasive procedure while standing up. Many vomit and can aspirate gastric contents while sedated. The risk of the endoscope to guide a catheter through the cervix has risk of perforation of the vaginal tract and enter the abdominal cavity. All these potentials are not discussed in Dr Stuart Masons article nor the potential reasons for his statistic of 65% conception using TCI vs 45% using frozen surgical. In his article he uses pregnancy as the complete determinant of success and this is flawed. It does not note number of puppies in the pregnancy, there is no note of timing of insemination as a reason for poor surgical insemination result. As noted above my success rate using frozen surgical insemination is over 95% so for him to have a result of 45% using a similar method begs a question of why does one veterinarian get such a superior result to another?? In addition the number of surgical candidates is inadequate to use as a comparison ie 118 inseminations all up abnormally skewed in the direction of TCI that is 78 TCI 40 Surgical. The author clearly has a conflict and chooses TCI over surgical anyway and this makes the article flawed.

The same article notes severe complications post surgical insemination in their hands ie Monash Veterinary Clinic Victoria being "anaesthesia-induced bradycardia during surgery, significant post surgery pain, seroma formation over the abdominal incision and delayed wound healing" In thousands of surgical inseminations I have never encountered a single one of these as a post surgery complication.

Surgical insemination is a veterinary procedure and the use of it is a specialised area. I have spent years perfecting the procedure and as such get very good results and am recognised Australia wide. The patients are looked after with utmost of care. They are prized breeding stock and the owners are wanting to preserve the genetics for the future. Surgical insemination is not a painful procedure

and we use non steroidal anti-inflammatories and analgesics such as Butorphanol to ensure there is no intraoperative or postoperative pain.

Surgical insemination approach allows us to assess any uterine abnormalities that is impossible to detect using TCI. Any problems with physical development of the uterus can be determined and if there are defects of the uterus that would preclude breeding it can be decided during surgery. There can be congenital or development defects of the uterus and ovaries that would result in non pregnancy or wastage of valuable frozen semen and none of that could be detected if TCI is the only method of insemination.

Surgical insemination is a minimally invasive procedure, and is a quick procedure in the hands of an experienced reproduction veterinarian. Reports of severe pain, and post operation complications are false and used by the few veterinarians performing TCI to enforce it(surgical insemination) to be banned.

The equipment required to perform TCI is expensive and the TCI procedure can take a long time(if the cervix is hard to locate) in some bitches which is a welfare issue in itself.

Banning surgical insemination would be a back ward step in canine reproduction.

We have made huge advanced in the area of canine reproduction over the last 15 years. Developing better semen extenders, perfecting insemination techniques and timing, learning techniques to improve fertilisation rates to name a few.

Huge amounts of money are spent by breeders importing semen and the potential wastage of this using an inferior method of TCI is problematic.

Both TCI and Surgical insemination have been around for many years, breeders have often tried both options but the results are clear and have them returning to surgical insemination as the preferred option simply because of results.

Our breeding clients are not the back yard breeders, breeding cross bred dogs that are not regulated or controlled by any government body. Our breeders are spending money on hip and elbow schemes and DNA breed profiles prior to breeding, complying to the the DPI protocols already in place for registered breeders. They are registered breeders, using frozen semen to continue and improve their breed genetics, and the monetary gain is not usually their main priority.

Dr Liz Brown

Northern Rivers Veterinary Service Casino NSW 2470