

Issue

The NSW RSPCA is concerned that the laws on controlling working dogs when not at work are not being followed by all farmers. They have requested the Association alert members of these laws to improve the welfare of working dogs and to avoid farmers being issued on the spot fines by RSPCA inspectors.

Background

The NSW Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act states that:

- A person shall not tether an animal for an unreasonable length of time or by means of an unreasonably heavy, or unreasonably short, tether.
- A person in charge of an animal which is confined shall not fail to provide the animal with adequate exercise... and is required to be released from confinement during a 24 hour period.

Options for working dogs when not working are to

- Tether them to a long wire run
- House them in a caged run
- Tether them on a long, light chain and tethered in a way that avoids an accident such as the tether shortening or causing choking
- Use your own judgement about whether these options provide “adequate exercise” if dogs have not been released during a 24 hour period

Create an environment for the dogs that shows dogs are cared for each 24 hours

- Shelter must be provided
- Keep the area clear of dangerous objects
- Clear the area of anything that can interact with a tether
- Clear the area of faeces
- Have water available and keep it of reasonable quality

Dogs should also be tied on or confined on the back of utes on public roads to keep them safe and if they are restrained for a lengthy time shelter should be provided, either on the ute or by parking in a place protected from heat or cold