

# Report on Special General Meetings, 31 May 2008



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Nobody will argue that a Constitution is essential for 'good order' in a member organisation, but it can also be frustratingly restrictive when people have done a lot of work and are eager to move forward.

This is the Editor's conclusion after attending the SABBA Special General Meetings, convened for Saturday 31 May. These meetings followed the cancellation of the Annual General Meeting in February, and the subsequent resignation of about half of the SABBA Board.

The stalwarts and new Board members (appointed in terms of the Constitution) ensured that SABBA business carried on as usual. Despite critics' predictions, the Association rapidly regained momentum and experienced a growth in membership and dog registrations in the last three months.

As a member, I was impressed with the improved communications from the Association, and looked forward to the Special General Meetings, where I expected a similar trend in actions. This was not the case,, and members – not the Board – delayed processes.

For one, the proposed constitutional changes were referred back to the Board for resubmission to the Annual General Meeting in February next year. In retrospect, this was possibly for the best. The Board, with six new members, seems to be doing a good job. Distance elections would have required at least two months to complete as well as a lot of money and effort. What SABBA needs most now is continuity and stability.

The overview below highlights the most important discussions and decisions:

## **Board members and elections**

The proposed constitutional changes make provision for distance elections of Board members by members in their own regions. The meeting requested the Board to reconsider the current demarcation of regions to ensure the best possible representation according to membership distribution, e.g. more Board members in large regions, and consolidation of smaller regions.

SABBA will also no longer elect honorary life members. The meeting agreed that SABBA's function is to serve the Boerboel breed, and not to honour individuals.

## **Progeny evaluation**

The Genetics Committee is eager to start implementing progeny evaluation, but realises that such a system will require open mindedness, the widest possible participation by breeders and owners, and ongoing review. The objective is to obtain information on genetic abilities to identify the best breeding dogs. The evaluation process will include temperament testing (recommended for urgent implementation). Current priorities are to review the Appraisal Chart and develop a data processing system. Contact Lukas van Vuuren, [lukas@spitsvuurboerboele.co.za](mailto:lukas@spitsvuurboerboele.co.za) for further information.

## **Tail docking**

There is no clarity on the legal enforcing of the ban on tail docking in South Africa, announced by the SA Veterinary Council. KUSA's standpoint is that tail docking should remain a matter of choice, and have sought legal advice.

Helmut Redtenbacher, Chairman of the Dobermann Club of Northern Transvaal, and member of KUSA's Tail-docking Sub-committee, challenged the legality of the ban. 'To the best of my knowledge there have been no changes to the law. In presenting the ban as a *fait accompli*, the SAVC is using the threat of *possible* prosecution by the SPCA in terms of the Animals Protection Act. The irony is that they are not empowered to prosecute laypersons, and by their own admission, can only prosecute veterinarians, after a court of law had convicted them. It would be difficult for the prosecution to prove that a dog was treated in a 'cruel and inhumane manner' or 'maimed'. It is also highly unlikely that a court would find anybody guilty of a criminal offence for performing a procedure that has been done for many years.' said Redtenbacher. He invited persons who wished to discuss the matter further to contact him on 0836530837 or e-mail: [redford@lantic.net](mailto:redford@lantic.net).

## **Microchips**

The Board decided that from 1 January 2009, microchips would be compulsory only for dogs on the Stud Register and for dogs to be exported. The motivation is that microchips may serve to identify a dog, but not to confirm its pedigree. Members agreed that the Board should investigate more trustworthy alternatives to ensure positive identification of dogs and their origin.

## **Registration of 'non-member' dogs**

Members were divided on whether SABBA should continue to register dogs bred by members of other Boerboel associations. Arguments against such a step included concern over differences in appraisal standards, and the reliability of information. After voting on the matter, the meeting resolved that SABBA should accept any Boerboel provided its pedigree can be traced, and it is appraised at no less than 80%. This issue will be discussed further at the next AGM.

## **Relationship with other organisations**

The Board recommended an organisational relationship of co-operation and consultation - but not affiliation - with KUSA. The motivation was that each organisation fulfilled a unique role. KUSA is a registering body for different dog breeds. SABBA's declared role is to promote and ennoble the Boerboel, and to maintain its own database. However, SABBA will not object to individual members joining KUSA for reasons of their own, e.g. where international organisations require affiliation or to participate in KUSA shows.

Members noted with appreciation that the EBBASA and SABBA Boards planned to meet soon to discuss future co-operation and possible affiliation. They urged the Board in several instances to make every effort to unite the Boerboel community in the interest of the future of the breed. Retiring life member Bert Gräbe, stressed this point in his farewell message. He said the only issues that should ever be brought to SABBA were those concerning the Boerboel, and not personal differences.

## **World Boerboel Auction and Show**

These events will follow on the six regional shows. Several members suggested that it would be more affordable and practical to hold the World Auction and Show on the same day. This was agreed to and the date was set for Saturday 25 October, at the Afridome in Parys in the Free State. Last year's shows were well received, and the Show Committee is making every effort to streamline proceedings, e.g. review of the appraisal criteria and training of judges. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the Auction – reintroduced after several years – where the majority of buyers will possibly be breeders.

## **2008 SABBA Board members**

Members who require further information on the meeting or other SABBA matter are welcome to contact the Chairman, Vice Chairman or their Board members:

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