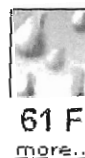




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Controversies spring up at dog auction

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By Patricia Morrison, News Editor

ODON -- Controversies sprang up during the area's first dog auction Saturday when people were escorted from the auction site for taking pictures of dogs as they awaited sale. County deputies were in uniform at the site.

Representatives from both the American Kennel Club and the American Kennel Association were on hand, but saw the dog auction in such a different light it reportedly almost led to violence.

Russell Dowell, an executive field agent for the AKC, was checking all AKC registered dogs for sale to assure they met AKC standards and were micro-chipped. While independent breeders may sell unmicrochipped dogs, all dogs selling at auction with AKC papers must have the identifying microchip in place.

One local breeder took his three cocker spaniel puppies to the veterinarian that morning after learning of the regulation and had the microchips inserted in order to sell the dogs with their papers.

"I'm just here to be sure they go by the rules of the AKC," Dowell said. "All dogs sold through an auction have to be microchipped."

Dowell made the trip from the St. Louis office which oversees Indiana and surrounding states. He said this was his first auction and did not want to comment on it as that was "not why he was here."

While Dowell was busy running the scanner over dogs to check for microchips, AKA representative Dan Cullison from Linton said he was pleased with the auction.

"I don't see anything wrong with it," he said. "I've even

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registered a few dogs, as long as they have their papers. I haven't seen any dogs that look mistreated. They're in small pens, but that's just temporary."

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Dowell, who looked as if he was beginning to lose his patience as the day wore on, at one point was looking for the representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture who was reported to be on the premises.

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"I'm looking for the USDA fellow," he said. "I can't imagine he's here seeing all this."

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Cullison said Dowell finally decided to pull all the papers of all AKC registered dogs going through the auction. The two men disagreed about what was going on and, according to Cullison, Dowell tried to run him down as he left the parking lot. Cullison reported the incident to the Daviess County Sheriff's Department.

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According to AKC spokeswoman Daisy Oakes, the organization does not comment on specific cases that are under investigation, but it is the policy of the AKC to oppose auctions and raffles as "not to be reasonable and appropriate methods to obtain or transfer dogs." AKC's current inspection program includes kennels and individuals offering dogs for sale at auctions.

According to policy, "any dog sold at auctions that is under 8 weeks of age or without microchip identification will be ineligible for AKC registration and shall be placed on permanent referral."

AKC representatives have the option to pull the papers of individual dogs and/or the kennels that are selling a number of dogs.

"They could put the individual on hold, or could fine someone," Oakes said.

"Sometimes dogs are dual registered," she commented, as many dogs sold at the auction were AKA, AKC and CKC (Continental Kennel Club) registered. "That way if there's a stop on the dog, with dual registry they sell it under the other paper."

Auctioneer Mark Graber commented that this was all new to him. "We're just learning how to do this," he said. He added that the paperwork on each dog was confusing and that they should have had tags on the cages to help people find the animals they were interested in buying.

People in the crowd were willing to help the auctioneer when he misnamed breeds of dogs as they were put on the auction block. They were also quick to speak up when a dog was presented as being "young," when a check of the teeth told otherwise.

As Graber said, "I'm used to selling horses. This is new to me."