



UNITED SCHUTZHUND CLUBS OF AMERICA
For the German Shepherd Dog

Dear Friends of the German Shepherd Dog:

USCA has been made aware of a movement toward a WUSV rule that imposes an international ban on the use of e-collars and possibly other training devices. USCA strongly opposes such restrictions for the reasons explained in this memorandum, which is addressed to our members and all WUSV organizations. Through its existing rules, USCA actively supports the continued progress of our programs through responsible and humane use of training methods. USCA asks the WUSV to reconsider this notion and urges other WUSV organizations to join us in support of our opposition.

1. **USCA opposes any international rule that would dictate directly or indirectly what is or is not lawful in other countries.** Unlike Germany, there is no legislation restricting e-collar use in the United States or in the majority of WUSV member countries. However, animal abuse is unlawful in the United States and in most, if not all, WUSV member countries. Legislation directed to equipment cannot prevent abuse, as any training method can be abused. Our AKC has adhered to this position for nearly two decades, "The AKC recognizes that special training collars may be an effective and useful management device, when properly used . . ." USCA does not intend to impose a rule on our members that is legal in our country.
2. **USCA opposes any international rule that governs training. To our knowledge, there has never been such a rule.** There are rules, policies, and procedures that cover what is and is not allowed at official events. Further, the rules have given direction to our judges to reward performance that evidences joy, harmony, and motivation. One only has to look at performances from just a few years ago to see the major impact this has had. *This current standard of evaluation of a dog's performance, strongly based on devotion to the handler with a free and natural performance showing no stress or avoidance in the execution of the trial exercises accomplishes the objectives and eliminates the need for training method specific bans.*
3. **This proposal would not accomplish the goal of eliminating abuse and could have probable unintended consequences.** IPO rules have evolved for a variety of factors to support evolving goals such as speeding up the events, eliminating pieces that add no value, keeping up with increasingly better training, and evidencing increased control of our dogs. This final goal would be nearly impossible without the use of specific collars and methods; banning them could lead to dogs that no longer present such a controlled picture to the public. Further, without changing the rules to allow for less control, it may push trainers to use methods that truly are not humane. Inhumane treatment of animals stems not from methods or devices, but from the people using them. USCA supports the education and humane use of training methods and will continue to support the development and continuous improvement of training practices and overall trial pictures that are both harmonious and controlled.



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Finally, and contrary to the opinion recently expressed, we applaud and support the lifetime achievements of our member, Debbie Zappia. We take great exception to the negative reference to her and a picture of her with an e-collar on her dog. Debbie is one of the most caring, developing, innovative, fair trainers to ever participate in our sport and more broadly, in all of dog training. Further, she is an unbelievably generous coach, who is willing to share any and all information to which she has access. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of working with Debbie has witnessed the thousands of repetitions with minute, broken down pieces of an exercise to ensure that her dog completely understands. We would invite anyone to review *every* performance of Iron and spend time with Debbie and Iron to witness the incredible bond and superior relationship she has with her dog. There is nothing inhumane or unfair in what she does. Insinuation that she is inhumane, if that was the intent, necessitates an apology.

USCA and its members respect the SV, WUSV member organizations, the WUSV, and the WUSV President for their dedication and fully appreciate their highest regard for the German Shepherd Dog. USCA joins with them by consistently promoting responsible and humane training, showing, and competition. USCA has developed and implemented policies and safeguards that are commensurate with the standards of the finest working dog organizations in the world to educate, enforce, and protect the safety of both our dogs and membership. These include, but are not limited to: An Aggressive Dog Policy, Helper and Track Layer Programs, a Judges Program, funding for regional education, and training seminars to provide continued education. Further, USCA members have attained great levels of success in show and performance trials including the current 2015 World Champion, many WUSV and FCI World Championship teams, regional/club/national events, demonstrations, and seminars. We firmly support and applaud these accomplishments of our members and recognize the skills they have demonstrated in balanced and responsible training. However, USCA strongly disagrees with any proposal for rules, policies, or procedures that would legislate the choice of training equipment. That would be a dangerous path, would not prevent abuse, ignores our progress, and should be rejected.

I thank each of you for time and effort in reading and considering the views expressed within. We ask that you, regardless of your position of support or dissent, communicate your member clubs' position to Dr. Henry Messler. We know that he is a thoughtful, dedicated, and open-minded individual, who will appreciate the feedback for a greater understanding of the sentiments of the WUSV member countries with regard to this issue.

Sincerely,

Jim Alloway

President - United Schutzhund Clubs of America