Accepted Manuscript

Electronic training devices: discussion on the pros and cons of their use in dogs as a basis for the position statement of the European Society of Veterinary Clinical Ethology (ESVCE)

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PII: S1558-7878(18)30010-8

DOI: 10.1016/j.jveb.2018.02.006

Reference: JVEB 1122

To appear in: Journal of Veterinary Behavior

Received Date: 15 January 2018

Accepted Date: 24 February 2018

Please cite this article as: Masson, S., Vega, S.d.I., Gazzano, A., Mariti, C., Da Graça Pereira, G., Halsberghe, C., Leyvraz, A.M., McPeake, K., Schoening, B., Electronic training devices: discussion on the pros and cons of their use in dogs as a basis for the position statement of the European Society of Veterinary Clinical Ethology (ESVCE), *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.jveb.2018.02.006.

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Title Page:

Title: Electronic training devices: discussion on the pros and cons of their use in dogs as a basis for the position statement of the European Society of Veterinary Clinical Ethology (ESVCE).

Article type: Review Article.

Keywords: dog welfare; dog training; aversive training techniques; electric collar.

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Abstract

In recent years, the affirmation of a greater ethical sense and research generating a better knowledge of the mechanisms of animal learning, evidence of the existence of an animal mind), and studies on the dog-human attachment bond have led to changes in the dog-human relationship. These changes have caused a notable improvement in dog training techniques. Increased emphasis on dog welfare, overall, led to questioning of many training techniques and tools that used aversive means. Recent research on the use of aversive training devices has been performed and, on this basis it has been possible to create guidelines to inform the public about utility and the possible detriments related to the use of these devices as a tool in dog training. The European Society of Clinical Animal Ethology (ESVCE) has released a public position statement based on the current scientific information available on e-collars, punitive training techniques and canine welfare. This paper elaborates and discusses the arguments "pro and contra the use of e-collars and aversive training methods" leading to the statement in more detail. As a conclusion, ESVCE strongly opposes the use of e-collars in dog training, and urges all European countries to take an interest in and position on this welfare matter.

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