



Jim Hutchins
President, Australian Cattle Dog Club of America
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Ms. M. Sue Richey, Performance Events
The American Kennel Club
5580 Centerview Drive
Raleigh, NC 27606-3390

Dear Ms. Richey:

Thank you for your response to our March letter to the AKC Board of Directors. Unfortunately, I believe our original concerns were not directly addressed and many underlying issues were not resolved to our satisfaction. The ACDCA Board of Directors still feels that the club was not fully involved in the advisory process. To our knowledge, the "amended" process you mention was not communicated at any time to our parent club or to our Herding Advisory Delegate. There is no written notice of such an amendment. There were no meetings or discussion by the Herding Advisory Delegates to provide input to the process.

The stated purpose of the herding program is, "to preserve and develop the herding skills inherent in the herding breeds and to demonstrate that they can perform the useful functions for which they were originally bred." Thus the program is intended to observe and quantify the various abilities of AKC herding breeds. It seems reasonable that Herding Breed member clubs should be consulted as to how their breed functions might be observed, quantified, affected or represented by any changes to the program. We wonder how twenty eligible herding breed parent clubs could represent their breed interests in a process involving one hundred and twenty three licensed herding clubs? Even if they all agreed, they could not counter one hundred and three opposing "popular" votes. Because of this, we believe the process is seriously flawed.

We are puzzled as to how to respond to the suggestion we offer a "special award" instead of championship points for **cattle** work at the Australian **Cattle** Dog National Specialty, while awarding points for **sheep** in the adjacent arena. Does this suggestion conform to the AKC mission statement or the purpose of the herding program? Since you use comparisons to conformation, could such a suggestion be made for specialty conformation shows? The answer is clearly "no". Our response? This suggestion is completely unacceptable to the ACDCA.

Australian Cattle Dogs have been competing in AKC Herding Events for eleven years and comprise approximately twenty-five percent of AKC Herding entries. The ACDCA Board represents those same interests. Nine of the eleven ACDCA officers compete in AKC performance events. They account for numerous AKC herding titles including five AKC Herding Champions, two AKC Dual Champions, the top working and producing Australian Cattle Dogs for the last ten years and over 150 years cumulative experience in ranching, dairy and herding trial experience. Advising the ACDCA Board is the ACDCA Herding Committee, representing another seven Herding Champions, four Dual Champions and over 200 years of cumulative ranching and trialing experience. We have a good deal of experience with the advisory process having participated in the two previous advisory Committees in 1991 and 1995. With this experience in mind, the ACDCA has made three suggestions to the AKC Directors that resolve our breed-related issues.

Our three recommendations to the Board are as follows:

- Provide a representative advisory committee process. At a minimum, the herding breed parent clubs should have the opportunity to examine and comment upon proposed changes. We ask that you involve the herding breed parent clubs in any existing or on-going changes to any of the regulations or courses. In the future, any regulation changes or significant changes in interpretation should involve all parties with an interest in the outcome: the clubs, the fancy and judges.
- Add stock and course specific designations to the Herding Champion title as was previously approved by the AKC Board for the Herding Started, Herding Intermediate, and Herding Excellent titles. This addition would protect our breed by accurately labeling the type of work done. This addition does not affect any proposed regulation changes or negatively affect any other breed. It will increase entries by existing Herding Champions.
- Discontinue awarding Herding Champion points for High in Trial. Award Herding Champion points to HX dogs by separately listing and sorting advanced scores on each type of stock. Points for each stock type would be calculated separately, using the numeric schedule on page 33 of the current regulations. We are asking to differentiate between stock types to award points instead of listing all scores together regardless of stock. Since HX titled dogs can currently earn Herding Championship points only on the stock and courses where they earned the HX, the data entry system to award points according to stock is already in place. Thus the type of work required for each type of livestock would be separately evaluated and rewarded, which is the intent of offering different types of stock at trials to begin with. How Herding Champion points are awarded would then be consistent with how they are awarded in conformation and obedience. This addition leaves the revision providing for a single High in Trial intact. Still, it properly recognizes the inherent abilities of *all* of our herding breeds. We believe this change would be administrative and would not alter any proposed regulation change or negatively affect any other breed.

The ACDCA wishes to thank you and the AKC Board of Directors in advance for considering our suggested solutions.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Hutchins
President, Australian Cattle Dog Club of America, Inc.

cc: AKC Board of Directors
Mr. William Speck, AKC Performance Events
Mrs. Kathryn Hamilton, ACDCA AKC Delegate
Mrs. Pamela Mansfield, ACDCA Secretary