

*These notes refer to the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland)  
2011 (c.16) which received Royal Assent on 29 March 2011*

# Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS**

#### **Part 2 - Protection of Animals**

##### **Prevention of Harm**

##### ***Section 6 – Docking of dogs’ tails***

This section prohibits the docking of a dog’s tail, otherwise than for the purposes of its medical treatment by a veterinary surgeon or to safeguard its life. Subsections (4) – (18) provide an exemption subject to certain conditions for certified working dogs involved in law enforcement, lawful pest control or lawful shooting of animals. Schedule 1 sets out the breeds to which an exemption may apply. It will be an offence if a dog is docked under this exemption and not identified in accordance with regulations made by the Department. It will also be an offence to knowingly give false information to a veterinary surgeon in connection with the obtaining of certification for a dog. In addition it will be an offence to take, or cause another person to take, a dog from Northern Ireland for the purpose of having the whole or any part of its tail docked. The section also introduces a ban on the showing of dogs where the tail was docked after the coming into operation of section 6. Subsection (13) provides an exemption which allows a subsection 4 dog to be shown in circumstances where it can demonstrate its working ability.