

## Aanmeldingsformulier voor proeven met gewervelde dieren.

Secretariaat DEC

Aanvrager:  
Afdeling:

Titel dierproef: Owner-dog relations

Aanmeldcode / Protocol: 2011100.a

Stadia van de proef:

10-10-2011	Aangemeld	
24-10-2011	Wijzigen	Secretaris van de DEC
26-10-2011	Gekopieerd	

Is deze proef wetenschappelijk getoetst en goedgekeurd? Ja

Toelichting: study is approved by [redacted] and supervised / conducted by [redacted]  
[redacted], who have multiple publications on behaviour research in dogs and ([redacted]) practical experience in testing dogs and giving behavioural therapy.

### 1.a. Met dit onderzoek te beantwoorden concrete vraag:

F. Wetenschappelijke vraag m.b.t. gedrag van dieren

The present study aims to determine which aspects of owner-dog relationships relate to problem behaviours in privately owned dogs. Firstly, the personalities of both dogs and owners, including how these match, are assessed and associated with owner-reported problem behaviour in the dog. Secondly, the direct effects of owner-behaviour on their dog's behaviour is determined.

The findings provide insight in the possible causes of problem behaviour in privately-owned dogs and help to construct strategies to prevent and reduce it.

### 1.b. Het uiteindelijk doel (Maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijke relevantie):

Doel:

Fear and aggression related problem behaviours in dogs have substantial impact on humans society and dog welfare. For example, dog bites occur at a frequency of about 18 per 1000 US people per year, of which 3 out of 18 seek medical help (Sacks et al., 1996; Overall and Love, 2001). In the Netherlands, where the dog to human ratio is about 1 : 9 or half that of the US, an annual incidence of 8.3 dog bites per 1000 people has been reported recently, with about 3 per 1000 people seeking medical care (Cornelissen and Hopster, 2009). Regarding the welfare of dogs, in a study of 12 different animal shelters across the USA, 40% of relinquishing owners cited behavioral problems as one of the reasons for surrendering a dog and of these, aggression was the most frequently (40%) cited problem (Salman et al., 1998).

It is assumed that the owner-dog relationship plays an important role in the development and persistence of problem behaviour in privately owned dogs. Personalities of owners may be (relatively) incompatible with the nature and personality of their dogs, increasing the risk of the dogs developing unwanted behaviours. This could in part results from dogs responding in a direct way to subtle cues

(subconsciously) provided by the owner in relevant situations, for example when encountering other dogs. The present study aims to investigate how different aspects of owner-dog relationships relate to problem behaviours in privately owned dogs. Such knowledge can help to construct guidelines for (candidate) owners for preventing and reducing problem behaviours in privately-owned dogs.

**1.c. Lekensamenvatting:**

**2. Gepland vanaf:** 01-11-2011 tot 01-05-2012

**3. Diersoort:** honden ; **Totaal aantal:** 1

**4.a. Nadere aanduiding gebruikte dieren:**

Privately-owned dogs

**4.b. Motivatie waarom is gekozen voor deze diersoort:**

Problems and research questions are largely specific to owner-dog combinations and are, therefore, investigated in the target species.

**4.c. Toelichting voor het aantal gebruikte dieren:**

The scores from an earlier behaviour study with privately-owned dogs ( Guido Bosch, Bonne Beerda, Anton C. Beynen, Joanne A.M. van der Borg, Antonius F.B. van der Poel, Wouter H. Hendriks. Dietary tryptophan supplementation in privately owned mildly anxious dogs. Applied Animal Behaviour Science 121 (2009) 197-205) were used for a post-hoc statistical power analysis. The minimal difference for significant contrasts (between 2 diets) in scores for confidence during an open-field test and the scores for arousal and low posture during a owner-separation test were about 20% and 30%, respectively, of the mean (control diet) scores. In this study a total of 73 dogs were tested. This illustrates that although such behaviour studies with about 70 dogs are accepted by the scientific community, the numbers are relatively low when the experimental factor of interest has more than 2 levels or the readout parameter has a discrete rather than continuous nature. The aim of the present study is to include up to 90 dog-owner combinations.

**4.d. Herkomst:** A. van gereg. fok/toeleveringsbedrijf in Nederland

**Toelichting:**

Privately-owned dogs

**5.a. Accommodatie:** Geen van deze (toelichten)

Behaviour tests are designed such that they can be performed on different locations, including training fields.

This implies that different test environments will be used.

**5.b. Huisvesting & Verzorging:**

Does not apply

**5.c. Voeding:**

Does not apply

**6.a. Proefschema / proefbehandelingen:**

Three types of behaviour tests are performed. The principles of the tests are explained, but details may differ depending on the locations of the tests. In part, dog-owners are invited to come to [REDACTED], but to obtain sufficient sample size it is expected to be necessary to organize (some) behaviour tests 'on location' (e.g. at training schools). Owners have a say in which behaviour tests (or measurements) they want to participate and this implies that dogs will not participate in all of the following tests; the maximum time that owner-dog combinations are present for

tests in Wageningen is set at 2 hours. This includes pause and play time between tests to facilitate relaxation between tasks and prevent carry-over effects. In general, behaviour tests involve task-performance for food rewards and these are expected to be pleasurable to the dogs. Tests that evoke reactions to stimuli (see section 3) may cause a degree of surprise / startle in some sensitive dogs and, thus, could cause some short-lasting stress. All tests are performed in the presence of the dogs' owners.

### 1. Delayed reward and reversed reward tests

Neuroimaging studies in humans have identified 3 main brain cell circuits that control whether or not people aggress (Coccaro et al., 2011). The generator of fear/anger (amygdala / hypothalamus) is controlled by prefrontal cortex centres that affect impulse control and decision making. The functioning of the latter manifests in the ability to switch between behaviour strategies (e.g. in reversed-reward tests) and in the (in)sensitivity to social cues. Impulse control shows for example in delayed-reward tests. Here, such tests are used to assess traits in privately-owned dogs that possibly explain the degree to which dogs show problem behaviour.

Reversed reward test may be performed in two fashions. Earlier we used a protocol where dogs learned in 10 choices that by touching a blue beaker (up side down which a food treat under it) they obtained a food reward, whereas touching the red beaker was non-rewarding. After this training, the dogs' responses were observed during 10 trials when the red instead of blue beaker became rewarding.

Alternatively, dogs are given the opportunity to go left or right in a T-maze. Initially going left is rewarded by receiving a food reward or having a playful interaction with the owner. After a maximum of 10 choices, another 10 choices are observed when the opposite one (in this case right) is rewarding.

Delayed reward tests are conducted again in two different forms. The procedure used earlier by us involves that dogs are presented a relatively small food treat together with a larger one. Choosing the small reward implies that it is given immediately to the dog, when the larger reward is selected an increasing delay time (2,4,6,8,...seconds) until the reward is given is imposed. The delay-time that is tolerated by an individual mirrors its impulse control.

Alternatively, dogs are given the opportunity to associate walking to a specific section of the room (or object in it) with receiving a food reward, given that a (low intensity) tone of high frequency is played back at the time of choice; during the playback of a low frequency tone the approach response is not rewarded. Next, a sweep tone that increases from low frequency to high frequency is played back and the frequency at which a dog performs the approach response is taken as a measure of impulse control.

### 2. Cognition tests

The occurrence of problem behaviour (especially those that are invariant and rigid in character) has been linked to a shift from high brain centre control (e.g. hippocampus) of behaviour towards low brain centre (e.g. basal ganglia) control (for a review see Toates, 2005. Cognition, motivation, emotion and action: a dynamic and vulnerable interdependence. *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* 86: 173-204). This fits with the aforementioned assumption that appropriate function of prefrontal cortex areas (i.e. higher brain centres) are necessary for normal expression of fear/anger-related behaviour. Behaviour tests that measure general cognitive capacity (intelligence) are included in the present study to test if this explains variation in the degree to which dogs show problem behaviour.

A number of 'pet activity toys' (see for examples [www.nina-ottosson.com](http://www.nina-ottosson.com)) are available to dog-owners that can be used to challenge their dogs in solving problem tasks for food rewards. Such 'puzzles' are of different complexity and have been used earlier by us to measuring cognitive ability in privately-owned dogs.

### 3. Models for testing direct effects of owner behaviour on responses in dogs

Dogs' responses to threatening stimuli may in part be determined by the way owners behave in such situations. To test this, dog-owner combinations are exposed to (daily occurring) stimuli that evoke interest and reactions in dogs and during which the owner behaves differently (because of prior instructions how to behave or being aware / unaware of the stimulus). Also, an insensitivity to social cues has been identified as a risk factor for aggression and we are interested if dogs can discriminate between intraspecific (dog-dog) friendly and agonistic signals. Physiological parameters indicative of arousal could help to correctly interpret behavioural findings.

3a. Owners are asked to walk a specified route (about 20 meter) with their dog on leash, along a canvas barrier that at parts is open from floor to ~ 75 cm height. The openings are thus clearly visible for the dogs but less so for the owners. After 3 control runs, a dummy (plastic) dog is placed near one of the canvas openings, making it visible to the dog but not owner. The reactions of both dogs and owner are recorded, with owners having been informed (knowledgeable owners) or not (unknowledgeable owners) about the presence of a 'dog'. Thus it is tested if it matters for the dogs reactions what the owner expects to happen. Detailed behavioural observations should reveal direct responses of the dogs to behaviour of the owner.

One run (3 in total) takes about 20 seconds.

3b. Owner are asked to take a position with their dogs and are instructed to, following the stimulus, 1. act as they would do normally, 2. do nothing or 3. extensively reassure their dogs and pet it. Next, a person wearing a striking outfit (e.g. a mask) is slowly walking toward the owner-dog combination approaching them up to about 2 meters after which to turn and walk away. The same procedure (with different outfits) is repeated 3 times, once for each specific instruction. Thus, it investigated if the dogs' responses to a strange event is modulated by how the owner acts. Detailed behavioural observations should reveal what owner signals influence the dogs' behaviour especially.

One test-trial (3 in total) takes about 30 seconds.

3c. Intraspecific cues that signal friendliness or fear/aggression are presented to a dog and it is observed if dogs respond differently to them. It is hypothesized that dogs that respond nonspecifically are more prone to behave aggressively. Cues may be either facial expressions and body/tail positions (dummy dogs or video recordings) or play backs of vocalizations.

Presentations (max 3 repetitions per dog) last about 30 seconds.

3d. For a more accurate interpretation of behavioural observations collected during the tests described under 3.), we aim to collect supporting physiological measurements that should assess levels of arousal. Such measurements are non-invasive and include heart rate measurements (using the Polar sport tester), skin temperature and salivary cortisol. The latter implies that 2 saliva samples are taken (before and after the procedure) by rotating cottons buds in the cheek pouches of the dogs for 45 seconds. Physiological measures are collected in only a subset of the total sample of dogs and in prior consultation with the owner.

**6.b. Mate van ongerief:** A. Gering

**6.c. Waaruit bestaat het ongerief en hoe bent u tot uw inschatting van de mate van ongerief gekomen?**

Behaviour tests that involve problem solving tasks involve working, in company with their owner, for food items and is assumed to be rewarding to the dogs.

Reactions to unexpected experimental stimuli (which mimic daily life stimuli) may trigger some startle, but this will be only short lasting (seconds) and in the company of their owner. Physiological measurements in a subset of the dogs are non-invasive.

**7. Welke maatregelen heeft u getroffen om het ongerief tot een minimum te beperken?**

**Anesthesie:** A. Niet toegepast (geen aanleiding).

**Pijnbestrijding:** A. Wordt niet toegepast omdat hiertoe geen aanleiding bestaat.

Tests are performed in the presence of the owner and those that, in some individuals, may cause startle last only seconds.

The stimuli used mimic those that occur in the daily life of dogs and are of low to moderate intensity.

**8. Toestand van dieren na einde van de proef:** Het dier is na de proef in leven gelaten.

**Toelichting:**

Dogs return home with owners

Problems and research questions are largely specific to owner-dog combinations and are, therefore, investigated in the target species.

[REDACTED]

[illegible]

## Aanmeldingsformulier voor proeven met gewervelde dieren.

Secretariaat DEC

Aanvrager:  
Afdeling:

Titel dierproef: Owner-dog relations

Aanmeldcode / Protocol: 2011100.b

Stadia van de proef:

26-10-2011	Aangemeld		
31-10-2011	Positief advies na behandeling KC		Secretaris van de DEC
25-09-2012	Opmerkingen		
28-09-2012	Welzijnsevaluatie aangemaakt		
28-09-2012	Welzijnsevaluatie aangemeld		
09-10-2012	Welzijnsevaluatie goedgekeurd		

Is deze proef wetenschappelijk getoetst en goedgekeurd? Ja

Toelichting: study is approved by [redacted] and supervised / conducted by [redacted]  
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It is assumed that the owner-dog relationship plays an important role in the development and persistence

of problem behaviour in privately owned dogs. Personalities of owners may be (relatively) incompatible with the nature and personality of their dogs, increasing the risk of the dogs developing unwanted behaviours. This could in part result from dogs responding in a direct way to subtle cues (subconsciously) provided by the owner in relevant situations, for example when encountering other dogs. The present study aims to investigate how different aspects of owner-dog relationships relate to problem behaviours in privately owned dogs. Such knowledge can help to construct guidelines for (candidate) owners for preventing and reducing problem behaviours in privately-owned dogs.

**1.c. Lekensamenvatting:**

**2. Gepland vanaf:** 01-11-2011 tot 01-05-2012

**3. Diersoort:** honden ; **Totaal aantal:** 90

**4.a. Nadere aanduiding gebruikte dieren:**

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necessary to organize (some) behaviour tests 'on location' (e.g. at training schools). Test location is likely to have an effect on the test-results and this factor is included in the statistical analysis. Owners have a say in which behaviour tests (or measurements) they want to participate and this implies that dogs will not participate in all of the following tests; the maximum time that owner-dog combinations are present for tests in Wageningen is set at 2 hours. This includes pause and play time between tests to facilitate relaxation between tasks and prevent carry-over effects. In general, behaviour tests involve task-performance for food rewards and these are expected to be pleasurable to the dogs. Tests that evoke reactions to stimuli (see section 3) may cause a degree of surprise / startle in some sensitive dogs and, thus, could cause some short-lasting stress. All tests are performed in the presence of the dogs' owners.

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instructions how to behave or being aware / unaware of the stimulus). Also, an insensitivity to social cues has been identified as a risk factor for aggression and we are interested if dogs can discriminate between intraspecific (dog-dog) friendly and agonistic signals. Physiological parameters indicative of arousal could help to correctly interpret behavioural findings.

3a. Owners are asked to walk a specified route (about 20 meter) with their dog on leash, along a canvas barrier that at parts is open from floor to ~ 75 cm height. The openings are thus clearly visible for the dogs but less so for the owners. During test runs, a dummy (plastic) dog or inanimate object is placed near one of the canvas openings, making it visible to the dog but not owner. Prior to a run owners are told they will encounter a neutral inanimate object or a dog, resulting in 4 combinations that are tested: the owner expects a dog or inanimate object in combination with the presentation of a model dog or neutral (biologically irrelevant) inanimate object. The reactions of both dogs and owner are recorded. Thus it is tested if it matters for the dogs reactions what the owner expects to happen. Detailed behavioural observations should reveal direct responses of the dogs to behaviour of the owner. One run takes about 20 seconds. The 4 combinations of what owners expect and is actually presented in the canvas opening are presented in randomized order for a given owner-dog combination. This allows to statistically determine and correct for possible carry-over effects (learning from earlier runs).

3b. Owner are asked to take a position with their dogs and are instructed to, following the stimulus, 1. act as they would do normally, 2. do nothing or 3. extensively reassure their dogs and pet it. Next, a person wearing a striking outfit (e.g. a mask) is slowly walking toward the owner-dog combination approaching them up to about 2 meters after which to turn and walk away. The same procedure (with different outfits) is repeated 3 times, once for each specific instruction. Thus, it is investigated if the dogs' responses to a strange event is modulated by how the owner acts. Detailed behavioural observations should reveal what owner signals influence the dogs' behaviour especially. One test-trial (3 in total) takes about 30 seconds.

3c. Intraspecific cues that signal friendliness or fear/aggression are presented to a dog and it is observed if dogs respond differently to them. It is hypothesized that dogs that respond nonspecifically are more prone to behave aggressively. Cues may be either facial expressions and body/tail positions (dummy dogs or video recordings) or play backs of vocalizations. Presentations (max 3 repetitions per dog) last about 30 seconds.

3d. For a more accurate interpretation of behavioural observations collected during the tests described under 3.), we aim to collect supporting physiological measurements that should assess levels of arousal. Such measurements are non-invasive and include heart rate measurements (using the Polar sport tester), skin temperature and salivary cortisol. The latter implies that 2 saliva samples are taken (before and after the procedure) by rotating cottons buds in the cheek pouches of the dogs for 45 seconds. Physiological measures are collected in only a subset of the total sample of dogs and in prior consultation with the owner.

#### **6.b. Mate van ongerief: A. Gering**

#### **6.c. Waaruit bestaat het ongerief en hoe bent u tot uw inschatting van de mate van ongerief gekomen?**

Behaviour tests that involve problem solving tasks involve working, in company with their owner, for food items and is assumed to be rewarding to the dogs.

Reactions to unexpected experimental stimuli (which mimic daily life stimuli) may trigger some startle, but this will be only short lasting (seconds) and in the company of their owner. Physiological measurements in a subset of the dogs are non-invasive.

#### **7. Welke maatregelen heeft u getroffen om het ongerief tot een minimum te beperken?**

**Anesthesie:** A. Niet toegepast (geen aanleiding).

**Pijnbestrijding:** A. Wordt niet toegepast omdat hiertoe geen aanleiding bestaat.



Uw aanvraag 2011100.a, door u aangemeld vanuit DRS heeft van de KC de status: 'Wijzigen' gekregen.

De DEC is van mening dat het doel van de proef opweegt tegen het te verwachten geringe ongerief dat de dieren ondergaan. Voorafgaand aan een definitief advies heeft de DEC de volgende vragen en opmerkingen:

De DEC verzoekt u bij 3. (specificatie diergroepen) het correcte aantal honden te vermelden (90 i.p.v. 1).

Daarnaast vraagt de DEC zich af, of er bij 3.a. sprake kan zijn van een geheugeneffect bij herhaalde uitvoer van deze proef en zij verzoekt u hierop uw visie te geven.

Bovendien lijkt het tijdsbestek, waarbinnen alle proeven moeten worden uitgevoerd de DEC aan de krappe kant en zij verzoekt u hierop in te gaan.

Tenslotte vraagt de DEC zich af, of het feit, dat er gesampeld gaat worden binnen een hondentrainingsfaciliteit de onderzoeksresultaten mogelijk beïnvloedt, aangezien hond en baas deze faciliteit mogelijk associëren met aangepast gedrag en zij verzoekt u hierop in te gaan.

Na aanpassing zal de proef door de secretaris van de DEC worden afgehandeld.

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Uw aanvraag 2011100.b, door u aangemeld vanuit DRS heeft van de Secretaris DEC de status: 'Positief advies na behandeling KC' gekregen.

De DEC is van mening dat het doel van de proef opweegt tegen het te verwachten geringe ongerief dat de dieren ondergaan en dat de vraag m.b.t. alternatieven voldoende is beantwoord.

Met vriendelijke groet,

  
Secretaris DEC