



QUARANTINE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF DETECTOR DOG DUTY

Quarantine detector dogs around the country recently celebrated a landmark occasion— 10 years since the familiar Beagles were introduced to Australia's international airports, where they use their remarkable sense of smell to detect plant and animal products of quarantine concern.

And the dogs have well and truly earned their keep. Pork chops strapped to passengers' bodies, pigeon eggs concealed in foil-wrapped chocolate and eggplant seeds containing exotic fruit fly larvae are among the many thousands of finds quarantine dogs have made.

It was in 1992 that the first two beagles and their human handlers began working for the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) at Australia's international airports. Since 1995 other breeds of dogs, including labradors and kelpies, have also been screening letters and parcels, working in the background at international mail centres and courier depots.

Over the past 10 years an even 100 Quarantine detector dogs have worked across the country to protect Australia from exotic pests and diseases—there are currently 82 dogs working for AQIS.

Bob Stirling, AQIS National Detector Dog Program Manager, says, "Our dogs have been donated by families or breeders—or even saved from the pound—and gone on to become ambassadors for Quarantine, undertaking important duties to protect Australia."

Quarantine dogs are trained to detect more than 30 items of quarantine concern including fruit and vegetables, meat, plant material, eggs, bees and reptiles.

"It is the dogs' amazing sense of smell, which is at least 100 times more sensitive than a human's, that makes them such good detectives," Bob said.

Over the past 10 years, quarantine detector dogs have sniffed out literally tonnes of material carried by international passengers or arriving in letters and parcels — material that could have introduced exotic pests and diseases to Australia.

"In an average month, a detector dog team at an airport can sniff out 33 kilograms of fresh fruit and nine kilos of meat. This makes our detector dogs and their handlers an invaluable part of Australia's Quarantine operations," Bob says.

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"Visiting Aunt Maude" - original drawing by Mike Sibley

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BEST IN SHOW

Borzoi

Velikij Viktor

Breeder: Haggerstrom

Owner: Lars Martensson, Sweden

Best Young Dog in Show

Beagle

Gold Line's Best Revenge

Breeder & Owner:

Pedersen, Denmark



Neumunster

1-2 June 2002

1832 entries

Judge Best in Show : Elke Peper, Germany



BIS #2

American Cocker Spaniel

Twin Pines Handsome Tiger

Breeder: Foles u Feller

Owner: Klemann, Germany



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BIS Young Dog #2

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Xtra Kentucky Man of Fairytale Forest

Breeder: Sunkler & Magenreuter

Owner: Peeters & Sunkler Magenreuter