

Other Areas of Practice**Putting mandatory dog walks to sniff test | Marcel Strigberger**By **Marcel Strigberger**

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(September 11, 2020, 3:23 PM EDT) -- Germany's agriculture minister Julia Klöckner has introduced the *Dog's Act* which will require all dog owners to walk their dogs for an hour at least twice a day. The law is actually called, "*Hundeverordnung*." (Don't ask me how to spell that!).

Is similar legislation coming to Canada? Is our law going to the dogs too?

A few thoughts come to mind. The first is what does dog walking have to do with agriculture? Isn't she out of her portfolio? I would understand if the minister of agriculture would introduce a law requiring you to walk your zucchini. What gives?

Is it all about exercise? I looked further and did not see anything about compliance by letting man's best friend loose on a treadmill. It's got to be an outside walk.

I noted that animal rights PETA president says a dog walk is more than a toilet break. She admonishes owners not to rush their dogs as it is the pooch's time. To doggies all this essential environmental contact is like their reading the news or viewing the Internet.

I'm happy we humans do not get our news this way. I think it would be awkward to sit on the subway in the morning and have a bunch of riders forgo their *Globe and Mail* and engage in mass sniffing. (Post COVID-19 of course).

For that matter I wonder how she knows what the dogs are thinking, and why these outings are like engaging the news or Internet. I have yet to see a beagle carefully examining a fire hydrant and when his owner yanks him away, he snaps back barking, "Hey, leave me a bit more. I'm Googling."

There are of course questions about enforceability of the legislation. There should be no problems with some dogs, such as rottweilers or pit bulls. If they want to walk, you listen. Nor would their owners dare limit their time on the "Internet."

But to cover most other dogs, the law will have to have some teeth in it. Canines, at least.

Maybe they can keep dog owners honest by inserting some type of GPS microchip in the dog's ear that logs and records the hound's daily activities. The problem with this however is that some activists will no doubt claim this procedure violates the dog's privacy rights. It would be like invading Fido's ear with Alexa. It would be essential to give the dog the option to decline this procedure. He could be directed to some website like www.hundverordnung.com/ihre-privacy-rights. A piece of cake, or perhaps rather, of Milk-Bone.

There will also be issues of dogs getting special consideration over other pets. What about cats? Are they not as important as dogs? Ask them and they would probably want a daily provision of live mice. Maybe for a cat playing with a mouse is its equivalent to going on the Internet. And if the mouse should get away this would add a new dimension to the phrase, "the Internet is down."

In my view while I am all for the animals, I think this law, which I won't bother spelling again, needs

to be finessed. I'd say the legislators will have their paws full.

Will Canada follow suit? Will it be a case of doggie see, doggie do do?

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