

BRAC's Board has thoroughly considered the issues involved in conducting our USDAA trial (April 24-26, 2020 in Waynesville, NC). Just the other day, the available data left room to hope that COVID-19 would pass us by. Since then, news has been singularly negative. It is now clear that the US will not emerge unscathed from the pandemic, and North Carolina will share that fate. Indeed, the disease has arrived in our mountains. These developments remind us that our primary duty is to protect the safety and health of our competitors; sadly, that duty requires that we cancel the trial. While various authorities differ on how many persons constitutes a "mass gathering," those numbers fall well below the numbers of competitors, family members, visitors, and staff who would be present. Our Governor's Executive Order banning such gatherings currently expires a bit before the trial date, but the probable trajectory of the pandemic makes an extension highly likely.

We therefore announce, with considerable reluctance, that our April trial is cancelled. We spend much time and energy on preparing for, traveling to, and running in agility trials, but our responsibility to our competitors and our community points clearly toward cancelling the trial.

As to BRAC's Memorial Day AKC trial (May 22-25 at the WNC Ag Center), the available information does not provide sufficient certainty to support a decision to cancel. Thus, we presume the trial will go forward. We will revisit the issue in mid-April to assess the state of information at that point. We will monitor developments in the meantime, and we will take any action that appears required. As previously noted, if the trial proceeds we will honor any request to withdraw an entry, no questions asked. If we can present a trial that complies with governmental restrictions, offers a safe and healthy environment, and provides an opportunity for lively and energetic agility competition, you can be assured that we will do exactly that.

Thanks for your past and future support. In the meantime, everybody spread out and wash those hands. As Sgt. Esterhaus used to say on Hill St. Blues, "Let's be careful out there."

See you in the training ring, while waiting for a trial,

Joe Root
President, BRAC