

Here is some basic information from the Barn Hunt Association:

The purpose of Barn Hunt is to demonstrate a dog's vermin hunting ability in finding and marking rats in a "barn-like" setting, using straw/hay bales to introduce climbing and tunneling obstacles in the dog's path. Barn Hunt is based on the skills historically used by itinerant "ratcatchers" in traveling the countryside, ridding farms of vermin, thus helping conserve and preserve food grains and cutting down on disease.

While ratcatchers often used breeds such as Jack/Parson Russell Terriers, they also used other non go-to-ground breeds such as Manchester Terriers, Rat Terriers, and a variety of breeds and mixes of small to medium size. Some breeds have never had an officially licensed test which truly emulates their traditional working task. Barn Hunt will fill that role.

Barn Hunt is also for any breed or mix of dog who loves to hunt and who can fit through an 18" wide gap between two hay bales. It will test speed, agility, and surefootedness. While not specifically targeted at larger dogs or dogs without a vermin hunting history, Barn Hunt is all inclusive and fun for any dog and human who wishes to play the game.

Barn Hunt is a sporting event, and as such there will be levels of difficulty, titles, and championships to be attained. While it can be used as an instinct test, there is also a handler component in that the handler must signal when the dog has reached the desired target PVC rat tube; thus, the handler must know and have a partnership with their dog. Teamwork will win the game.

Barn Hunt can be held indoors or outdoors, in a barn-like setting or on any piece of level ground that can be enclosed securely by gating/fencing.

As a sporting event, all participants in Barn Hunt are expected to operate within a code of good sportsmanship. No punitive or corrective training is allowed on trial grounds. Any handler who verbally or physically abuses his or her dog either in or out of the ring can face discipline from dismissal from class to dismissal from show grounds and expulsion from future events, depending on the severity of the action. Any handler who displays lack of sportsmanship toward the judge, stewards, or fellow competitors can also face disciplinary action. Barn Hunt is a family sport and should be treated as such. Curse words uttered during the dog's hunt will mean an instant Non-Qualifying run.

At all times, the safety of the dogs, handlers, and rats is to be of paramount importance. Rats will be humanely handled and safely confined in aerated PVC tubes; Barn Hunt is not intended to harm or kill rats.