

Health and welfare in brachycephalic dogs – NKK (june 2016)

Until recently:

Norwegian Kennel Club

- Information/education – owners, breeders, judges etc
- BSI
- Selection for healthy dogs
- Development of fitness test (“tread mill test”) in cooperation with the Norwegian Bulldog Club
- Increased focus on brachycephalic health – meetings with breed clubs and information about brachycephalic health problems and possible actions
- RAS – breed specific strategies – breeding plans for long term goals through a defined strategy in all dog breeds

Norwegian Bulldog Club

- Selection of healthy dogs
- Four health surveys through the last years
- Continuous gathering of health data
- Development of fitness test (“tread mill test”) in cooperation with the Norwegian Kennel Club
- Very specific health advise on club home page (<http://norskbulldogklubb.net/>)
- RAS for bulldog and French bulldog published and in use

Norwegian Pug club:

- Selection of healthy dogs
- Ongoing health survey in cooperation with the Vet school
- Education of conformation judges
- Education of breeders
- Questionnaire to veterinarians – difficult because of vet-patient confidentiality
- Close cooperation with the Swedish Pug Club and cooperation with breed clubs for brachycephalic breeds in the Nordic countries – regarding brachycephalic issues
- RAS will be published shortly

Developing plans for possible actions in the (near) future:

- Increased focus on selection for a healthy, functional anatomy and normal function and fitness
- Increased selection for reduced BOAS risk. This may be done by excluding dogs with BOAS, including dogs surgically corrected for the disease, from breeding. This will correspond well to the NKK Code of ethics, saying that only functionally healthy dog may be considered for breeding. At the same time, there should be clearly defined selection for longer muzzles with open nostrils etc in the relevant breeds.

- Work for an adjustment of breed standards, or enhance the description of relevant anatomy in the breed standards. In some of the clearly brachycephalic breeds, there are no accurate description of relative muzzle length in the breed standard (e.g. Pekingese and Staffordshire bull terrier).
- Descriptions that contradict health and welfare should be corrected. In all relevant breeds, the description of the head proportions should describe CFR (craniofacial ratio).
- Endurance/fitness testing (treadmill or outside run) of the individuals to be able to select the dogs with least compromised physical performance.
- Voluntary owner reports (including veterinary journals) of dogs that have undergone respiratory surgery - to a centrally located database
- Veterinary certificate for stud dogs and breeding bitches - on the dog's general health and especially its respiratory function. Reports from sire and dam may become mandatory for registration of puppies.
- Form with owner's statement that the stud dog/breeding bitch has not been surgically corrected for respiratory problems
- Form with owner's statement for the breeding bitch for each litter – stating whether the delivery was normal, assisted (medically/manually) or by cesarean section