

Update on actions in Sweden and the Nordic Kennel Union May - June 2016

Swedish Initiatives

Following the Swedish Kennel Club (SKK) Symposium on Brachycephalic Dogs in February 2016, the SKK issued a press release describing the background, current and future actions related to brachycephalics. See [article and press release](#) on DogWellNet.com. Included in that report was a statement on the breeding of brachycephalic dogs and strategies to improve the health status. It was indicated that actions must be taken with cooperation across many stakeholder groups. They indicated that:

“In collaboration with the Swedish Kennel Club and its breed clubs, the Swedish Veterinary Association / the Swedish Society of Veterinary Medicine, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and the Swedish Board of Agriculture, a number of working groups has been established, aiming to further develop various measures to be taken as soon as possible and at the latest during 2017. “

The Swedish initiatives described above have now been ongoing for a while. All working groups have representatives from multiple stakeholder groups. The following working groups have reported progress;

- a) Development of health certificates for puppies of brachycephalic breeds.
- b) Now under validation
- c) Development of certificates for proposed breeding stock.
- d) A prototype ready for validation
For both a) and b) there will be included definition of parameters, assessment procedures, and education and training of those performing the assessments (e.g. veterinarians).
- e) Epidemiology: compiling quantitative evidence on occurrence, etc. Some sources and initiatives include: insurance data; university hospital data on number and type of cases; requests for data from large animal hospitals and veterinary groups; compilation of registration numbers for various breeds over many years (from SKK); evaluation of the Breed-specific Breeding Strategy documents in use by breed clubs; evaluation of recent breed health surveys, as well as review of the veterinary literature.
- f) Registration of corrective surgeries in brachycephalic breeds. This task is now under the responsibility of the SKK, but being developed in consultation with veterinarians and other stakeholder groups.
- g) Consumer information
- h) Education, including show judges, veterinarians, others.

Other activities:

- The SKK staff and experts are participating with the Nordic Kennel Union initiative (see below).

- Meetings with government, local and regional regulatory agencies, welfare groups. Relationships are going well, as the SKK is able to demonstrate that actions are underway and all relevant stakeholder groups are represented.
- There is a symposium organized for September for veterinarians.

Nordic Kennel Union Initiatives

Following a meeting of representatives of the five Scandinavian Kennel Clubs, the Nordic Kennel Union (NKU) has appointed two specific commissions:

- 1) To address situation concerning the health and welfare issues of brachycephalic dogs and to propose strategies. Members of this working group include those from the NKU Scientific Committee, as well as others, e.g. breeders, judges.
- 2) To develop a media strategy.

Meetings are planned to further develop the mandate, structure and goals of these commissions.

Communication / Collaboration with IPFD

Most of the kennel clubs are Founding Partners of IPFD and their staff and experts, e.g. the members of their Scientific Committees, are actively involved in DogWellNet.com and with the International Dog Health Workshops. There has been a special [Brachycephalic Issues section](#) on DogWellNet.com since last fall, and the website is already functioning as an information hub as material and links continue to be added.

IPFD is also in discussions with:

- Veterinary organizations from several countries, Partner and other kennel clubs, welfare organizations and others to determine the potential for a broader international collaboration.
- There will be a stream on issues of exaggerated conformation at the 3rd International Dog Health Workshop in Paris 21-23 April 2017. The French Kennel Club and IPFD are assembling working groups in advance of the workshop.
- IPFD is working with breed experts and breed clubs from several countries to start a database of breeding evaluation and fitness testing programs, breeding strategies and other information on recommendations and regulations, to serve as a resource for working groups and committees.
- IPFD is also seeking funding to support these international collaborative efforts.
- The section on DogWellNet.com is continuing to expand with information and resources. Plans include presentation of multinational statistics on registration numbers, as well as reviewing current breeding guidelines from various sources.

It is clear that issues of health and welfare in brachycephalic breeds are under scrutiny throughout the world. The most effective way forward is through coordinated international collaboration, sharing of resources, expertise and evaluation of evidence. This collaboration will allow participants to build on the shared efforts and resources to address the issue as appropriate in their own country or region.