

News from the United States-ICEC Dogs

Per the American Kennel Club (AKC) in 2022, the French Bulldog became the most popular breed for the 1st time. The English Bulldog was #6.

1-In January 2023, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) journal published an article on the respiratory function grading scheme (RFGS) as a health screening test for BOAS. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) has licensed the RFGS for use in the US. The Bulldog Club of America, French Bull Dog Club of America, and Pug Dog Club of America approached the OFA in light of the public discourse around brachycephalic breeds because of their tendency to have respiratory issues and asked whether the OFA could put something in place to help identify healthy dogs. The chief operating officer of the OFA explained that the RFGS program intends to identify the dogs that are healthy, while segregating them out from dogs that have more severe cases.

Dr. Ladlow trained the first two U.S.-based examiners, who in turn trained the next two. Four additional veterinarians have been trained, and four more attended the dog show in Portland for training. The OFA hopes to gradually increase the pool of available approved veterinarian examiners so that they can perform the testing more readily in different parts of the U.S. and Canada.

2-In January 2023, the AVMA updated its policy on Inherited Disorders in Responsible Breeding of Companion Animals (this reflects a step in the right direction)

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/inherited-disorders-responsible-breeding-companion-animals>

(New additions here):

“The AVMA encourages veterinarians, breeders, and breed associations to carefully consider the health and welfare implications of breed standards, breeding decisions, and the responsibilities involved with breeding, selecting, or owning companion animals. To improve quality of life of companion animals, the AVMA discourages breeding companion animals with deleterious characteristics, since these features often require surgical correction or life-long medical or behavioral management.”

3-The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA) has a page devoted to the health and welfare issues of brachycephaly, titled, The Cost of Cuteness, which I created here:

<https://www.hsvma.org/brachycephalic>

This page has engendered numerous media opportunities and interviews to publicize the welfare concerns of brachy breeds.

4-A few years ago, I reached out to the AVMA on behalf of the HSVMA to propose a coalition of veterinary organizations devoted to the brachy problem. They declined this invitation. Prognosis: Guarded.