

National Companion Animal Coalition (of Canada): efforts on extreme conformations in dogs to date for ICECD

The NCAC [website](#)

NCAC members:

- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Canadian Kennel Club
- Pets Canada
- Humane Canada
- Ex-officio: Agriculture and AgriFood Canada (Government of Canada)

The National Companion Animal Coalition (NCAC) was formed in 1996 to promote socially responsible pet ownership and enhance the health and well-being of companion animals. The NCAC provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and to address issues of mutual interest with regard to companion animals.

Members individually and as a collective have worked towards expanding the awareness of the public regarding the risks of and potential solutions to extreme conformations and heritable disorders.

National efforts regarding extreme conformations and heritable disorders (individually and/or collectively): 2016 to 2023

1. Articles published by CVMA members in 2016 and 2017 in Canadian Veterinary Journal on the issue of extreme conformations notably brachycephalic dogs.
2. The issue was first put forward to the CVMA membership by our then president elect as a CVMA priority issue for the association in 2018 as focus on brachycephalic animals to review international efforts to look for synergies and decide a way forward.
3. The focus evolved in 2019 to include all extreme conformations and heritable disorders
4. Issued a press Release “call to action” following the death of several imported French bulldogs in a large shipment of dogs from eastern Europe :
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-and-outreach/priority-areas/extreme-conformations/>
5. Bilateral meetings between CVMA and CKC to discuss the issue in early 2020 and ongoing. Further discussions on the issue with all NCAC member organizations.
6. CVMA arranged and participated along with other NCAC members associations in multistakeholder dog Import ad hoc meetings to discuss the risks and possible solution to importation of all breeds of dogs from unknown breeding and health statuses. Ongoing.
7. CVMA as an individual association and also with NCAC members has been working with the federal government agency responsible for animal imports to find solutions (due to both transport risks and disease introduction)
8. CVMA worked with IPFD (previous) CEO Brenda Bonnett for potential collaboration with CVMA
 - a. CVMA membership educational webinar on the subject by BBonnett (IPFD)
 - b. Presentation by IPFD Brenda Bonnett at annual CVMA conference on extreme conformations
9. Marketing consultant engaged to review the impact of online purchases of brokered animals and solutions to impulse purchases and need for due diligence

10. NCAC joined ICECD (CKC was a founding member)
11. CKC/CVMA/IPFD/Royal Canin joined forces on a multi-stakeholder virtual symposium on extreme conformations and responsible breeding and ownership July 2022
12. CKC introduced the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme to Canada
 - a) Discussions with The Kennel Club and the University of Cambridge to bring the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme to Canada. (2021 - 2022)
 - b) Sept 2022 discussions with AKC Canine Health Foundation and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) regarding the RFG Scheme
 - c) Partnered with OFA to bring the RFG Scheme to Canada in early 2023
 - d) Identified lead examiners for RFG Scheme: Dr. Ameet Singh and Dr. Allison Collier
 - e) CKC launched the first official RFG Scheme screening clinic in March 2023, in conjunction with the Scarborough Kennel Club dog show. (The US launched their inaugural RFG Scheme screening clinic in January 2023)
13. CVMA full support of CKC introduction of RFG in Canada
 - a) CVMA met with Jane Ladlow re RFG process and introduction to Canada to determine how CVMA can best support.
 - b) CVMA met with Dr. A Singh (trained RFG assessor) in Jan 2023 re (also Dr. Allison Collier to Portland for RFG training)
 - c) Ongoing CVMA/CKC bilateral meetings re updates
 - d) CVMA agrees to provide support for and encourage the RFG participation to all veterinarians in Canada
14. CVMA [Ad imagery guidelines for marketers](#). These are to address the normalization of extreme conformations (and other concerns related to animal imagery) in the media.
15. The CKC formed a Brachycephalic Breeds Advocacy Committee (BBAC) in 2019, to support the ongoing education, advocacy, and health of all Brachycephalic breeds. The BBAC project plans: education for breeders, judges' and the public.
16. CKC in June 2022 summer educational webinar for brachycephalic breed clubs
17. CKC in August and November 2022 webinars to promote discussion, collaboration, and action with brachycephalic breed clubs regarding extreme conformation.
18. CKC is developing an Integrated Breed Health Program over the next few years (beginning in 2023) to complement initiatives like the RFG Scheme and support member breeders with ongoing science-based education and best practices.
19. CVMA position on Responsible Breeding is currently in the member consultation phase and expected to be published before the end of 2023.
20. The CVMA position statement on Animal Sentience is anticipated to go to member consultation within the next few months. It may be useful in speaking to the needs of animals bred with extreme conformations and heritable disorders.
21. CKC has agreed to partner with CVMA in the next iteration of the Kennel Code of Practice (which is also used by dog owners in general)
22. All NCAC member groups have agreed to remove all images using brachycephalics from existing documents and marketing and to refrain from using going forward. Despite ongoing efforts the French Bulldog has now surpassed the Labrador Retriever as the most popular dog in the US and it is assumed that Canada is similar.