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National report on extreme breeding situation in Denmark

At the WSAVA World Congress held by Danish Veterinary Association in Copenhagen in 2017, the DSAVA hosted a workshop to discuss issues regarding extreme breeding situation. Two expert groups formulated a number of recommendations: That it is time that we take responsibility for the health and welfare of our patients and actively contribute to improving the quality of life for the brachycephalic animals.

This was the starting point for the DSAVA's initiative of a "brachycephalic multistakeholder group", where stakeholders across organizations and authorities collaborate to promote healthy breeding in Denmark and internationally.

Since 2017, the working group has, among other things, shed light on the anatomical features that characterize a healthy brachycephalic animal, and on that basis created information work for all target groups about what each of them can do to help improve the health and welfare of the brachycephalic animals.

The DSAVA has continually updated its homepage with materials aimed both at veterinarians and dog owners.

<https://www.ddd.dk/politik/aktuelt-i-ddd/sund-avl/>

<https://www.ddd.dk/dyreejere/brachycephale-hunde/>

Links to sites on the DSAVA homepage:

Amongst the initiatives carried out by the DSAVA in collaboration with the Danish practicing veterinarians, has been a study mapping of health status of dogs with brachycephalic syndrome in 2019.

The study aimed at mapping the health status of French bulldogs, pugs and English bulldogs with pedigrees and was based on the parameters that were found to be significant in an earlier pilot study on the health of French bulldogs. After completion of the data collection, the results were processed and, among other things, published in an article in the Danish Veterinary Journal.

The results of the survey were followed up in March 2020 with a campaign targeting dog owners. The campaign aimed at making coming dog owners think about health when buying a dog. However, the COVID epidemic shifted the attention of the public. The campaign has been run again very recently both on DSVAVA media channels as well as on SoMe channels of the other stakeholders. A link to the campaign may be found here:

<https://youtu.be/29a0n2u4rho>

Also, the stakeholder group has produced posters that have been exhibited and has participated in several public meetings to draw attention to the issue and worked actively with the Danish authorities on how to buy a healthy dog.

The DSAVA has also worked closely with the Danish authorities on creating awareness of the importance on buying a healthy dog. The link to the site is:

https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Dyr/Kaeledyr/klar_til_hund/Sider/default.aspx

The DSAVA has actively worked with (?) Copenhagen University to participate in several debates both held by students and the Welfare Center at the university in 2021 and 2022

<https://dyreetik.ku.dk/arrangementer/2022/vid-seminar-2022/>

The DSAVA has also invested actively in collaboration with members of the stakeholder group in participation in national public meetings, including a national meeting for young people. This activity will be repeated in 2023. Ungdommens Folkemøde:

<https://www.ungdommensfolkemoede.dk/>

The stakeholder group includes both the Kennel Club and the Danish animal protection associations, who are, in turn, in close communication with animal protection associations in Norway, who are in process with prosecution of the Norwegian Kennel Club. Currently we try to find a common ground in the Danish stakeholder group.

In 2020 DSAVA decided to work actively with the Danish Kennel Club to adopt and support the system developed by Cambridge University to promote breeding of healthy animals through the BOAS scoring system. It has taken until now to get Danish veterinarians trained to do the scoring. The issue is currently to get as many animals scored as possible and to ensure that all veterinarians, who do the scoring are completely unbiased. It is the hope that this scoring system will help move the health status of the brachycephalic dogs to a healthy status and avoid legislative measures. This needs to be monitored closely.

In March 2023 Danish national television featured the opportunity of the new scoring system in primetime news, this hopefully will also bring attention to the importance of buying a healthy dog. Link to programme: https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/din-hunder-ikke-soed-naar-den-sidder-op-og-sover-maaske-har-den-svaert-ved-traekke?cid=soc_facebook_drnyheder_post_ggfvx98z

Following this feature, the campaign developed by the stakeholder was repeated on all SoMe channels.

The stakeholder group will meet again in April 2023 to discuss further actions.