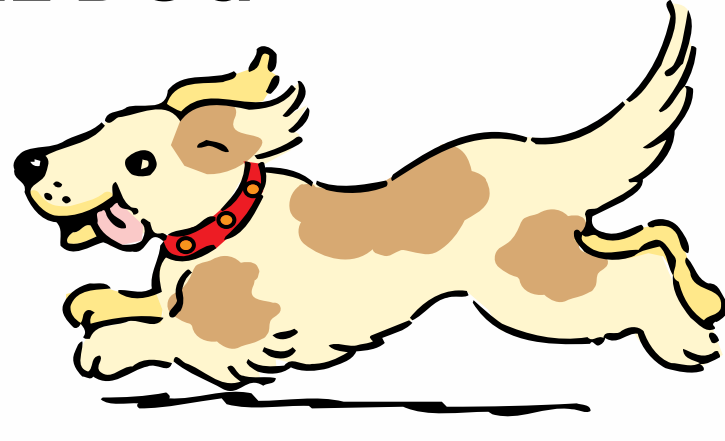


MOVING FROM INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION TO ACTION: THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL DOG HEALTH WORKSHOP

HELSINKI, JUNE 2024



The International Partnership for Dogs organises biennial International Dog Health Workshops that bring together scientists, breeders, legislators, veterinary practitioners, and other stakeholders to promote information sharing, foster collaboration, and agree on priority actions to improve dog health and well-being.

The 5th International Dog Health Workshop was hosted by the Finnish Kennel Club in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2024. The workshop was structured around four areas affecting dog health and well-being. Priority actions were agreed for key issues in each area.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

KEY ISSUES

The COVID-19 pandemic increased demand for dogs. The volume of puppy sales increased, but puppy buying behaviours worsened. During this period, puppies were less likely to be seen with their mothers and were often collected away from their breeding locations. Buyers may unwittingly be supporting supply chains with poor welfare standards and illegal imports.

AGREED ACTIONS

- Develop care criteria that define high-welfare breeding practices.
- Explore new opportunities to access better data and information on dog production and acquisition systems to guide action.



BREEDING FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

KEY ISSUES

There is growing concern about how to effectively protect dog health from harms related to specific body shape characteristics that show high public demand but are associated with poor welfare. Several common physical breed characteristics (e.g., entropion/ectropion, skin folds, and extreme brachycephaly) are considered health risks for dogs.



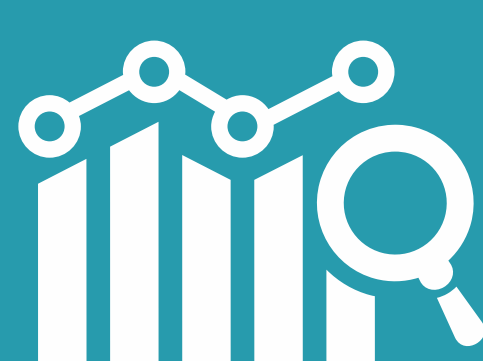
AGREED ACTIONS

- Prioritise canine health and welfare and then adapt existing breed concepts to meet these goals.
- Improved animal welfare legislation for breeding is needed because the interpretation and enforcement of current, new, and updated legislation is often vague or inconsistent.

BIG DATA

KEY ISSUES

Kennel clubs hold extensive data on health test results (e.g., hip dysplasia). Large volumes of clinical data also exist in veterinary clinical record systems and pet insurance databases. But ensuring these data are shared, curated, and explored towards improved evidence on canine health is challenging.



AGREED ACTION

- A subgroup of IDHW participants will pilot a data collection and analysis project to explore how estimated breeding values (EBVs) can be used more effectively to improve canine health. EBVs are proposed as options to control disorders such as hip and elbow dysplasia, spinal problems, and/or behavioural traits.



DOES THE COLOUR MATTER? DEFINING BREED VS. VARIETY

KEY ISSUES

All forms of selection generally reduce genetic diversity. Therefore even the practice of selectively breeding from healthier dogs and lines within breeds aimed at reducing disorder occurrence also counterproductively reduces genetic diversity.

AGREED ACTION

- Accepting closely related current breeds as varieties of the same parent breed can encourage crossbreeding between varieties to improve genetic diversity.

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