

Mandatory X-ray Screening Successfully Launched in the German Dachshund Club (DTK)

Since 1 August 2024, the German Teckel Club (DTK) has implemented mandatory radiological screening for intervertebral disc calcifications. The initial evaluations show encouraging results. The background to this measure consists of scientific studies demonstrating that the prevalence of calcified intervertebral discs significantly influences the risk of subsequently developing a herniated disc. These findings suggest that breeding measures based on X-ray screening can help reduce the frequency of disc herniations.

The first evaluations—more than 600 Dachshunds from DTK breeding have already been examined—show encouraging results: the number of calcified discs in the German population from controlled breeding appears to be lower than in comparable international evaluations (source: Lappalainen et al., *Intervertebral disc disease in Dachshunds radiographically screened for intervertebral disc calcifications*, 2014).

Earlier studies had already demonstrated that slimmer dogs and those participating in shows have a lower risk of intervertebral disc disease (Packer et al., *DachsLife 2015: an investigation of lifestyle associations with the risk of intervertebral disc disease in Dachshunds*, 2016). The new results provide further evidence that well-cared-for, active dogs from controlled breeding have a lower risk of developing intervertebral disc disease than dogs from other sources where such preventive examinations are not carried out.

Thanks to mandatory X-ray examinations for all breeding dogs, centralised evaluation of results, and scientifically supported breeding measures, existing health standards in controlled breeding can be further improved—an important contribution to maintaining the health of our Dachshunds!

Outcross Project for the French Bulldog in Germany – The First Puppies Have Been Born

Due to well-known health dispositions in the French Bulldog breed, the breeding clubs affiliated with the VDH have for many years relied on extensive health examinations — including scientifically validated exercise tolerance tests — as a basis for breeding decisions.

To support a healthier phenotype and introduce “new genetic diversity” into the breed (for example with regard to the DVL2 gene mutation), the French Bulldog Club Germany (FBVD), in close coordination with the VDH as the umbrella organisation, additionally decided to carry out an outcross project.

“The planning was demanding, and it was not easy to find suitable breeding partners for our outcross project. In the end, just like the breeders in the Finnish Kennel Club, we chose the Papillon as the partner for our French Bulldog females,” reports Heidi Leister, Chairwoman of the club. “There were also extensive health examinations, including for the Papillon males used in the breeding programme. Under no circumstances did we want to introduce new hereditary diseases into our puppies via the outcross project. But the puppies are healthy and lively, and despite all the effort, we are glad that we took this step.”