

BREEDING STRATEGIES & ETHICAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR BREEDING (CODE OF ETHICS)



**The Norwegian
Kennel Club**

www.nkk.no

Introduction

The Norwegian Kennel Club (NKK) has a long tradition promoting healthy dog breeding through education and cooperation with breeders and breed clubs. It is our true belief that this is far more beneficial to the dogs' health and welfare than excessive rules and restrictions. Our vision is that through this inclusive breeding strategy, based on education, knowledge and respect, we will breed the healthiest dogs in Europe.

Too heavy restrictions promote too heavy selection, thereby leading to matador breeding, inbreeding and decreased gene pools, and may result in an increased number of unregistered dogs with no health policy at all. Strict rules against certain diseases may also lead to an increase in other serious diseases which cannot be detected through screening tests or DNA-tests, consequently not being subject to eradication programs.

Health surveys made by the breed clubs in cooperation with scientists will reveal breed specific health problems, and are of great importance for the breeders in their selection and combination of dogs for breeding, as well as for the scientists in their studies of different diseases. Screening of inherited diseases and functional disabilities are other important tools in dog breeding; to know as much as possible about important health issues is of major importance in healthy dog breeding. Screening results for hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, inherited eye diseases as well as results of DNA-tests are available on the NKK database DogWeb, with free access for all member of NKK. Breeding values for hip dysplasia has been available on DogWeb since 2008 for 40 breeds.

The NKK Breeding School consists of two weekend seminars, and is arranged in different part of the country, teaching breeders about genetics, inherited diseases and functional disabilities, breeding values, breeding recommendations and regulations, reproduction and obstetrics, pediatrics, feeding and socialisation of puppies etc.

Identification with microchip is mandatory for all dog used for breeding, show or any other official competition, as well as for official radiographic screening and screening for inherited eye diseases and DNA-tests for results to be registered in DogWeb. Since 2011 microchip identification has been mandatory for every puppy prior to receiving registration papers from NKK.

Norwegian Kennel Club Breeding Strategies *(NKK 2007)*

1. Introduction

The goal in dog breeding is functionally healthy dogs with a construction and mentality typical of the breed, dogs that can live a long and happy life for the benefit and pleasure of the owner and the society as well as for the dog itself. The Norwegian Kennel Club (NKK) will seek to attain this goal through education of breeders, focusing on cooperation and respect as well as making breeders fully aware of their responsibilities.

2. Knowledge and education

When selecting dogs for breeding, it is of uttermost importance to look upon the dog and the breed in its entirety; it is insufficient only to evaluate results of screening tests and DNA-tests.

NKK will educate the breed clubs to function as good advisers to promote healthy dog breeding in their specific breed. NKK will also educate breeders in order for them to emphasize the importance of suitable combinations as well as the selection of the individual dog to be used for breeding to reduce the risk of unhealthy offspring, as well as focus on the importance of the environment when raising puppies. The education will be given through central and regional seminars and courses, books, articles and booklets as well as guidance from qualified specialists.

3. Obligations

Members of NKK are obliged in their breeding to comply with NKK's Ethical Rules and Regulations for Breeding (Code of ethics), FCI International Breeding Rules, FCI's Code of Breeding Ethics and breed in accordance with the NKK Breeding Strategies.

4. Main points in the breeding strategies of NKK

- 4.1 Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs can be used for breeding; If close relatives of a dog suffering from a known or presumed inherited disease or functional disability are used for breeding, they should only be mated to dogs from bloodlines with low or no occurrence of the same disease or disability.
- 4.2 A breeding programme should not exclude more than 50% of the breed; the breeding stock should be selected from the best half of the breed population.
- 4.3 To preserve, or preferably increase, the genetic diversity of the breed, matador breeding and heavy inbreeding should be avoided. As a general recommendation no dog should have more offspring than equivalent to 5% of the number of puppies registered in the breed population during a five year period. In breeds with few individuals and where the breeds to a high extent are dependent upon breeding material from other countries, the size of the breed population should include the population in the cooperating countries, e.g. the Scandinavian countries.
- 4.4 A bitch that is unable to give normal birth, due to anatomy or inherited inertia, should be excluded from further breeding – independent of the breed.
- 4.5 A bitch that is unable to take care of newborn puppies, due to mentality or inherited agalactia (no milk production), should be excluded from further breeding.
- 4.6 Dogs with a temperament untypical of the breed, aggressive dogs, must never be used for breeding.
- 4.7 Screening (evaluation of a large number of dogs independent of clinical signs) should only be recommended for diseases and breeds where the disease has an impact on the dogs' functional health.

Screening results for polygenetic diseases (diseases due to several genes, often in a combination with environmental factors) should be used to calculate an individual breeding value for the disease. It is preferable to include both national and international screening results in the breeding value.

The average breeding value for the combination should be better than the average for the breed.
- 4.8 Results from DNA tests for inherited diseases should be used to avoid breeding unhealthy dogs, not necessarily to eradicate the disease. Dogs known to be carriers (heterozygote) for a recessive inherited disease should only be bred to a dog that is proven not to carry the same gene.
- 4.9 Health issues that cannot be diagnosed by DNA-tests or screening programmes, should have equal impact in the breed specific breeding programmes.
- 4.10 The raising of puppies, with correct feeding, environmental exposure, stimulation by their mother, breeder and others to develop social development and health, must be basic in all breeding of dogs.

Norwegian Kennel Club

Ethical rules and regulations for breeding

Code of ethics (NKK 2008; last updated 04.09.2012)

Breeding of purebred dogs is an important fundament in the work of the Norwegian Kennel Club (NKK). One of the main objects of the NKK is to promote the development of the breeds, of physically and mentally healthy dogs with breed specific confirmation, that are functionally healthy and socially well adapted to modern society.

The selection and combination of dogs for breeding made by the breeder is the basis for the development of the breeds. The goal in dog breeding is functionally healthy dogs with a construction and mentality typical of the breed, dogs that can live a happy life for the benefit and pleasure of the owner and society, as well as for the dog itself. Genetic diversity is fundamental for the development of the breeds and the ability of the dogs to adjust to the demands of society.

Breeding and raising puppies must be carried out in such a manner that it promotes the health and wellbeing of the progeny, as well as the welfare of the bitch, in accordance with the NKK breeding strategy and Code of ethics.

1. Breeding and development of the breeds shall be based upon long term goals and healthy principles, to promote good health, sound temperament and breed specific working abilities.
2. The breeding must serve to preserve, and preferably extend, the genetic diversity of the breed. Matador breeding and strong inbreeding should be avoided. Mating between siblings, mother to son, father to daughter or combinations with equivalent inbreeding coefficient must not be performed¹. Breeding between half siblings or combinations with equivalent inbreeding coefficient should be avoided².

The inbreeding coefficient is calculated based on a 6 generation pedigree³; for imported dogs the calculation should be based on the available pedigree information in 4-6 generations.

Exceptions can be granted by NKK; an application form is available from www.nkk.no

3. The breeder must have the necessary knowledge of the breed, breed lines, keeping of dogs, breeding and raising puppies, and through selection and combination contribute to the preservation and development of the breed. The breeder should prevent accidental mating from occurring.

Mating between two dogs with the colour merle, dapple, harlequin (dogs with the genotype Mm) must not be performed.

4. The breeder must ensure that the dogs used for breeding are kept under good conditions, both mentally and physically. As long as the puppies are with the breeder, they must be kept in an environment that promotes their physical and mental development, which guarantees good socialization. The individual breeds shall be raised and kept in accordance with breed specific needs.

5. Only functionally healthy dogs must be used for breeding. Breeders are required to select dogs for breeding that are mentally and physically fit for the purpose.

Results from DNA tests for inherited diseases should primarily be used to avoid breeding diseased dogs. For diseases with autosomal recessive inheritance a carrier may only be used for breeding if mated to a partner with DNA test result clear (genetically free of the mutation). Functionally healthy dogs that are homozygous for the disease mutation (DNA test result affected) can only be bred after application to the NKK for exemption. In case of such exemption, the dog must be mated to a partner with status clear to avoid compromising the welfare of the offspring.

6. The breeder must follow the NKK rules and regulations regarding breeding restrictions to reduce the prevalence of inherited diseases and functional disabilities. Any dog used for breeding must fulfil all breed specific demands (e.g. radiographic screening, genetic testing) set by NKK for registering puppies in the NKK register. Requirements for breeding from the specific breed club ought to be obeyed.
7. The breeder shall practise good cynological ethics in their breeding.
 - The bitch must be at least 18 months at the time of mating. If the breed club advice that the bitch should be older at her first mating, this should be complied with.
 - Whether a bitch can be mated on two following seasons, depends on her age, general condition, number of puppies in the last litter and the interval between the seasons. If a bitch has two litters within 12 months, there must be at least 12 months until the birth of her next litter.
 - A bitch must not have more than 5 litters, and must not be mated after 8 years of age unless a written permission has been obtained from NKK. An application form is available from www.nkk.no and includes a veterinary certificate confirming that the bitch is clinically healthy and in good overall condition prior to mating. The mating must take place within 3 months of the veterinary examination, and the permission from NKK must be given prior to mating and be enclosed with the registration application. This applies both to bitches that already have 5 litters and bitches that are more than 8 years at the time of mating.
8. When selling or transferring a dog, the breeder must be critical and contentious in choosing the new owner, and give supportive guidance both generally as well as concerning breed specific issues.

¹ Inbreeding coefficient equal to or higher than 25%.

² Inbreeding coefficient equal to or higher than 12,5%.

³ The number of generations is calculated with the puppy itself as first generation.

- Always use a written contract signed by both parties; it is recommended to use NKKs Sales Contract which is available from www.nkk.no. The seller is obliged to give information on health issues in the breed as well as of the close relatives of the puppy.
 - Do not transfer to the new owner a dog with injuries and/or disease/functional disabilities or faults according to the breed standard, unless it is clearly stated in the sales contract.
 - When selling a puppy and/or making an agreement with specific terms, always use a written contract which states the conditions, e.g. retained breeding rights and ownership.
 - A veterinary examination certificate, not older than 2 weeks, must be enclosed with the delivery of the dog. A puppy must not be delivered to the new owner before 7-8 weeks of age, and must have been treated for internal parasites, based on prevailing recommendations.
 - When selling a puppy, the breeder must register the puppy in NKK as soon as possible and hand over the registration certificate to the buyer, unless there is another agreement in the written contract.
9. Never give false information about breeding, and always live up to NKKs by-laws and regulations.

Violations of these rules may result in: the litter not being registered, the puppies being registered with limited registration (banned from breeding), the bitch being banned from breeding for a limited period of time and/or disciplinary reactions.