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Norwegian Society for Protection of Animals comments regarding «Responsible cat/dog breeding guidelines»

The Norwegian Society for Protection of Animals (NSPA) appreciate the opportunity to make this statement.

The NSPA works to prevent and stop unethical breeding of family pets, hereunder pedigree dogs and cats. Solid scientific evidence shows that that a number of breeds have an enormous burden of disease. NSPA is of the opinion that it is both unethical and, in some countries, even illegal to continue breeding pedigree dogs without making changes in the way dogs are bred. In addition, the lack of sufficient remaining genetic diversity makes it impossible to breed robust and healthy animals within the remaining population. Based on these facts, the NSPA sees it as imperative that we get permanent structural changes in the way dogs are bred. Health and function and the animal's intrinsic value must carry more weight than the way the dog looks.

To achieve this, one mustuse mass data and estimated breeding values (EBV) for health and function. Both breeding of dogs and the national regulation of breeding must be based on science and no longer based on race theories from the 1930s.
Autoscanning of databases for health and function should be implemented on a large scale and in such a manner that it will enable the national regulatory body to achieve tight control of breeding of dogs and cats with relatively little resources.
This also applies to cats and other animals.

Comments on the document regarding dogs

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1. Introduction

Line 181:
It`s time to base breeding of cats and dogs on science and employing todays technology. Crossbreeding is a vital measure to rescue several of our dogbreeds as scientific research show that most breeds have an unacceptably high inbreeding coefficient. Breeding should not be based on race hygiene theories from the 1930s.

Line 191:
Breeding for best practice will imply the use of mass data for *all* diagnosis and health issues for *all* the individuals in the breed. Best practice will also imply the use of mental and physical tests for all breeding individuals in the population.

Line 219:
The breeders must seek information and documentation about the breed on a population level and seek professional guidance on how to maintain genetic variation of a population.

2. Principles:

Line 254:
An estimated breeding value (EBV) must be provided to the buyer as part of the sales contract.

Line 282 and 284:
We agree.

3. Selection of parents

Line 296:
Standardized physical and mental tests must be performed by the veterinarian

Line 298-302:

For certain breeds inbreeding has already gone too far and introducing new genes by crossbreeding is the only viable option.

Line 318:
Degree of inheritance within a breed must be carefully monitored using modern technology.

Line 333:
Genetic screening must be used with caution and based on sound science. All breeding schemes should take into consideration the complete heath of the animal and the population. Today's dogpopulations are in a genetic crisis because very few individuals are used for breeding. Exclusion of individuals from breeding must be done with extreme caution and based on sound science. Breeding where one predicts that 25% of the puppies will get sick (classical mendelian inheritance) must be banned (eg the colour Merle, Dermoid sinus in Ridgebacks).

Line 340:
It is a prerequisite for breeding that you have an estimated breeding value (EBV) for many traits.

Line 350:
Dogs that have corrective surgery should be castrated, preferably during the procedure. They must be excluded from all breeding. Exlusion of a dog must be recorded in all relevant registers and open for everyone to see.

4. Competent human carers:

Line 443:
Erase «(when appropriate)».

Line 450:
Breeders must understand that most health problems, most conformation traits and most behavioural traits in dogs are caused by multiple genes *and* environmental factors. The

breeders must therefore understand the importance of use of mass data and estimated breeding values (EBV) for health and function.

5. Requirements for good animal welfare

Line 481, table 2 under good health:
All diseases treated by vets must be recorded in a register and the information must be used for both breeding purposes, and as a tool for the regulatory body to ensure standards are met.

Line 510:
This is not appropriate for athlete dogs such as sledge dogs.

Line 770:
All veterinary treatments should be made available to create an estimated breeding value and as a tool for the regulatory body to ensure standards are met.

Line 778:
We agree that hemoeopathic vaccines is not an option.

Line 788:
The veterinary certificate should declare breed abnormalities and breed standards such as brachycephaly, ingrown tale, long back, teeth abnormalities, open fontanelle, excessive skin folds, exaggerated hind limb angles etc even when these are considered breed standards.

Line 790:
We agree

Line 818:
Add: Breeding where it is estimated that25% of the puppies will get sick (classical mendelian inheritance) must be banned (eg the colour Merle, Dermoid sinus in Ridgebacks).

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6. End of breeding life

Line 1167:
This must be implemented in the relevant database.

7. Record keeping:

Records necessary to estimate breeding values for health and function must be registered in national or preferably international databases. For both breeding purposes and made available for the regulatory body.

8. Protecting the future welfare of puppies and their new owners

Line 1302:
Add: Breeders must provide new owners with estimated breeding values for function and health.

9. Registration, licensing and enforcement:

Line 1348:
Comment: the only way to achieve this is by demanding that information of health and function is stored on databases and made available for the regulatory body.

Line 1370
Comment: Genetics is a complex subject. No lay person can be expected to have any comprehensive knowledge regarding the modern science of genetics. Breeding must be supervised by geneticists and based on sound science.

Line 1390:
Regarding the enforcement chapter:

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Enforcement must be based on comprehensive databases for function and health. Inspections (home visits) must be deemed an ineffective and outdated work method when it comes to breeding

Autoscanning of databases for health and function should be implemented on a large scale and in such a manner that it will enable tight control of breeding of dogs with relatively little resources.

The competent authority must ensure that databases for function and health are used both as an aid for breeding healthy animals and as a tool in regulating breeding of dogs. Inspection and home visits will in most cases not be an effective tool. Only by comprehensive use of databases for health and function will the regulatory body be able to monitor, advice and regulate health and welfare issues related to breeding of dogs.

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