



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB

May 28, 2020

Mr. Jack Alberts
Chairman
Raad van Beheer op Kynologisch Gebied in Nederland
Postbus 75901
NL 1070 AX AMSTERDAM Z

Dear Mr. Alberts:

The American Kennel Club joins with national kennel clubs around the world to advocate for the health and preservation of purebred dogs.

We are disappointed in the circumstances that have led to the recent decision by the Dutch Kennel Club- Raad van Beheer- to limit registration of purebred brachycephalic breeds based solely on physical attributes and to allow cross breeding in certain breeds to increase muzzle length.

We recognize that this decision is due to the impact of the Animals Act and the Animal Keepers Act (2014) that exerts significant control over Dutch dog breeders and registries. However, we strongly urge the Dutch Kennel Club to continue to aggressively work against these overt attempts to control breed type, and to continue to pursue education and scientific discussion of thoughtful ways to address health issues within a breed in a manner that protects and preserves the essence of that breed.

We believe that restricting registration based on physical characteristics will make it impossible for responsible breeders to continue to improve the health and conformation of that breed within the structured world of kennel clubs.

Our organization believes that breeding programs should be undertaken responsibly for the purpose of preserving breed characteristics and producing healthy, well-socialized purebred puppies. Breeders should be encouraged to regularly educate themselves on best breeding practices and to perform pre-breeding screening to select against extremes and for healthy dogs. Responsible breeders give careful consideration to health issues, temperament, and genetic screening, as well as to the individual care and placement of puppies in proper homes. They also work diligently to further their education and propel their selected breed in a positive manner.

A recent assessment by Dr. Jerry Bell, of the Tufts Cumming School of Veterinary Medicine, has noted that “within-breed genetic variation exists and there are objective means to improve the genetic health of involved breeds through selection.” Knowing this, we believe that responsible breeders can retain tradition while still being able to make suitable improvements in breeding choices. Health issues or defects associated with the brachycephalic breeds typically appear over generations of breeding. In many cases, such issues can be addressed by responsible and knowledgeable breeders, but this also will take multiple generations to address.

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These restrictions will only affect responsible breeders that use the registry. It will prevent the registration of healthy dogs and will have no impact on the health of dogs owned by individuals who do not use the registry services. Restrictions of this nature penalize a small number of breeders, many of whom show around the world, focused on breeding dogs that are the best representation of the breed standard via health testing. The introduction or requirement of cross breeding eliminates the work of responsible breeders. Instead, it leaves the breeds at the hands of those who do not use the registry or submit to the breeder codes of ethics of kennel clubs.

For the more than 25 years, the AKC Canine Health Foundation has been instrumental in assisting our clubs with research that has led to health developments that have helped breeders improve the health of not just certain purebred dogs but all dogs. As new research and scientific data become available, progress in areas that were at one time unachievable may now become attainable. These goals will take a concerted effort of collaboration between the science, veterinarians and responsible breeders.

The American Kennel Club supports purebred dogs and the responsible breeders who have dedicated their lives to these breeds. We strongly encourage the Dutch Kennel Club to work with breeders, veterinarians and animal welfare organizations around the world to find ways to reduce and eliminate any health issues associated with these breeds. We are happy to assist in any way possible.

Respectfully,

The American Kennel Club