



Press Release from the Danish Kennel Club:

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All the major dog organizations join forces to improve the health and welfare of Danish dogs

To ensure that we breed the healthiest dogs in Denmark and give them the best possible starting point for a good life, the largest dog organizations have now joined forces in a historic collaboration, as Animal Protection Denmark, the Danish Veterinary Association, DOSO (Animal Welfare Organizations' Cooperation Organization), The Danish Society for the Protection of Animals (Dyreværnet) and The Danish Kennel Club launch a proposal for a new Danish health model for dogs.

The proposal for the new Danish health model for dogs consists of the following values:

- 1) Health and welfare are more important than a specific appearance
- 2) Health is required when breeding dogs
- 3) Welfare is required when breeding dogs
- 4) A registry for dogs' possible diseases and health status
- 5) Equal terms for commercial and private dog breeding
- 6) Focus on healthy dogs - also when importing

The five organizations agree that the main goal is healthier Danish dogs bred with a focus on the welfare of the dogs. This should apply to all dogs, regardless of pedigree or not, breed or mix.

The model has been launched in continuation of the Danish government's proposal "Together for Animals Agreement on Animal Welfare 2024-2027". At the same time, new EU legislation on dog welfare is in the pipeline. However, the EU legislation only propose new rules to apply to commercial breeding. Commercial dog breeding covers approx. 50% of Danish dog breeding, and therefore the five organizations believe that our proposal should be introduced into Danish legislation and apply to all dog breeding in Denmark. The welfare of the dogs should not be dependent on whether it is a private individual who breeds the litter or a commercial breeder. It makes no difference to the dogs.

Together, the organizations hope to inspire the political apparatus, which is already in the process of drafting new legislation that will have a huge impact on future breeding, but also on many homes that want a family member they can enjoy for many years to come.

"At the Danish Kennel Club, we welcome this historic collaboration, which bodes well for the future of dog breeding. We want health and welfare for all dogs. And since, for some breeds, only a very small fraction of puppy registrations is subject to the Danish Kennel Club's breeding



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requirements and ethical breeding recommendations, this proposal is essential to achieve our common goal," explains Lise Lotte Christensen, behavior consultant at the Danish Kennel Club.

Healthy dog breeding in Denmark

Together we will ensure healthy breeding of Danish dogs

We welcome that a broad majority in the Danish Parliament has decided to set a new framework for breeding requirements for dogs.

To ensure that we breed the healthiest dogs with the best possible starting point for a good life, we propose a model for breeding dogs in Denmark, based on the following values:

- 1 Health and welfare are more important than a specific physical appearance
- 2 Physical health is required when breeding dogs
- 3 Welfare is required for the breeding dogs and their progeny
- 4 A registry for dogs' possible diseases and health status
- 5 Equal terms for commercial and private dog breeding
- 6 Focus on healthy dogs - also concerning imports







Dansk Kennel Klub Den Danske Dyrlægeforening Dyrenes Beskyttelse DyreværnsOrganisationernes SamarbejdsOrganisation Dyreværnet

- 1 **Health and welfare are more important than a specific physical appearance**
The interest in dogs with short noses, big eyes and small heads, for example, should not result in the breeding of unhealthy dogs. However, dogs with these traits can be healthy if they are bred correctly.
- 2 **Physical health is required when breeding dogs**
A dog should pass required health tests prior to breeding. This will create a breeding culture where dogs are bred to move freely, have normal vision, breathe freely, be in good health and give birth without hindrance. There are already good international results from implementing various tests - such as breathing tests (like BOAS), X-rays and DNA testing (for genetically inherited diseases) - improving health for future generations of dogs.
- 3 **Welfare is required for the breeding dogs and their progeny**
Dogs need to be able to mate and give birth naturally. A bitch that is both physically and mentally mature has the best chance of labouring through pregnancy, birth and caring for the litter of puppies. A minimum and maximum age must be set for the bitch's first and last litter. There should also be a maximum number of litters for the bitch, and a minimum length of time between litters.
- 4 **A registry for dogs' possible diseases and health status**
All dogs must be registered in a public registry with their health requirements and current test results. The public registry will be accessible to all dog owners in Denmark - and it should be possible to look up breeding requirements and health results for all dog breeds in the registry.
- 5 **Equal terms for commercial and private dog breeding**
Upcoming EU-regulations will set rules for commercial dog breeding that will only apply to around 50% of Danish dog breeding. Current rules should cover all dog breeding in Denmark. Health and good animal welfare should be equal for all Danish dogs.
- 6 **Focus on healthy dogs - also concerning imports**
We want to create international focus on the fact that we in Denmark make demands regarding health and welfare for dogs. By focusing positively on dog health and establishing requirements for breeding processes, we create an understanding of, and demand for healthy dogs. The goal is to reduce the demand for dogs imported from illegal and unhealthy puppy suppliers and instead create the foundation for import of healthy dogs to Denmark.

Health and welfare

The Dutch dog model
Prohibition model that incentivizes imports.

The Norwegian dog model
Ban on breeding dogs with hereditary and unnecessarily burdensome traits.

The Danish dog model
A set of rules with requirements for health tests and animal welfare. A ban on breeding dogs with hereditary illnesses and unnecessarily stressful traits. Healthier dogs in every generation. Focus on welfare in breeding processes. Full support from all interest organizations concerning dogs.

Further background on the current dog welfare debate:

Animal welfare and the healthy breeding of dogs has certainly caught the public's attention. And with good reason: there's a dog in around one in four homes and we love our dogs like never before.

Therefore, it has become increasingly important to the five organizations that our dogs are healthy and happy. And just as equestrian sports are being scrutinized to see if the industry is living up to its ethical responsibilities, there has been similar criticism about the health of dog breeds.

The debate has largely focused on the short-nosed dog breeds, some of which can have breathing difficulties.



In February, the government published the political agreement "Together for the Animals Agreement on Animal Welfare 2024-2027" between the Government (Socialdemokratiet, Venstre, Moderaterne), Socialistisk Folkeparti, Liberal Alliance, Det Konservative Folkeparti, Radikale Venstre, Dansk Folkeparti and Alternativet.)

The agreement contains the following three points concerning dogs:

- 1) Initiative against extreme breeding of pets
- 2) Clarification of rules on the tethering of dogs
- 3) Ban on certain dog collars

In addition, DKK 1 million will be allocated to The National Register of Blood Tracking Dogs .

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