

"Dortmund Appeal" for a turn in breeding for dogs' benefit

In the mother country of pedigree dog breeding, Great Britain, the year 2008 marked the beginning of a radical turn. The only aim of this turn is to centre the welfare and health of dogs in breeding from now on consequently and without restrictions.

Also Austria has already taken steps in this matter. We also see the necessity of such a turn in breeding in Germany.

The signees' preferential aim of each dog-fancier is to campaign for the health and welfare of our dogs. So far, not early enough attention has been paid to the health of dogs in breeding. Unfortunately, inbreeding, excessive breeding, hereditary diseases culminating in characteristics of inhumane breeding practice are not uncommon. Whole breeds are not able anymore to breed without active help of humans.

We appeal to the responsible persons in breed clubs and breeder's associations, to breeders as well as dog owners and public authorities to campaign for a sustained turn in breeding for the benefit of welfare and health of our dogs!

⇒ Moving, breathing, seeing

Using these three verbs, the biggest breeder's association of the world, the British "Kennel Club" describes its turn to breeding considering the health of dogs. Actually it should be a matter of course to respect and keep elementary functions of life. Especially the breeders of our dogs should be expected to respect the health of dogs without compromise and to put this on the first place of breeder's endeavour.

⇒ No breeding for trends

By pedigree dog breeding, standards which are considered as basis have already established. However, an unreasonable development has been in progress. This development shall be led to healthy dogs by the measures mentioned here.

The exterior of a dog must not affect breathing, seeing, moving or any other natural need in no way. Impairments or particular risks concerning health, especially hereditary diseases, must not be supported by specific accentuation of particular attributes. The welfare and health of dogs must absolutely rank first.

⇒ No inbreeding

The problem of inbreeding, mating of related individuals or line breeding is knowingly ignored or minimised in many parts of pedigree dog breeding. The danger of inbreeding concerning the risk of hereditary diseases, resistance to disease, vitality and life expectancy of all mammals is scientifically answered though. Inbreeding has to be considered cruelty to animals, covering entire populations in the long run.

Rules must be established for each breed to support and secure the genetic diversity in the future. A genetics database is to be established. Stud dogs must be imposed a restriction. Artificial genetic barriers concerning e.g. club membership or coat colouring are to be abolished.

⇒ Pro reorientation of show character

Awards must not be given only for the outward appearance. Cosmetic manipulation regarding dogs are to be refused. Character, health and genetic amenities for the population have to take centre stage and are to be proofed.

Character and procedure of shows are to be changed accordingly. Judges are to be trained, instructed and chosen.

⇒ **Animal protection to be active law also in breeding**

The German animal welfare law says in fact that it is prohibited to inflict pain or suffering on an animal. The reality of dog breeding sometimes seems to override this law. There are breeds which are able to reproduce only via caesarean or other help of humans. Selective breeding with hereditary diseases, inordinateness of several characteristics like coat, colouring, folds, ears, slanted backs, angulation of hind leg, extreme dwarfism and giant breed etc. cause tremendous suffering for the dogs without the animal welfare law coming into action. Also massive impairment concerning socialization of puppies, e.g. by dog dealing, is not gripped by current law.

We need an animal protection law taking effect in practice.

⇒ **Enable dogs to cope with their tasks**

Men's demands of our dogs are highly ambitious in these days. A neutral character of the dog is required. A dog must not show its own initiative towards aggression towards men and/or conspecifics. The breeder shall confront the puppy with environmental impact as often as possible to obtain a neutral dog of steady character. Excessive insecurity / anxiousness, especially regarding bitches imprinting puppies, shall not be tolerated.

Man has to make sure that the puppies get a socialization as good as possible to be able to cope with their tasks.

⇒ **New ethics in breeding**

We need new ethics in breeding which is consequently geared to the welfare and health of dogs and prepares them for their life in our society. In pedigree dog breeding, a certificate of qualification, observance of binding and transparent rules and admission of independent examinations are needed. On this basis, a state-approved permission for breeding and sale of dogs is required. Breeder's measures to the disadvantage of dogs' health are to be sanctioned.

We need an independent quality management for breeding. The breeding of "our best friend" should be worth more care.