



Club du Bouledogue Français



ASSOCIATION A BUT NON LUCRATIF REGIE PAR LA LOI DU 1^{ER} JUILLET 1901

AGREEE PAR LE MINISTERE DE L'AGRICULTURE

AFFILIEE A LA SOCIETE CENTRALE CANINE 

To: Dr. Kirsi Sainio, President of the Scientific Commission of the FCI
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Fédération Cynologique Internationale
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Monday July 6, 2020

Mrs. President of the Scientific Commission of the FCI,

By email of May 25, 2020, you asked the French Bulldog Club what actions we were taking to combat the health problems of the French bulldog, a brachycephalic breed.

Consequently, we are honored to answer by explaining the following points.

Historical reminders concerning the morphology of the French Bulldog

The current morphology of the French bulldog is the result of historical evolution. This dog comes largely from the English Bulldog, a mastiff originally used in Great Britain in the fights against bulls and bears. After the ban on bullbaiting in 1835, only dwarf varieties, the "toy bulldogs", interested buyers, who used them as watchdogs and companion dogs.

The French Bulldog was created in France in the middle of the 19th century in the popular districts of PARIS, by crossing toy bulldogs imported from Great Britain with small doguins and local ratiers. The literature also mentions the contribution of dogs of "Brabançon" breed,

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then later of various burrows dogs bringing the gene for the white variegation. The French Bulldog was used by the grooms for its zeal to destroy the vermin in the stables and by the butchers for its bravery in driving the cattle to the slaughterhouse.

Its courage and morphology were perfectly suited to these functions. It would be a mistake to compare its naturally reduced size with, for example, Robinow syndrome, since it is certainly a small but vigorous molossoïd which, unlike humans with this syndrome, does not suffer neither urinary nor genital anomalies. The French Bulldog does not suffer from mental retardation, too.

The particular shape of its spine results from the perfect adaptation of its English ancestor to the fighter function: a stocky shape, an arched backbone, which made it possible to fight against a superior adversary in size and weight. Its upturned muzzle, its flattened face allowed to grab the opponent's muzzle and not to let go, while still continuing to breathe.

By studying the pictures of dogs awarded in competitions and represented in profile, we see that the morphology of the French bulldog, and in particular the brachycephalic form of his skull, with a CFR of around 0.3, did not vary between the early 20th century and today.

State of the BOAS problem today

So, we can ask the question of whether the studies on brachycephalic problems have taken as their objects of study a herd whose origin is generally of poor quality, resulting from massive importation of farms whose profitability comes before their interest in cynophilia, and not from breeders living in the country that created the breed.

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French breeders are still amazed at the proportions that the debate on BOAS has taken on in Great Britain and in the Scandinavian countries, to the extent that, in France, this health problem does not arise with such acuteness.

Measures taken by the Club du Bouledogue Français

The Club du Bouledogue Français, holder of the breed standard, whose work about the standard was validated by the Scientific Commission of the Société Canine Centrale and the Fédération Cynologique Internationale, has taken the following measures which have prevented the problem from developing in France .

- 1) **Revision** in 2015 of the French bulldog standard to fight against all drifts, especially those leading to breathing difficulties. Morphological descriptions were written to avoid hypertypes, and serious and eliminating faults were listed to prevent sick dogs from being allowed to breed, and awarded in dog shows.
- 2) **Reinforcement** since 2019 of the respiratory tests during the Test d'Aptitudes Naturelles (TAN), an examination intended to verify the physical and psychological capacities of dogs. To successfully pass this exam, dogs must be able to walk 500m in walking steps in less than 6 minutes. Failure to pass this exam prevents the dog from acquiring additional points in scoring, from accessing championship titles, from being offered as a stallion on the CBF referencing list.
- 3) **Obligation** to pass three medical tests: screening for degenerative myelopathy, screening for dislocation of the patella, screening for heart abnormalities.

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The general breeding policy of the Club du Bouledogue Français is as follows.

- a) Dogs are born in breeders, as has always been the case, and not in laboratories.
- b) Advances in veterinary medicine and genetics are taken into account. We keep breeders informed and responsible, but we do not strip them of the prerogatives of their profession for the benefit of veterinarians.
- c) Dogs are allowed to live without depriving them of their legitimate pedigree, but the least able to access breeding are dissuaded.
- d) Candidates for the reception of a French Bulldog are widely informed about the characteristics of the breed and the excesses that certain subjects may present resulting from the incorrect application by certain breeders of the directives given by the Club du Bouledogue Français and the Société Centrale Canine.
- e) French law, via the Code de la Consommation (Consumer Code), exposes a heavy pecuniary sentence to a breeder who sells a dog suffering from any pathology.

The French Bulldog Club also wishes to draw your attention to the following points.

- 1) Breathing problems are not correlated with brachycephaly. For example, the ADAMT53 gene causes breathing difficulties in the Norwich Terrier, which is a non-brachycephalic breed.

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2) Non-brachycephalic breeds are prone to other pathologies, rare or nonexistent in the French bulldog. For example, the Doberman is prone to torsion of the stomach, the German Shepherd to hip dysplasia, the Iris Wolfhound to the systemic port shunt, such as the Labrador, the Samoyed, the Australian Shepherd, the Border Collie, the Bichon Havanese, Maltese, or curly, the Yorkshire terrier, the Silky terrier, the Miniature Schnauzer, the Jack Russell terrier, the American Cocker Spaniel, the Cairn Terrier. We could thus review all the races, and therefore ask the right question: WHO and WHY does the French Bulldog bother to the point of undergoing such a well-organized bashing, in the media and even at the highest levels of canine circles?

3) Dogs from crossbreeds or from a re-temper are not free from pathology. Under the pretext of modifying a race to extinguish a pathology, a new one appears. We can even argue with regard to the French bulldog that the emergence of major breathing difficulties and a change in its morphology are concomitant with the recognition, almost imposed on CBF, of the fawn robe. This novelty created such a craze that its exponential development led indelicate breeders to use during the first decade of other breeds, pug, Brabançons, dogue de Bordeaux, king charles ruby, to produce them, for lack of having enough breeders wearing this coat in the breed. Despite the selection work, there are still traces of it on hypertyped subjects that the policy of the CBF and the SCC are striving to eliminate.

4) The French bulldog has existed for over a century. It is a mirror of the originality of Parisian taste and considered a national treasure of France, for which we are going to ask for recognition, like the Akita Inu, recognized national treasure of Japan. The pathologies from

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which he may have suffered in the past have not prevented him from reaching us and spreading throughout the world, including countries whose climate is not favorable for people and animals sensitive to heat, like South America and Australia, where his incredibly affectionate character towards the human and particularly the children makes their happiness. We protest against the Anglo-Saxon propaganda which seems to want to lead a blind and brutal policy which could quickly lead to the extermination of the race, rather than better focusing on the selection of the livestock of each country concerned, in particular those whose livestock, by living on an island far away from the mainland, may lack supply of healthy dogs from country of origin.

5) Sexual reproduction constantly produces genetic mixing. Even if we succeeded in isolating individuals that we would describe as genetically superior, which has always been a failure, since perfection lies in imperfection, the only fact of putting them back into the sexual reproductive circuit would again create descendants with health characteristics not only variable, but unpredictable in advance.

6) The current French Bulldog is perfectly suited to his function: a companion dog affectionate towards his master and his family, cordial towards strangers.

7) The French Bulldog is also suitable for the canine species market: it is very popular in several European countries, Brazil and Japan.

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8) For a dog fancier, not all dogs are interchangeable. We prefer a French Bulldog by following the same approach which makes us prefer a Louis XV piece of furniture to an Ikea piece of furniture, a Lego toy to a Meccano, or an iPhone to a Huawei.

Consequently, the CBF strongly condemns any undertaking which aims to distort or irreparably destroy the genetic heritage of the French Bulldog, which would modify the morphological and psychological balances of this breed, and would create a "dysharmonious" breed whose dog fanciers and buyers would divert.

Faithfully yours.

Mrs. Elyse WAGET
President of the CBF

Mr. Daniel BÉGUIN
Vice-President of the CBF

CC to:

- Mr. Tamás Jakkel, President of the FCI (tjakkel@gmail.com)
- Mr. Yves De Clercq, FCI Executive Director (declercq.y@fci.be)
- Mr. Jorge Nallem, President of the FCI Standards Commission (jorgenallem@gmail.com)

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