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Instructions to judges of the brachycephalic breeds

in regard to exaggerations of type

SVENSKA KENNELKLUBBEN



Measures by the Swedish kennel club regarding the brachycephalic breeds

- Spreading knowledge about the origin of the breeds
- Caring for their health and wellbeing • Today, and in the future

The Swedish kennel club is acting together with the breeders, judges, exhibitors and members to ensure that the brachycephalic dogs, as well as all other purebred dogs, are sound, healthy and true to their respective breed standards.



Content

Instructions to judges of the brachycephalic breeds	5
Reasons for the decision	6
Interpretations and applications regarding text in the standards.....	7
Details of the head – cause and effect.....	7
Eyes:	7
Muzzle:	8
Teeth/jaws/mouth:	9
Body / neck:.....	9
Skin:	10
Coat:	11
Movement:.....	11



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Instructions to judges of the brachycephalic breeds in regard to exaggerations of type

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Instructions are commissioned in the sincere interest to keep these breeds healthy, and to preserve them for the future.

These instructions are a result of the new Swedish welfare legislation, regarding all domestic animals, the new law is in effect since 1st of April 2019. Parliament accepted the new legislation (no 2018:1192) and the proposals for change in the Public and Privacy Act (no 2009:400) as being in effect from 1st of April 2019. Parts of the legal regulation that concern dogdom are administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and these regulations are fully completed as of 14th of May 2020. These regulations and their general amendments are in effect from 15th of June 2020.

It is the regulations that will depict how the breeding of dogs is to continue.

The Government states in the new legislation that domestic animals should have a possibility to perform all their natural behaviour that they are strongly motivated to do by instinct, and which is important for their wellbeing. Other important news in the legislation is that it expresses requirement for competence to handle animals, prohibition to abandon animals as well as

a strict protection act for animals that are competing in any kind of trial.

Changes in the Public and Privacy Act means that personnel, within the Health- and Social Security Departments gets the right to report animal welfare issues to the authorities concerned

Prohibition against certain breeding

It is now by law prohibited to pursue any kind of breeding of animals that might cause harm to the individuals. The prohibition regards both breeding stock and their offspring.

Parts from the chapter: Breeding.

Basic conditions regarding dog breeding

1 § For dogs to be used in breeding the following requirements must be met:

Parents shall be of correct anatomical, physiological and behavioural characteristics, and must not stand any risk to negatively affect the health and wellbeing of neither parents nor offspring.

Prohibition to breed under certain conditions

3 § It is prohibited for dogs to be bred from if any of the following conditions exist:

- If the combination, according to available information, will increase the risk for disease or functional disabilities in the offspring. Disabilities regarded are conditions complicating the dog's natural behaviour or function.
- Combinations that are assumed to result in an increased risk for whelping difficulties.
- A bitch that have had a cesarean section twice must not be bred from again.
- If anatomical defects are discovered at a first cesarean section, which indicate a probability of future cesarean sections, the bitch must not be bred from again.

However, the Government does not at the moment find cause to order veterinary surgeons to report any findings of defects or complications caused by breeding.

Reasons for the decision

The Government considers that:

“Welfare problems that are connected to breeding within certain areas, not least when it comes to breeding of pedigree dogs and cats where focus lies on particular exterior features that might in certain cases lead to animals standing a risk of being injured, ill or suffering from affects of inbreeding. The Government also points out in the directives

that a number of breeds are still at risk and have physical problems caused by a brachycephalic anatomy, like a very short muzzle that can lead to respiratory problems”.

The investigation further considers that:

“Despite current rules, there are obvious welfare problems connected to breeding and precautions must be taken. Where it concerns pets, it seems it often comes down to a wish to breed animals with more unusual and extreme appearances.

The Government, like the investigators, believe that it is not ethically acceptable to breed animals with an anatomy that deprives them of normal functions, like giving birth in the normal way because of an ideal that the dog should have a certain look.

In line with this, the Government proposes that there will be an addendum in the law that gives the right to the Government or the Ministry of Agriculture to add regulations with requirements or prohibitions to ban breeding that adversely affects the animals' normal functions or ability to naturally give birth.”

The Government does not consider a need for rules on general conditions for breeding, as proposed by the investigators. As the Government does not propose a ban in the law, against the breeding of animals that might be affected in their natural behaviour, there will of course not be a need for exceptions from such a prohibition

Advice when judging brachycephalic breeds

– Interpretations and applications regarding text in the standards

The following is proposed as a guideline when judging the brachycephalic breeds

The differences of type in the brachycephalic (short skulled) breeds are seen in various degrees, regarding length of skull; length of muzzle and jaw; size and setting of eyes but also in the shape of ribcage; length of neck and amount of loose skin. Exaggerations of these features can lead to severe health problems, in particular where the respiratory ability is affected, with a negative effect on breathing and control of body temperature.

Good judgement, sincere care for the breeds' health and future wellbeing will be crucial for their existence. A genuine aim to preserve these historic breeds in a healthy state will be the goal for the future.

Details of the head – cause and effect

EYES:

Cause:

A short skull might cause the eye sockets to be shallow and the eyes to protrude and become unprotected. The word prominent, sometimes used in standards does not neces-

sarily mean protruding. Prominent could mean that the eye is of a shape, expression or size that makes it the first and obvious thing to note. But the word prominent is never a call to reward overly big or protruding eyes. Eyes should never be protruding as that causes a risk for injury. Entropion (eyelids rolled in) or ectropion (very loose, sagging lower eyelids, haw) or eyeball overgrown with dense pigment, are all conditions that have to be investigated by a veterinary surgeon and not in the show ring. However, a polite recommendation to the handler to have the eye-condition looked into is never wrong.

Effect:

Eyes too big and that clearly show white around the iris; excessive tear flow; brown stains under the eyes; opaque/greyish cornea; red conjunctiva; constant blinking or squinting.

The following applies regarding grading:

A dog that shows any of above symptoms can never be awarded a CK (certificate quality). As for the grading, it will depend

on the severity of the conditions, in relation to the whole of the general appearance as well as according to the judges' own discretion. In severe cases a disqualification may be considered.

According to the Swedish kennel club's rules of ethics and Swedish Law, the dogs' wellbeing and soundness will always have priority.

MUZZLE:

Cause:

In the case of a short, blunt or flat muzzle with none, or a very short ridge of muzzle there will for obvious reasons be very little space for the oral cavity. Standards that ask for a short but not flat muzzle have of course more leeway of interpretation. Well, how short is short? Flat can never be anything but flat, but what about blunt? Well, if flat is not what is asked for it is advisable to interpret the standard text rather than go for what is commonly seen today. As in all interpretations of text it is the different variations of the word that matters. But priority is soundness, as always.

A muzzle that in the standard is asked to be blunt will not be untypical if it is slightly longer than commonly seen, not even if it is several centimetres longer than flat... Well, how short is blunt?

Effect:

A very short muzzle will increase the risk of a small oral cavity that together with pinched nostrils can give severe effects of BOAS (Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome). A very short muzzle may also be connected to a wry mouth; lame tongue; very short lower jaw and uneven jaws with the effect that teeth penetrate the palate.

The following applies regarding grading:

Dogs that display severely affected breathing; severely pinched nostrils; evidence of a lame tongue, wry mouth; short lower jaw and uneven jaws causing teeth to penetrate the palate, all show faults that are disqualifying, hence no other grading could be in question.

Over nose wrinkle:

Cause:

A full nose wrinkle, or roll is not always asked for in a standard but has become a tradition in a couple of breeds since the mid 20th century.

Attention to what a standard actually asks for is at hand. A broken nose wrinkle is asked for in the Pekingese and in the Pug standard a nose wrinkle is not even mentioned.

Effect:

A very thick roll, if also clad with too much hair might adversely disturb or even damage the cornea. The over nose wrinkle might be so heavy as to partly hang over the nose and hence disturb the dog's ability to breath freely.

The following applies regarding grading:

An over nose wrinkle or roll that is so heavy/or profusely coated (long, coarse, off-standing coat) as to obviously disturb the cornea and/or the nose can never be considered for "Excellent".

As to a lesser grading, it will of course depend on the severity of the conditions, in relation to the whole of the general appearance as well as according to the judges' own discretion. In very severe cases a disqualification may be considered.

Nose:

Cause:

The nose size as well as its construction, vis-à-vis the development of the nostrils; depending on how open the nostrils are, is a matter that varies very much in the brachycephalic breeds. There is no “simple” answer to why French Bulldogs do not seem bothered by fairly tight nostrils whereas Pekingese can show obvious signs of suffering. The size of the nose has been mentioned as a reason for concern in Pekingese. Generally one wants a nose to be fairly cold, moist and big enough for the size of the breed in question and to have sufficiently open nostrils

Effect:

A small nose, sometimes also a medium sized nose, will of course experience adverse effects from an over hanging nose wrinkle. If the dog also has pinched nostrils an obvious risk for breathing problems arises.

The following applies regarding grading:

A nose that is so small and has very obvious pinched nostrils resulting in clearly affected breathing can never be graded “Excellent”.

As to a lesser grading, it will depend on the severity of the conditions, in relation to the whole of the general appearance as well as according to the judges’ own discretion. In very severe cases a disqualification may be considered. Dogs with acute signs of breathing problems should always be disqualified.

TEETH/JAWS/MOUTH:

Cause:

A lower jaw being too short (shark-bite); narrow lower jaw or wry mouth is all conditions where the teeth might penetrate the palate.

Canine teeth wrongly placed might as well as molars set across the jaws hinder the dog from closing the mouth properly. There are also cases with incisors of minute size (noted in several breeds, not just brachycephalic).

Description of a lame tongue: A narrow, long paralysed tongue that cannot be held in the mouth when the mouth is closed.

When there is not a lame tongue: A broad tongue rolled up in an open mouth on a hot summer’s day, or a broad fully coloured and moving tongue to get cooling air circulated when panting during hot weather.

Effect:

A lame tongue might be detected already in young dogs. A tip of the tongue can be seen either in the corner of the mouth or in front of the closed incisors. In older dogs it is very obvious as more of the tongue hangs out, dry, wrinkled and paralysed outside the mouth, the whole time.

The following applies regarding grading:

Disqualification, as with any other abnormality. It goes without saying that a paralysed tongue is very harmful to the dog and affects its ability to eat and drink.

BODY / NECK:

Cause:

Short sternum (breast bone), short, open ribcage, narrow ribcage (keel shaped). Very short neck that is thick and coarse.

Effect:

A short sternum will not give support to ribs; short, open ribcage will not provide protection to lungs, intestines and diaphragm. A narrow, shallow ribcage gives poor space for heart and lungs. A short, thick neck

also affects the space of the oral cavity. All the mentioned conditions affect the dog's capacity of breathing normally, hence the grading must be according to the grade of deviation.

The following applies regarding grading:

A dog's breathing should be monitored during the whole time the dog is in the ring, whether standing or moving. Any discomfort of breathing, for any reason; anatomical; weather or environmental shall be reflected in the grading of the dog – of course with the grade in proportion to the affect.

Below are three examples of how to grade and place in a challenge regarding a dog's breathing ability under different conditions.

1. Breathing affected either insignificantly or temporarily (eg. hot, humid weather) that does not cause any problems for the dog. It might be noted in the critique but will not affect the grading, although it might be considered in a challenge situation.
2. Breathing slightly affected (eg. constantly clearing the throat or snuffling during normal weather conditions). Whether caused by anatomical conditions or other reasons, the grading should always reflect the condition of the breathing.
3. Obvious signs of breathing difficulties always motivate a disqualification.
4. Signs that is obvious even when the dog is standing still and is not affected by hot weather or excitement etc.

Namely:

- Exhale breathing with a wide-open mouth, and with the tongue significantly hanging out of the mouth.

- Evident, harsh noise from the snuffling when catching breath.
- Visible retractions in the forechest when inhaling air or contractions behind the ribcage as the dog catches breath.
- Head and neck hanging down and nodding with each gasp for air.

Tail and croup:

Cause:

Abnormally steep croup; non-existing tail or a lame tail that covers anus.

Effect:

A croup that is severely steep results in very weak hindquarters and movement that lacks reach and strength.

A tail should be seen and felt. A tail that is lame and completely covers the anus is of course of great discomfort for the dog.

The following applies regarding grading:

A non-existing tail is a disqualifying fault. (In the Bulldog standard lack of tail is stated as "not desired").

SKIN:

Cause:

Skin that is exaggeratedly wrinkled; very loose and lymphatically thick; irritated, reddish brown or coarse; greyish and bald -all those conditions stand a risk of developing eczemas or fungal infections.

Effect:

Excessive amount of loose skin around the eyes and muzzle could cause irritation and affect the nose as well as damage the eyes. Skin that is thick and lymphatic might also reduce space in the oral cavity; cause the

cartilage skin in the outer ear to wrinkle and swell with a risk of fungal infection. This type of skin has also been said to increase the risk of wet eczemas.

The following applies regarding grading:

Skin that shows evidence of eczema or fungal infection cannot be graded with “Excellent”. The reason to be stated in the critique is: “the skin is not in show condition”. Dog judges do not give veterinary advice in the show ring, but of course, if asked one is allowed to advise the dog’s handler to seek veterinary advice.

Brachycephalic breeds might have youth pimples. This is not listed as a skin problem as it is considered a hormonal and temporary condition. Hence not affected by any lesser grading.

COAT:

Cause:

A coat that is too profuse; has the wrong texture; is very thin or has bald patches.

Effect:

Coat that is excessively more profuse than asked for in the standard is commonly called being “over coated”, as can often be seen in Pekingese. If the texture of the coat is also wrong, being very woolly it can cause the dog to overheat. When judging the breed one should take care and examine the coat thoroughly to make sure that it is not felted close to the skin as that of course will increase the risk for overheating. Too much coat might also impede movement. Pugs might suffer from a harsh coat texture that stands off instead of being smooth and lying close to the body. The coarse kind of texture on a full nose wrinkle might harm the cornea. This type of coat often gets somewhat long

and hence started the un-ethical procedure of clipping the coat. Boston Terriers might suffer from a very sparse coat, mainly noted on the abdomen; inner side of the legs; on the throat and on the skull.

The following applies regarding grading:

Pekingese carrying a voluminous, woolly coat that disturbs both eyes and nose and impedes movement could never be considered for “Excellent”. Pugs with a clipped, plush coat should not be given a CK (certificate quality) neither should a Boston Terrier that is partly bald.

As for a lesser grading, it will depend on the severity of the conditions, in relation to the whole of the general appearance as well as according to the judges’ own discretion.

MOVEMENT:

Cause:

Movement that lacks power and strength; forequarters that are so loose that the forelegs can not lift the feet properly with the effect that the coat on the topside of the paws are worn down; severely loose shoulders and upper arms causing the whole of the forequarters to drop down on the brisket, both when standing and moving; severely weak hindquarters with no drive or power of propulsion; forelegs as well as hind legs crossing over; constant spinning and trying to sit down at the same time as the dog tries to scratch its head.

Effect:

Most of the above mentioned conditions are caused by poor, weak anatomy, which of course affects the dogs wellbeing. Very narrow, weak and thinly boned fore- and hindquarters are often the case when legs are crossing over when the dog moves. The spinning

and scratching might be a sign of a painful neurologic condition called syringomyelia which of course cannot be stated in the ring by the judge, not even as a suspicion, but the handler should be advised to seek veterinary help as constant spinning and scratching is not normal.

The following applies regarding grading:

It is important that brachycephalic breeds are given sufficient time to show their movement in the ring to be able to fully assess movement and breathing, of course without exaggerations and under normal weather conditions. As to the grading of poor anatomy it will of course depend on the severity of the conditions, in relation to the whole of the general appearance as well as according to the judges' own discretion. In severe cases, as most of the examples above are, a CK (certificate quality) is very unlikely. Most probably, the grading will be on the lower scale.

Disqualifying faults:

(In the UK one does not disqualify but the use of "highly undesirable" could be said to have the same severity)

An anomaly is always disqualifying, like the examples below.

- Wry mouth
- Short lower jaw
- Lamé tongue
- Teeth, wrongly placed and pressing against the palate
- Molars set at the wrong angle in the jaw, preventing the jaws to close
- Nostrils severely pinched, to a degree that it affects the breathing
- Breathing, so severely troubled that it obviously affects the dog clinically.

(The Swedish kennel club regulations define disqualified as caused by an anomaly defect thus: *a dog that has such anatomical defects that they have a negative impact on the dog's health and soundness, particularly with regard to the origin/function/use of the breed*).

No grading:

(In the UK, the use of "withheld" might be equivalent to "no grading")

Below are some examples of conditions, on the day that might give cause to use "no grading". As they are conditions on the day, they could be corrected and therefore they are not a disqualifying fault.

- Temperament, although friendly but unruly and impossible to assess either standing or walking.
- Excessively underweight- or over weight. Of course too much weight as well as too little might be a health issue, but it can be corrected.
- A squinting and watery eye, maybe from draught; a grey/cloudy cornea, caused by trauma to the eye.

Note! A judge's report must never be similar to a veterinary examination. Although, when there is a suspicion of a severe health issue, a polite suggestion to seek veterinary advice is in the best interest of the dog.

The written report

The structure of a judge's critique still stands: It should be written down in the same order as the dog is judged, i.e: General appearance as the dog enters the ring; the head with all its details; the body; tail; limbs; the coat and the gait/movement. Specific breed typical features should be mentioned as well as all the positive issues, and the negative ones that might be the reason for the grading. Temperament should always be mentioned.



*Photographers: David Dalton, Ole Kristian Lökken, Helene Strömbom,
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