

It's not just BOAS. It's not just dogs.

Breeding for looks can never prioritise health.

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

I have no relevant financial interest, arrangement or affiliation with any company or organization.

‘Easy’
priorities;

EU, UK,
USA.

- Extreme conformation and showing.
- Assisted fertility - some breeds exist almost purely because of veterinary intervention.
- Mutilations.
- Illegal puppy trade and breeding.



Mutilations.

- Aesthetics
 - Tail-docking
 - Ear cropping
- Owner convenience
 - Debarking of dogs
 - Declawing of cats
- Cultural and legal differences
- Owners should be as accountable as those doing it to avoid loopholes
- Ignorance of the law is not a defence
- Welfare needs should take priority over human vanity and convenience



One of 11 puppies that died after their tails were docked with a Stanley knife. Photo: RSPCA

Evolution and survival of the fittest

- Important to keep this in mind even though it seems obvious.
- Canids and felids;
 - Long, straight limbs
 - Long muzzles
 - Short fur, even in cold climates
 - Long tails
 - Open, unimpaired vision
 - Erect ears



Extreme conformation.

- Many owners are unaware that breeds and an entirely man-made concept and do not exist in nature.
- Certain breed standards based on looks alone are a major cause of unnecessary suffering.
- Suffering as tangible as physical abuse.



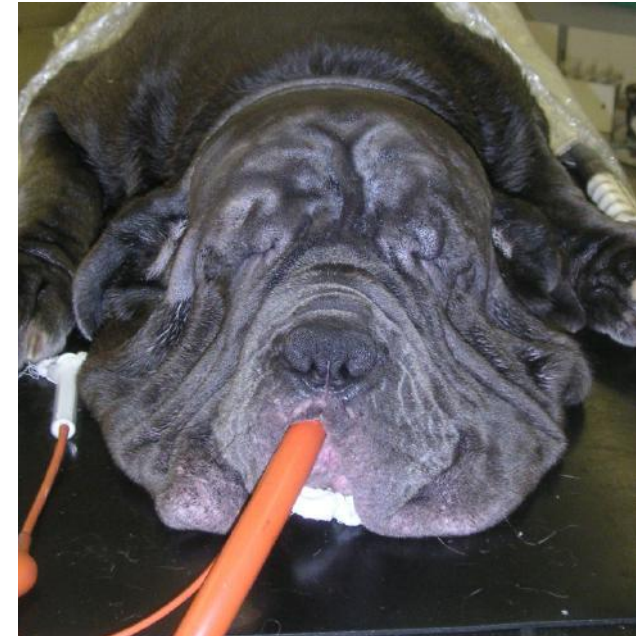
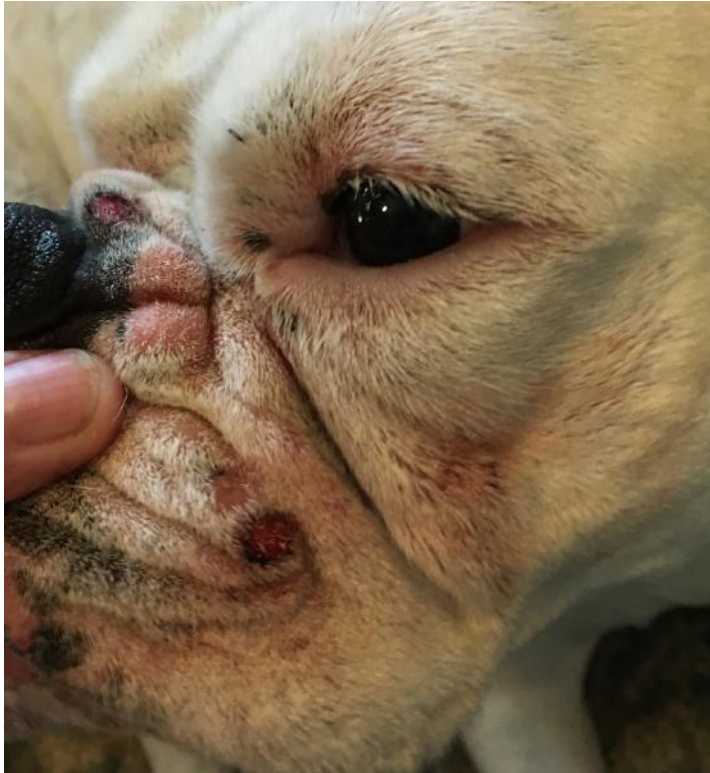
©London Cat Clinic



©Dyrlægehuset Farum

Excessive skin.

- Skin fold pyoderma
- Entropion
- Ectropion
- Diamond eye
- Dysfunctional lips
- Surgical intervention
- Ocular trauma



Long backs and short legs.



©Littlelixie [Flickr](#)

- UK KC recently amended dachshund breed standard to ensure 'ground clearance'.
- IVDD
- Joint disease due to incongruity.
- Frustration with inability to move freely and inability to express normal behaviour.

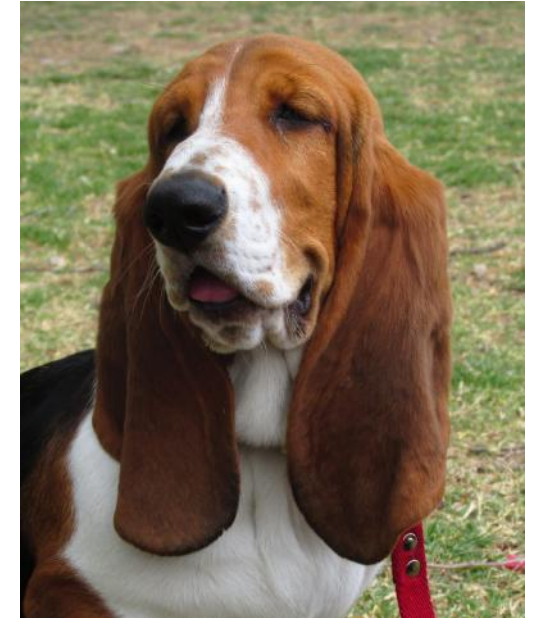


Lab antibrachium vs basset
©Andy Moores



Abnormal ears.

- Trauma
- Mobility issues
- Thermoregulation
- Cartilage defects and osteochondrodysplasia.
- Hairy ear canals eg poodles



Abnormal coats.

- Excess hair – untenable by animals and owners alike
- Hypothermia - create naked animals then put clothes on them!
- Hyperthermia – many breeds not clipped but could be
- Hairless animals prone to injury and sunburn, cats self-traumatising when groom
- Mating and nursing difficulties eg angora rabbits
- Flystrike
- Behavioural impact – next presentation



©Samantha Taylor FRCVS



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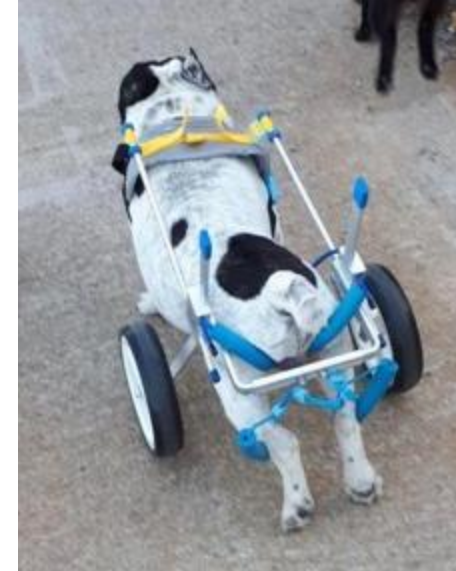
'Brachycephaly is a direct result of the stupidity of man'



It's not just about BOAS.

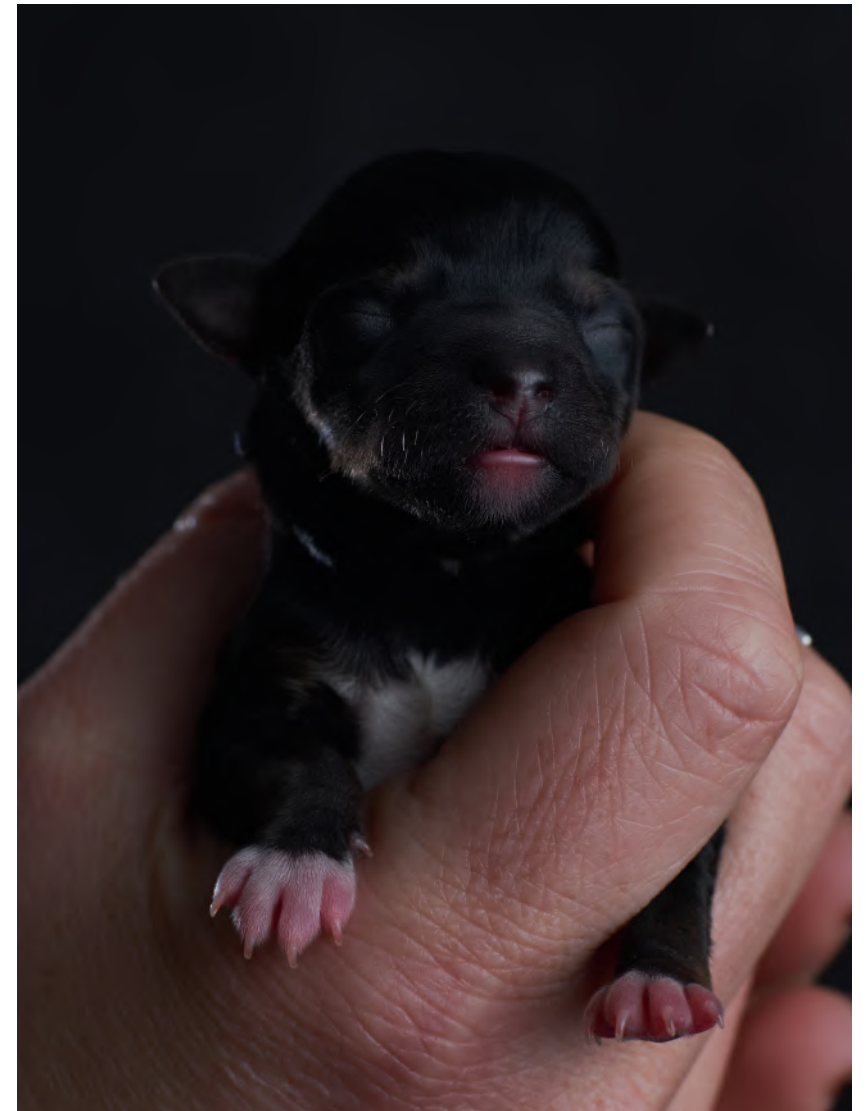
- Multiple GI diseases
- Heat intolerance
- Exophthalmos
- Corneal trauma
- Dry eye
- Skin fold pyoderma
- Hemivertebrae
- Orthopaedic disease
- IVDD
- Multiple myelopathies
- Chondrodystrophy
- Obesity
- 100% dental malocclusion
- CM/SM
- **Inability to reproduce.**

Hiatal hernia ©Jon Wray



Assisted fertility.

- Some breeds are clinging to existence through veterinary intervention. We need to ask serious ethical questions about this.
- No elective c-sections.
- ?Compulsory neutering at time of section.
- No AI unless proven for reasons of genetic diversity or to avoid travel and negative welfare.
- Fit for breeding testing by **independent** vets.



Horses.



ECVM – Equine Complex Vertebral Malformation



Many
species
affected



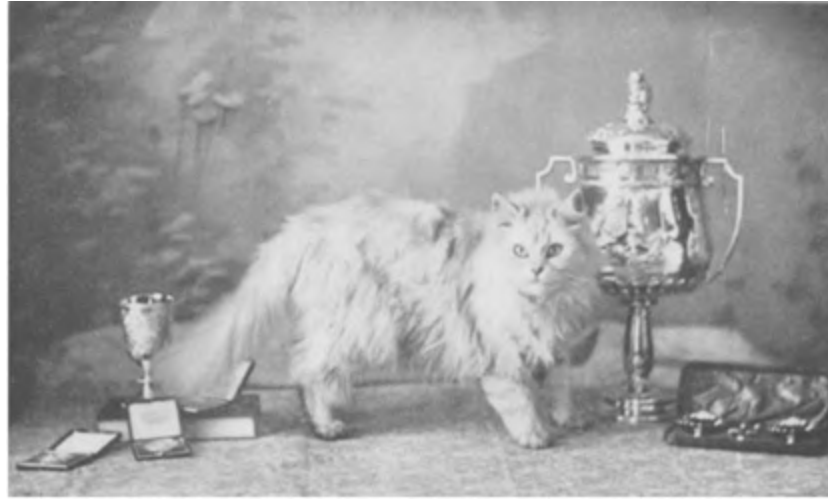
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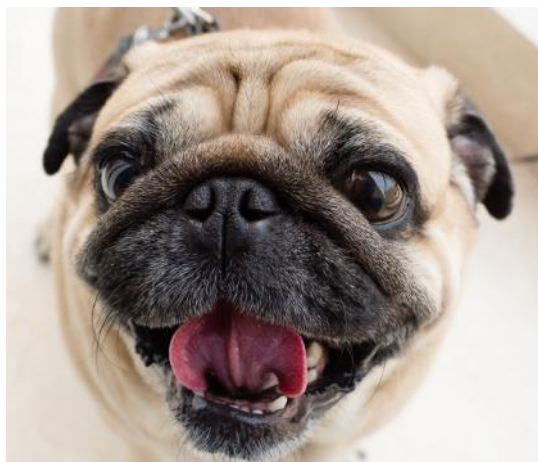
What have we done?

- By only being concerned with looks we have created animals that would not and *could* not exist in nature. Breeds do not occur in nature. They are a totally man-made concept.
- If we breed for looks then health and temperament can NEVER be a priority.
- Many breed enthusiasts say that we can't get rid of breeds and that breeds can't be changed. We've only had many of these breeds for between 20-100 years. And they have already changed beyond recognition.

You can't
change
breeds...



You can't
change
breeds...



What should we be doing? Governments.

- **Animal Welfare Regulation 2018;**

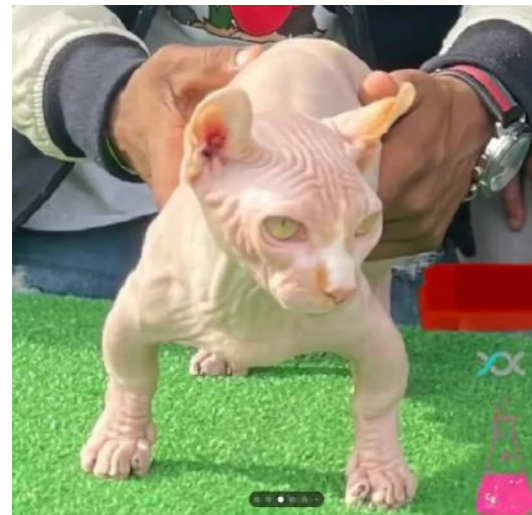
- “No dog may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, phenotype or state of health that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or welfare of its offspring.”



- Legislation – new **plus** enforcement of existing.
 - We need more test cases and prosecutions. NSPA.
- Laws should cover extreme conformation and mutilations and should apply to all breeders and all species.
- Confusion resolved over whose responsibility it is to prosecute.
- Money for training of those who are responsible for prosecution/licences.
- Stop illegal trade and close loopholes in puppy imports.
- Mandatory use of AWF puppy contract and PIP for all breeders. Similar initiatives outside UK.
- Proof of knowledge prior to pet ownership – pets are a privilege, not a right.
- Owner accountability – ignorance is not a defence.
- Ban breeding of certain breeds, features or ownership bans.
- Ban showing to reduce emphasis on aesthetics. Showing serves no benefit to the animals involved, especially detrimental to prey animals such as rabbits and cats.

What should we be doing? Registry and showing bodies.

- Halt registration and showing of worst affected breeds until health issues have been addressed.
- No new breeds added unless bred for health and temperament.
- Complete, *independent* veterinary review of breed standards across all species.
- Use of the AWF puppy contract and PIP for all breeders wanting to register.
- Open the stud books and allow outcrossing.
- Mandatory, rational health testing for all breeding animals and all show animals.



What should we be doing? Veterinary profession.



- Don't underestimate the mental health impact on the profession of current trends or owner attitudes.
- Consider the environmental impact of preventable surgeries.
- Vets need to be united and speak up. Be honest as well as caring and diplomatic.
- Governing bodies – tighter guidelines for professional misconduct e.g reproductive services and mutilations.
- Practice ethical policies and meetings.
- No more normal for breed. All deformities should be noted as such. It's the species that are important, not the breeds.
- Social media. Absolutely no sharing of extreme conformation as cute or funny.
- Pre-purchase advice.
- Collaborate with insurance companies. Which conditions should not be covered?
- Research into maximum variations.
- ACT GLOBALLY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

Why Not?

- Healthy, true crossbreeds full of hybrid vigour. Robust, well-socialised, unique individuals fit for the purpose of living happy lives.
- Health and temperament **FIRST** above looks.



Thank you.

