

## **THE DUTCH BAN THE BREEDING (AS WE KNOW THEM) OF THE 12 BRACHYCEPHALIC BREEDS IN FCI GROUP 9**

From the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 the breeding of the 12 brachycephalic (shortened foreface) (Affenpinscher, Boston terrier, English and French bulldog, Griffon bruxellois, Griffon belge, Petit Brabancon, Japanese Chin, King Charles spaniel , Pekingese, Pug and Shih Tzu) breeds in the Nederland's has been changed forever. A change in the pedigree and criteria for breeding could have serious consequences for us all.

Dog health and welfare has been in the spotlight for many years since the documentary "Pedigree dogs exposed" in 2008. Animal activist groups such as PETA/CRUFFA and "Vets against brachycephalics" propose health is due to the dramatic changes in type caused by poor breeding practices over the years. The Dutch KC blame breeders for not being more proactive. Could it be that activists have moved into positions where they can have an influence on the KC and government where the hidden agenda is to ban us all from owning a dog, any dog?.



Have they really changed that much ?

In 2014 the Dutch Government pass a law that "forbids the breeding of companion dogs if they will pass external harmful defects to their offspring. Although what a harmful defect was unclear when the animal activist group "Dier & Recht " (animal and law) sued a short muzzled dog breeder based on this law and the judge could not ascertain " what a serious hereditary defect was!..

Cross breeding initiatives in the Nederland's such as the "The Graussie project for SM in the Griffon "and the Dutch KC allowing "a cross breeding for the Swiss Shepherd in 2015" may have been a warning of things to come.

In 2018 the Dutch government express concerns and request the Dutch KC make a breeding plan to improve the health of the these breeds and the University of Utrecht Department of Veterinary Medicine was assigned the task of developing the criteria.

Rather than conducting studies themselves their criteria appear to be based on the study by Rowena Packer in 2014 for BOAS and eye associated disease in shortened muzzles which was "based on unreliable tape measurements "and Jane Ladlows (University of Cambridge) studies on the 3 most popular brachycephalic breeds the French bulldog, English bulldog and the Pug in 2016/2017. The latter only found a

“weak link for CFR and BOAS in the French bulldog and no correlation in the English bulldog and Pug”.

The other 9 breeds have had very little research undertaken and appear to have been banned “based on the default of the other 3 breeds rather than science”.

In March 2019 the report “breeding brachycephalic dogs” and “6 enforcement criteria” for breeding were written **with others due to follow** .

Concern is raised regarding the unregulated breeding (puppy farmers) and the import of dogs which account for a high percentage of dogs in the Netherlands. Cross breeding is suggested as a way to meet the criteria but no recommendations on which breeds can be used are made. Can you imagine the effect of crossing a toy breed with a working breed? Since the rise in popularity/cost of cross breeds such as the labradoodle for eg would this not play into the hands of the puppy farmer who is unlikely to address health in the first instance.

In August 2019 The Dutch KC together with the breed clubs involved submitted a separate breeding strategy where “it was mandatory to prove that brachycephalic dogs were free of conformation related problems” adding additional tests (exercise testing, Body condition scoring and Neck girth circumference) to the original criteria. .

Why is it then that “even if your dog has been checked by a vet, BOAS tested and found to be healthy you are not allowed to breed based on muzzle length alone” when there is weak evidence to support it (University of Cambridge). Fines maybe issued.

May 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 the Dutch minister “endorses the additional measures from the breeding strategy” but does not adopt it – preferring the original 6 criteria. There are slight differences between the government enforcement criteria and the KC breeding strategy which can be viewed at [www.houdenvanhonden.nl/fokkenkortsnuiten](http://www.houdenvanhonden.nl/fokkenkortsnuiten) page 14/15

The conclusion from the Dutch KC states “For a success in The Netherlands it is essential that the dogs bred continue to resemble the breed concerned in appearance and behaviour, but with an extension of the muzzle length”. In this way the consumer has a choice”.

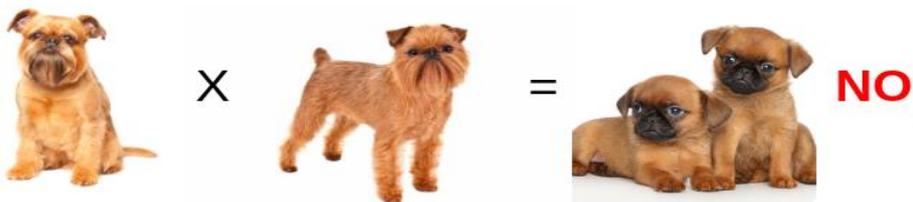
How can a breed resemble a breed when its nose is much longer? How can a judge judge these dogs against a breed standard where this nose length would be considered a fault? How can the Dutch KC make these changes without the agreement of the FCI or the country of origin for these breeds and the breed standard. How can they ban all the breeds based on the evidence of 3, where the evidence showed a weak link to muzzle length and BOAS.

May 18th 2020 – The Dutch KC introduce a change in the in registration procedure and issuing of pedigrees for the 12 brachycephalic breeds.

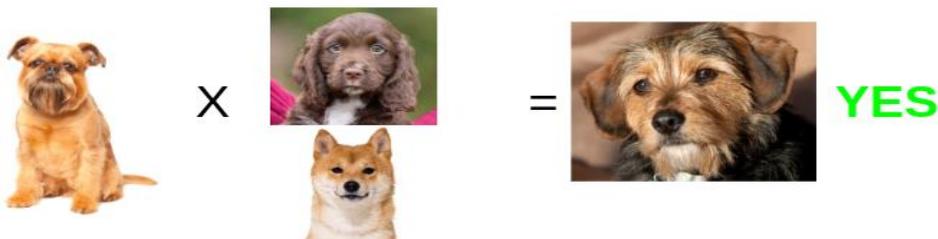
Many KC 's including our own make statements preferring to work with their breeders and other countries in recommending a breeding strategy according to the grading system by Jane Ladlow rather than a breeding ban ( which has previously not worked) and condemn the changes in registration / pedigrees which appear to contravene the rules of the FCI.

Could the FCI ban the Nederland's from being a partner?

### In the Netherlands from 18/05/2020



Griffon x Griffon : no pedigree



Griffon x Other Breed : registered as pure-bred Griffon



Griffon x Griffon CFR > 0.3 : special pedigree

This “special pedigree” is NOT a pedigree but an annex register for the puppies for 3 generations with a “certificate of parent-ship being issued”. After 3 generations and following examination that the puppy meets “the criteria” these puppies may re enter the pedigree database.

The four Uk clubs send a united letter expressing our concern.

Could our KC do more? BOAS testing has become compulsory for Assured Breeders in the 3 main breeds. However this does not account for the huge numbers of unregulated breeders. No doubt registrations would fall in number if BOAS testing

was compulsory for all breeders in order to register their puppies !! Since the KC is a business this could affect their income. Cross breeds potentially could be registered with our KC in the near future which defeats the “pedigree dog “We maybe a few years behind the Dutch KC but are we potentially following suit?

## MUZZLE LENGTH

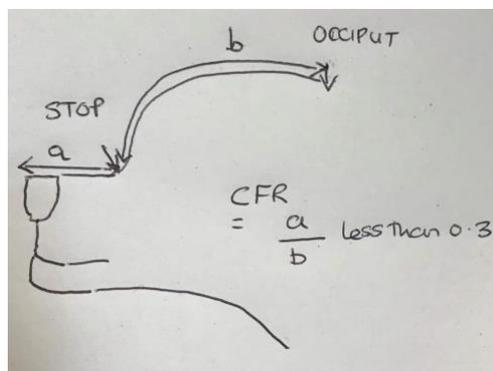
Infact the Griffon is ranked 46 in the insurance ranking for respiratory risk by Agria backing up the theory that Griffons on the whole do not have a major problem with their breathing

If muzzles length is vital why is it that there are “8 long nosed muzzle breeds “also in the ranking for Respiratory problems (Agria Sweden) and Cambridge found a weak link only for muzzle length and BOAS

**RESPIRATORY/UPPER: Ranking for  
Relative Risk Compared to All Breeds**

Brachys	Rank/ 200
English Bulldog	1
Boston Terrier	3
French Bulldog	4
Pug	8
Dogue de Bordeaux	9
Japanese Chin	10
Boxer	25
CKCS	27
Griffons	46
Pekingese	47
Shih Tzu	62
Affenpinscher	77

*Agria*  
Djurförsäkring



One of the main criteria is to increase the muzzle length based or Cranio facial ratio (CFR) by selective breeding or CROSS BREEDING to any other breed

Most Griffons as we know them have a CFR of 0.1 to 0.2) and the breeding of dogs with a CFR < less than 0.3 was banned in March 2019.

A temporary transition period allowing the breeding of dogs where “one parent meets 5 criteria but has a CFR of <0.3 “can be mated to a dog which meets all 6 criteria including a CFR of >0.3 is in place.

The ultimate goal is that the CFR should become > 0.5 (a griffon with a nose at least as half as long as its skull) by 2022.

However the Cambridge team consider “**CFR is not suitable as a breed prohibiting criterion, because both reproducibility and predictive value are insufficient**”.

This is just the beginning and we should not be complacent.

The Dutch KC propose to address in the future “animals which are too small and weigh under 10kg”, “animals whose legs are too short or their back too long or who have too many wrinkles or excessive hair” so we are all at risk

### **BRACHYCEPHALIC OBSTRUCTIVE AIRWAY SYNDROME = BOAS**

B= BRACHYCEPHALIC (shortened foreface)

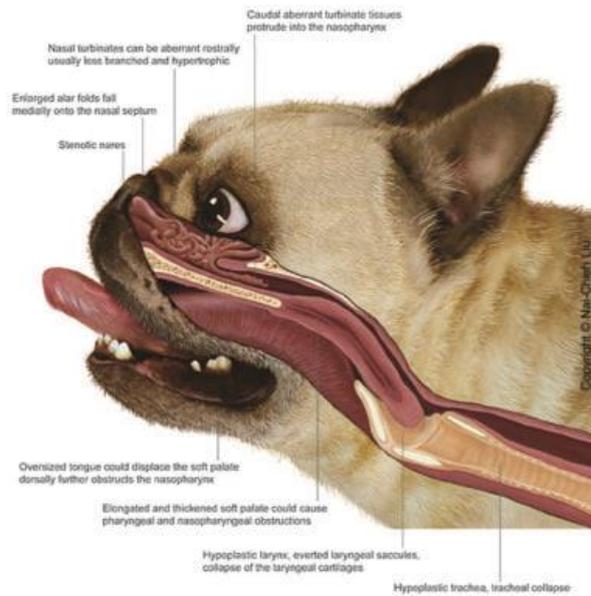
O= OBSTRUCTION (any obstruction/ narrowing or blockage)

A= AIRWAY the route from the outside via the nose/ mouth through the back of the throat larynx and pharynx to the lung via the windpipe or trachea to the small airways.

S= SYNDROME combination of the above.

BOAS occurs when the bones of the skull shorten but the soft tissue (palate, muscles, nasal tissues or turbinates and tongue) fail to similarly reduce in size.

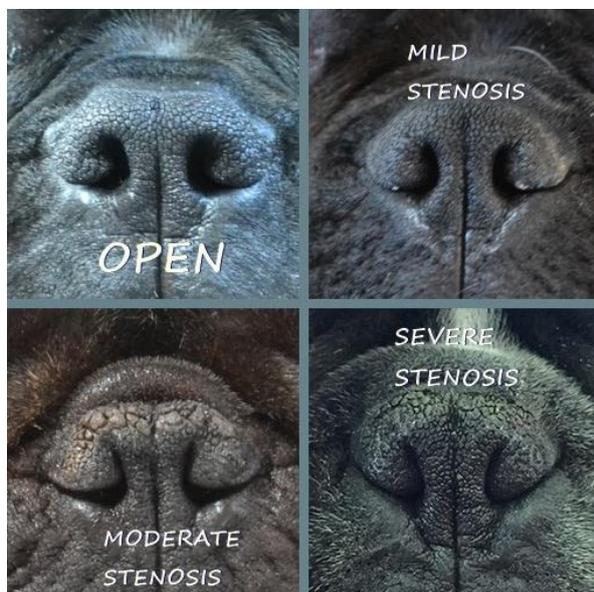
As the site of obstruction can vary amongst dogs and even breeds, the clinical signs or problems that the dogs have differ amongst individuals/ breeds. It's a complex condition where muzzle length was found to be a weak link , whereas nostril size, neck girth and length and soft tissue had a greater link to BOAS. So maybe further research into these issues in all breeds would be beneficial?



## **SIGNS OF BOAS include**

**NOISY BREATHING** Stertor (low pitched due to nose narrow or palate vibrating ) and or stridor (high pitched due to laryngeal collapse). Noises normally increase when excited or exercising. Snoring maybe evident during sleep

## **STENOTIC NOSTRILS**



**TEMPERATURE CONTROL** – tendency to heat stroke or keep cool in warm weather with excessive panting and exercise intolerance

**EXCESS REGURGITATION/ SALIVATION** due to the excess air bloating of the stomach

**ACCESORY BREATHING** using the abdominal muscles to breathe or the skin at the front of the chest (neck) moving when breathing.

### “BOAS IS NOT THE SAME AS “REVERSE SNEEZING”

BOAS appears to be more prevalent in those dogs which are overweight with heavy short necks and narrowed nostrils.

BOAS is “complex, progressive and unpredictable” and can change over the course of a dog’s lifetime (University of Cambridge).

### How often should your dog be assessed?

The Kc recommend assessment at 12 months of age and every 2 years thereafter until breeding stops whilst University of Cambridge recommends yearly assessment from 1 year until they are stable (usually around 5 years of age). The list of assessors can be found on the KC website

### What does each grade mean?

#### Grade 0

Your dog is clinically unaffected and is currently free of respiratory signs of BOAS. If your dog is under two years old we suggest they have an annual health check with their own vet, as BOAS can develop later in life.

#### Grade 1

Your dog is clinically unaffected but does have mild respiratory signs linked to BOAS. These signs do not affect their exercise performance. If your dog is under two years old we suggest they have an annual health check with their own vet, as BOAS can develop later in life.

#### Grade 2

Your dog is clinically affected and has moderate respiratory signs of BOAS that should be monitored and may require veterinary treatment.

#### Grade 3

Your dog is clinically affected and has severe respiratory signs of BOAS and should be seen by your own vet for a thorough veterinary examination with treatment. We do not recommend that you breed from your dog.

### **Breeding advice**

The way that BOAS is inherited is not fully understood and is not always entirely predictable.. **However, even if used responsibly, this guidance cannot guarantee that a puppy from two unaffected parents will be free from BOAS.**

		DOG ONE (sire or dam)			
DOG TWO (sire or dam)	RFG GRADE FOR EACH DOG	GRADE 0	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3
	GRADE 0	Green	Green	Green	Red
	GRADE 1	Green	Green	Green	Red
	GRADE 2	Green	Green	Amber	Red
	GRADE 3	Red	Red	Red	Red

**Green:** The lowest risk of producing puppies affected by BOAS.

**Amber:** A higher risk of producing puppies that may grow up to be affected by BOAS.

**Red:** A mating which has a high risk of producing puppies that may grow up to be affected by BOAS. These matings are not recommended. Producing puppies affected by BOAS has a serious impact on their health and welfare. A mating which may produce affected puppies should never knowingly be carried out.

### What happens with my result?

Your dog's grades will be recorded on the Kennel Club's database and will be published in one or more of the following: breed records supplement, registration certificate, the Kennel Club website ([Health Test Results Finder](#)).

### References:

Raad van Beheer breeding strategy brachycephalic dogs @ [www.houdenvanhonden.nl/fokkenkortsnuiten](http://www.houdenvanhonden.nl/fokkenkortsnuiten)

Identifying dogs at risk of BOAS [www.vet.cam.ac.uk/boas](http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/boas)

Respiratory Function grading Scheme @ [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/healthfor breeders](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/healthforbreeders)

Impact of Conformation on canine health : BOAS

Packer.R and Tivers,M.(2015) Strategies for the management and prevention of conformation related respiratory disorders in brachycephalic dogs. Veterinary medicine: research and reports,6,219-232

My thanks to Geert Degezelle for explaining my queries

Jane Conway