



Health screening test rolled out for brachycephalic dog breeds.

The University of Cambridge and the Kennel Club (UK) Respiratory Function Grading Scheme provides an assessment for brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome. to objectively measure the severity of brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome in dogs and help make a clinical diagnosis. The intent of the scheme is also to improve understanding of the condition, increase awareness, and ultimately reduce the incidence of BOAS, the scheme has been accepted widely around the world as a viable way of repeatable way of grading dogs for respiratory function.

Dogs Australia (ANKC) with its affiliated State and Territory Members Bodies is the peak body in Australia responsible for Registered Pure Bred dogs and is a not-for-profit organisation advocating for the preservation of purebred dogs through ethical breeding. dedicated to promoting the health and welfare of companion animals through a reduction in the incidence of genetic disease, joined this international effort just prior to COVID and after being delayed by the pandemic is currently rolling out the RFG Scheme in Australia.

As part of its agreement with the Kennel Club, Dogs Australia has appointed Dr. Arthur House BSc BVMS Ph.D. Cert SAS DECVS as Australia's Chief Assessor for the RFG Scheme, an internationally recognized specialist small animal surgeon in both Australia and Europe. Arthur recently visited the UK to be briefed on the supervision of the Scheme by Dr. Jane Ladlow the Cambridge University Principal Investigator into Non-invasive Assessment of Respiratory Function in Unrestrained Conscious Brachycephalic Dogs Pre and Post Upper Airway Surgery. Dr. Ladlow gave evidence in the case at which the Norwegian Court of appeal overturned the Bulldog breeding ban.

Dr. House is currently training veterinarians to become approved assessors to carry out respiratory function grading, a number have already been trained and appointed in Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, and in conjunction with the State and Territory Member Bodies, training will take place in other states in coming months. The response to the launch of the RFG Scheme in Australia has been excellent and the National British Bulldog Breed Council is instituting respiratory function grading as one of its health screening tests.

The objectives of the scheme in Australia are;

To identify dogs at risk/subject to BOAS to allow for the best care and treatment for managing such conditions.

To give the breeder/owner the best available information in terms of the appropriateness of using a dam/sire in a breeding program.

To give other breeders the information resource of dogs affected and unaffected by BOAS to allow for the selection of the most suitable stock for breeding purposes.

To provide data and statistics in terms of BOAS to monitor the frequency and progress in the breed affected for ongoing research for the overall improvement of the relevant breeds.

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