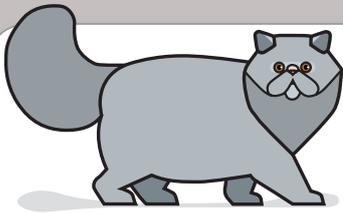


BREEDING FOR EXTREME CONFORMATIONS

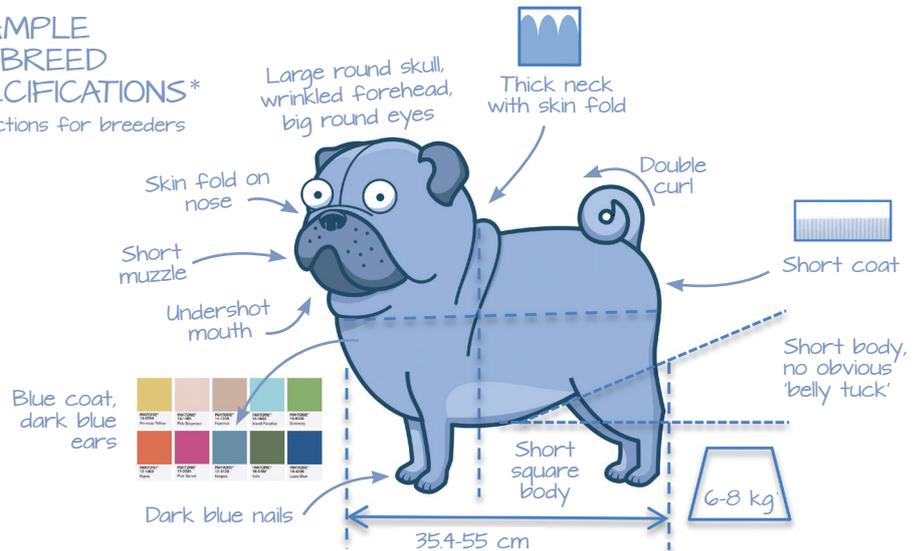
What is the problem?



Extreme breeding

EXAMPLE OF BREED SPECIFICATIONS*
Instructions for breeders

➔ **Extreme conformation** of pets by selecting for a particular 'look' (e.g. flat nose, sloping back, bulging or droopy eyes, skin folds, round skull) to the point of causing animal suffering.



*Although this is example is fictitious, it is inspired by true breed standards. Breed specifications (or their interpretation) can be quite extreme.



Causes

- Increased **demand** (fashion) of certain breeds, boosted by advertising, movies, social media and celebrities
- **Lack of owner awareness** about the health and welfare impact of extreme breeding (e.g. thinking that snoring is normal)
- **Lack of regulations** (e.g. extreme breeding, breeding conditions)

Consequences for animals

- Extreme looks ('conformation') can lead to poor animal health and welfare to the point of **animal suffering** (struggling to breathe, overheating, joint pain, sore skin, eye ulcers...)
- They may **need invasive surgery** in order to breathe or walk normally, and often need a caesarean section when giving birth
- Intensive interbreeding can pass on genetic disorders, causing **suffering and early death**



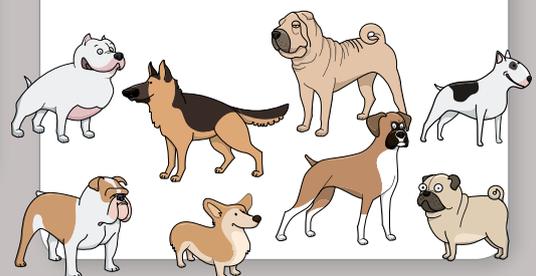
Consequences for owners

- **High unexpected medical and surgical bills**
- **Heartache** due to poor health and welfare or early death of their pet
- **Complicated care** of unhealthy dogs (avoid warm weather, excitement, activities)
- **Unmet expectations of pet ownership**
- **Emotional and legal hurdles** for dealing with unhealthy animals



Consequences for society

- More and more **unscrupulous breeders and puppy farms** to satisfy demand
- **Behavioural problems** if dogs are from an uncertain source (due to early weaning, poor socialisation)
- Higher risk of **introducing disease** with dogs that come from abroad (e.g. rabies, resistant bacteria, disease-carrying ticks and fleas)
- Increased numbers of **unwanted puppies and dogs**



Although pugs dominate on this page, many other breeds and animals are also affected by extreme breeding.

BREEDING FOR EXTREME CONFORMATIONS

What can we do?



Pet owners

- Consult a vet before you buy a dog
- Don't buy pets with extreme breeding features
- Don't buy a dog or cat online or from an uncertain source
- If buying a pedigree puppy, always ask to see its mother and sign a puppy contract
- Check that the animal is identified and registered



Veterinary organisations & animal charities

- Raise awareness about the risks of extreme breeding
- Create and promote veterinary health certificates and puppy contracts
- Encourage health screening before breeding
- Set up a system for vets to share data on health screening, corrective surgery and caesareans due to extreme breeding
- Work with national kennel clubs to share these data



Veterinarians

- Advise (future) owners and breeders on animal health and welfare
- Don't 'normalise' extreme breeding traits (e.g. snoring)
- Record all health and welfare issues related to extreme breeding
- Report corrective surgery and caesareans due to extreme breeding
- Only carry out caesarean sections in emergencies
- Avoid artificial insemination if the dog or cat is incapable of mating or giving birth alone



Dog and cat breeders

- Choose health and welfare over looks when breeding
- Don't breed from animals with extreme traits
- Have a vet check your dogs for health and functionality before breeding
- Consider cross-breeding if extreme features impact dog health and welfare
- Don't 'normalise' extreme breeding traits (e.g. snoring)
- Correctly identify and register all puppies and kittens
- Don't sell animals under 8 weeks of age or 16 weeks if sold abroad



Politicians & legislators

- Ban extreme breeding to protect animal welfare
- Impose health and welfare standards in dog and cat breeding
- Make microchipping and registration of dogs and cats mandatory
- Improve border checks on pets
- Regulate the online trade of pets
- Enforce legislation with high penalties
- Help raise awareness about extreme breeding



Breeding associations & kennel clubs

- Revise breeding standards to prevent extreme breeding
- Encourage breeders to breed for health not just looks
- Train show judges to recognise healthy animals
- Don't accept or reward extreme breeding features at shows
- Set up pre-breeding health screening programmes
- Work with vets to collect data on health screening, corrective surgery and caesareans due to extreme breeding



Researchers & educators

- Train vets and breeders on breed-related health and welfare issues
- Study the impact of extreme breeding on health and welfare of dogs and cats
- Develop evidence-based limits on physical features or function tests



Advertisers, filmmakers, social media users

- Don't use dogs with extreme breeding features (or their cartoons) in commercials, advertisements and movies
- Don't create or share 'funny' videos of pets that struggle to breathe, exercise or show other signs of extreme breeding
- Help raise awareness about extreme breeding



Celebrities and VIPs

- Don't buy or promote pets with extreme breeding features
- Help raise awareness about extreme breeding

More information?

| www.fve.org | www.fecava.org |

This infographic was produced jointly by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations.

A joint FVE/FECAVA position paper on healthy breeding was adopted in June 2018. Please visit our respective websites for details.

