

Letter to companies who use brachycephalic animals in their adverts (dogs, cats, rabbits and horses)

Dear Sir, Madam,

European veterinary organizations: FECAVA, FVE, UEVP and ISFM are aiming for the welfare of all animals.

In the last few years we have been looking into responsible breeding of dogs, cats, rabbits and horses. Some popular breeds have extreme body shapes like flat faces, long backs, short legs or heavily wrinkled skin, which can all cause health problems.

The most affected animals are the flat-faced, so called brachycephalic, breeds.

In your adverts we found that your company is using pictures of flat-faced animals in order to make your product attractive to your customer – even if the product is not pet-related.

Brachycephalic pets, like Pugs, French Bulldogs, Persian cats and other flat-faced breeds, have become very popular in the last few years. Even more by adverts like yours and celebrities who are in the spotlights with their pet every day.

The continued use of photos and videos of these breeds encourages potential pet owners to choose these breeds.

With their nice round head and beautiful round eyes, flat-faced animals make people think of them as small children and babies.

But in fact these breeds are 'created' by humans to a certain level of extreme conformation which hugely compromises their overall health and quality of life.

Narrow nostrils, overly long soft palate and bulging eyes are visible abnormalities on the outside. Deformation of vertebrae, spinal disease, heart failure and brain deformities are problems that people don't see from the outside but do have a negative impact on the health of these animals.

Our fundamental aim as veterinarians is to protect animal welfare and also not to encourage the breeding of animals that are in extreme suffering and pain.

It is our ethical duty as veterinarians to contribute all our expertise and skills to the wellbeing and health of all animals and to promote and protect their welfare, and therefore we pledge not to use these breeds in any advertising.

So, we kindly ask you to consider these remarks and pledge in the future not to use these breeds in advertising anymore.

In the meantime our profession will uphold its responsibility and make further efforts to change breeding standards and if necessary stop the breeding of certain flat-faced pets, as well as other forms of extreme conformation.

In the end we all want happy, healthy animals, including your costumers.

FVE - Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

UEVP - Union of European Veterinary Practitioners

FECAVA - European Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations

ISFM - International Society of Feline Medicine

