

## Harmonization of Genetic Testing for Dogs (HGTD)

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There is widespread consensus amongst the veterinary and research communities on the need for a collaborative, international effort to address challenges surrounding effective use of genetic health testing (GT) in dogs. There is currently no mandatory accreditation or standardization for GT for companion animals, putting the health of many individual dogs and their progeny at risk, frustrating veterinarians and consumers, and negatively impacting the reputation of GT, in general. There is a need not only for transparency of the overall quality of commercial entities, and of the specific tests/ products they are offering, but also for better information and counselling to support the global dog community, veterinarians and consumers.

The International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD), an independent, multi-stakeholder organization, has been recognized as the appropriate body to create and oversee an online resource to: catalog information from commercial test providers (CTPs) on measures of quality; host expert reviews of genetic tests; coordinate a program for standardized testing; assemble resources for genetic counselling and education; and provide the foundation for future developments. The basis of this program is the voluntary participation from CTPs and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The initiative, the Harmonization of Genetic Testing for Dogs (HGTD) parallels resources developed for human genetic testing (e.g. [Eurogentest](#)). As almost all genetics experts have an affiliation with a CTP, the HGTD resource will utilize panels of qualified experts to provide collective expert opinion. The online platform of the IPFD (DogWellNet.com), demonstrated here, can be continually expanded to accommodate a growing catalog of CTPs, expert reviews, and resources.

Research in GT and genomics and the subsequent development of tests continues at a rapid pace. Issues of quality and the complexities of application of tests – for different scenarios and for different breeds – has not received adequate attention. Many breeders, breed clubs, their veterinarians and advisors are overwhelmed by the challenges of integrating scientific developments into sound breeding decisions. The lack of transparent information on the quality of CTPs and tests; the confusion and frustration of consumers and the financial and personal costs to them; is a crisis in the making.

The IPFD Harmonization of Genetic Testing for Dogs is a major step towards improving access to information, and encouraging and standardizing best practices for GT. This resource will aid international kennel clubs, breed clubs, breeding advisors, veterinarians and the end-user to make informed decisions regarding laboratories and testing for the health and welfare of their

dogs. This, in turn, will lead to better translation of research developments to practical and effective applications.

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