

Breeding for Health and Well-being: Innate Health in Dogs



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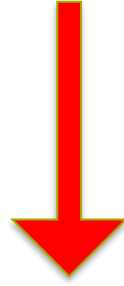
MVB BSc(hons) GPCert(SAP) GPCert(FelP) GPCert(Derm) GPCert(B&PS) PGCertVetEd FHEA MSc(VetEpi) PhD FRCVS

**"Stop and think before
buying a flat-faced dog"**

5th IDHW – 14th June 2024

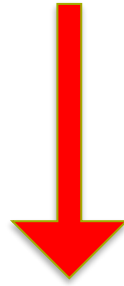
Health and Wellbeing

A sentient animal is a being that can experience feelings such as pain or pleasure



A dog is a sentient animal

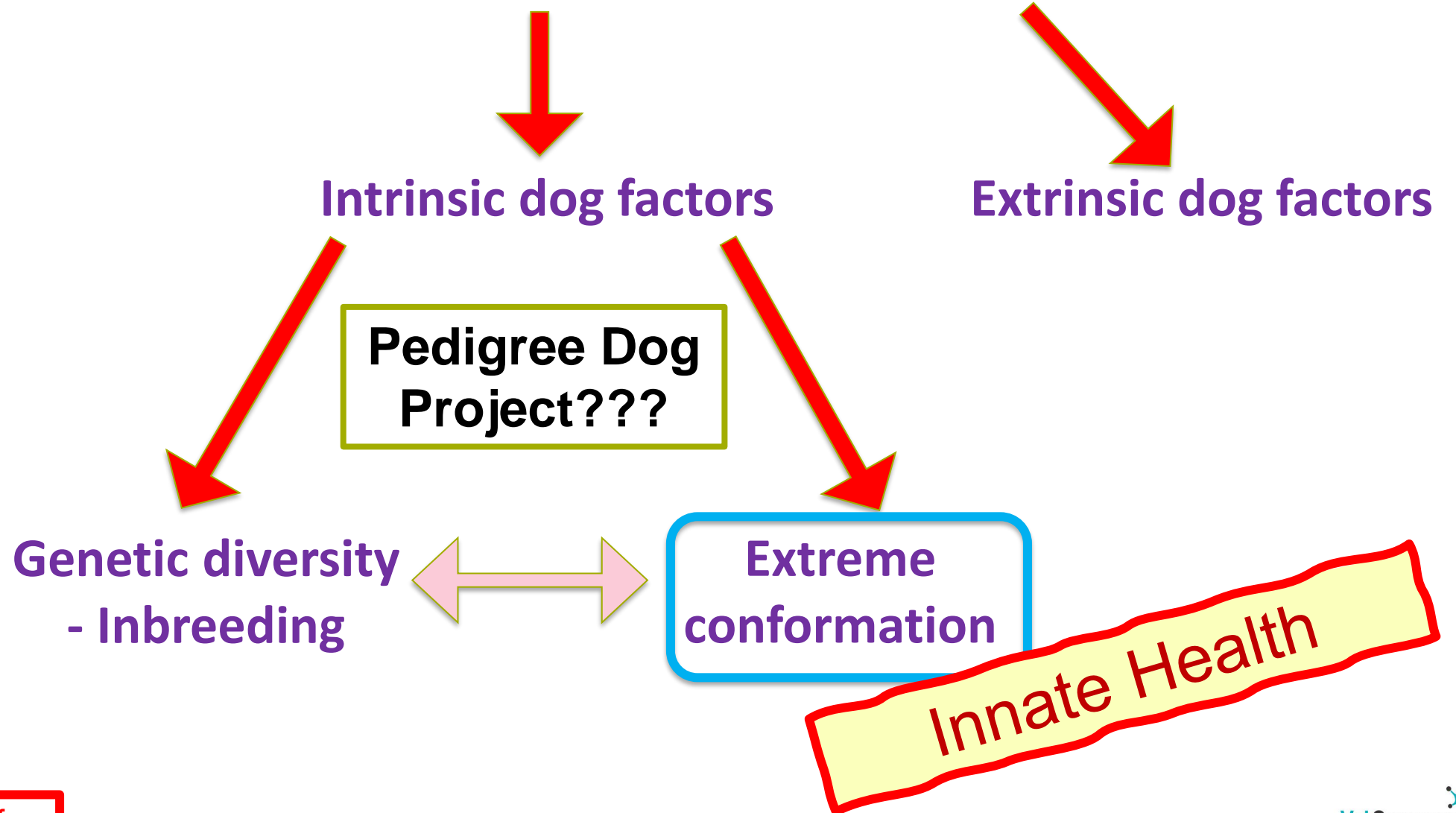
A sentient animal is not a disorder, a breed, a pedigree, or a bit of a dog



Our shared human ethical responsibility for living sentient dogs

Health and Wellbeing

Our shared human ethical responsibility for dogs



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Concept behind 'Innate health'

- ✦ All dogs, regardless of type and breed, should be capable of performing all the typical activities necessary for their wellbeing within the anatomical, physiological and behavioural evolutionary norms for the species and the dog's stage of life .

Dan O'Neill, RVC



Every dog should be able to do what we all should expect a dog to be able to do

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Extreme Conformation in Dogs

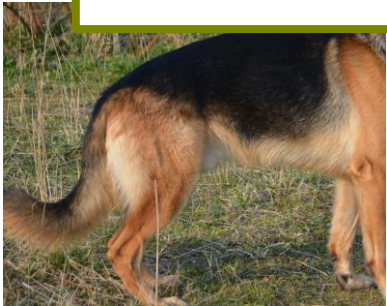
Extreme conformation in dogs describes a physical appearance that has been so significantly altered by humankind away from the ancestral natural canine appearance that affected dogs commonly suffer from poor health and welfare, with negative impacts on their quality and quantity of life.

International Collaboration for Extreme Conformation in Dogs

<https://www.icedogs.com/home/extreme-conformation>

Extreme Conformation in Dogs

Extreme body conformation as preventable and human-made harms to innate health may be the most pressing welfare issue for domestic dogs right now.



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Legislation in England

Schedule 6 (6)(5) of The Animals Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations (LAIA Regs) 2018 states

“No dog may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, phenotype or state of health, that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health or welfare of its offspring”

All dogs should have good ‘innate health’ that is compliant with current animal welfare legislation

Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111165485>

Animal Welfare Act 2006. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>

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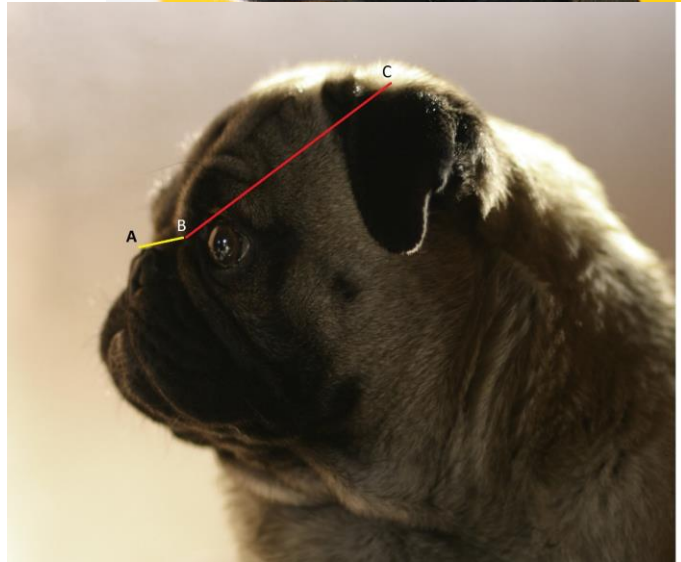
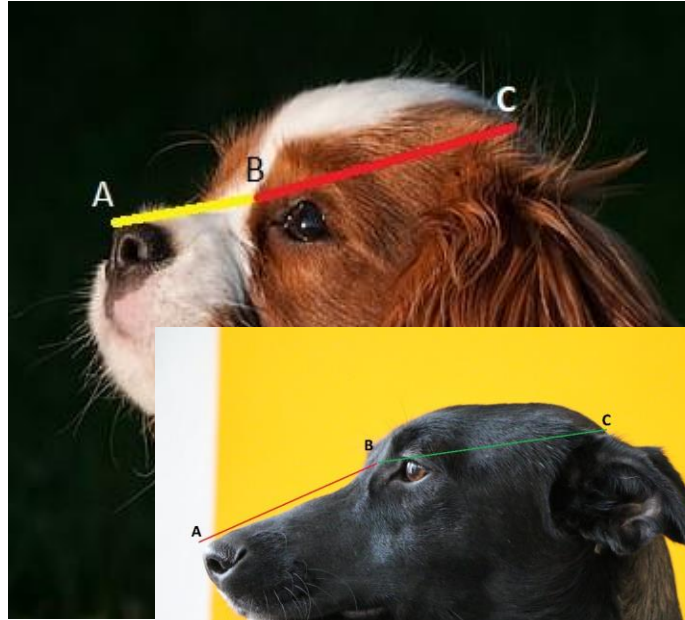
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Innate Health Criteria – Extreme Conformations



“Stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog”

Innate Health Criteria – Extreme Conformations



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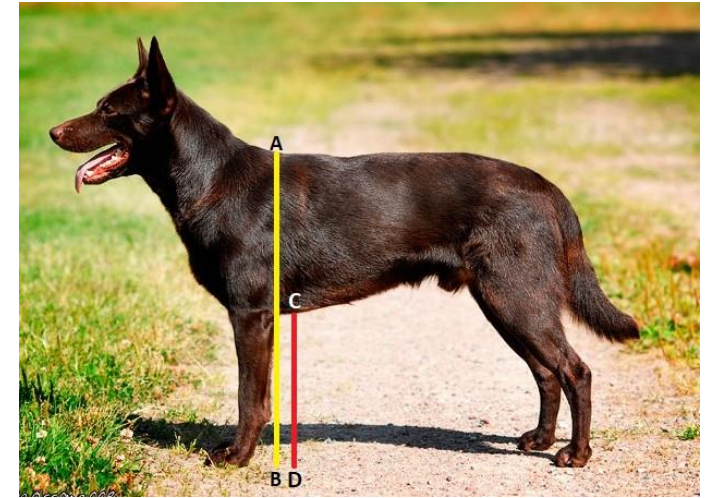
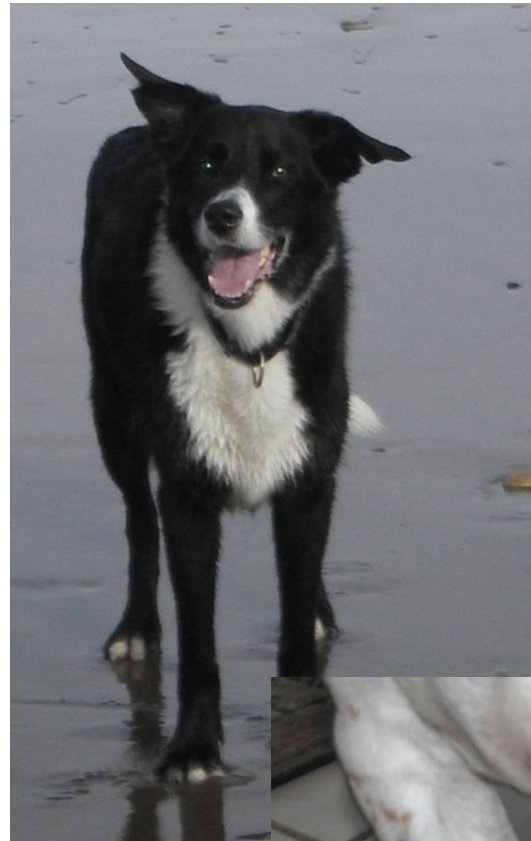
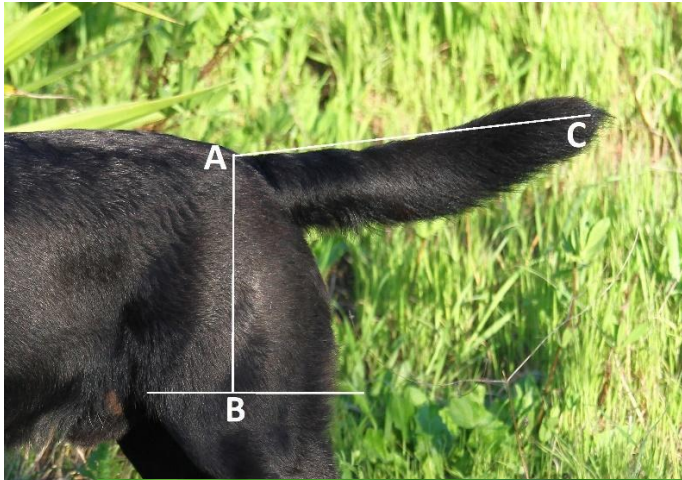
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Innate Health Criteria – Extreme Conformations



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Innate Health Assessment



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Innate Health Criteria – Extreme Conformations



Innate Health Assessment

1. Provides an **objective** tool.
2. Applies to **all dogs** regardless of size, pedigree, purebred, breed or type.
3. **Does not require** specialist equipment, knowledge, medical tests or veterinary involvement.
4. **Supports ethical breeders** to breed away from extreme conformations.
5. **Supports ethical owners** to acquire dogs without extreme conformations.

Innate Health in French Bulldogs



A solution right under our nose? Exploring health implications and public demand for brachycephalic 'designer' outcrosses (In Progress)

People: Lizzie Youens, Dan O'Neill, Rowena Packer

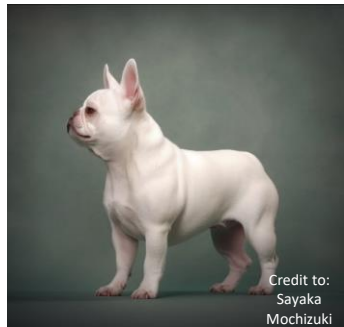
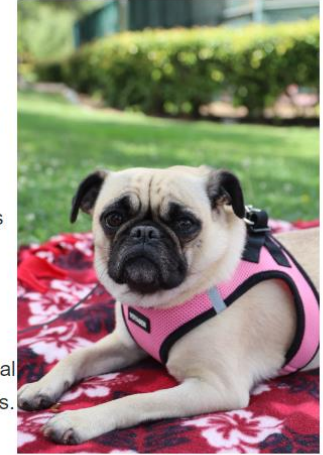
Vet Compass Project Type: Dog

Dates: July 2023 - Jan 2025

Background

Demand continues to rise for brachycephalic (flat-faced) dog breeds in the UK. Evidence documenting links between extreme flat-faces and the risk of severe, chronic disease (e.g. breathing and eye problems) has failed to lead to conformational-changes (e.g. increased muzzle length) required to protect canine welfare. Breeders continue to select for extreme show-ring standards, and puppy-buyers continue to favour extreme-brachycephalic breeds (e.g. French Bulldogs, Pugs, English Bulldogs).

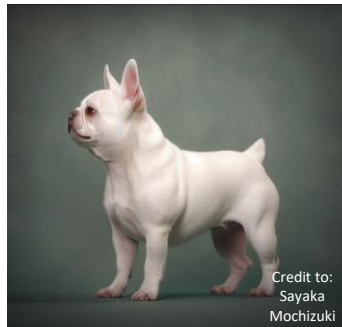
Educational efforts have not resulted in substantial changes to owner attitudes, with normalisation of health problems pervasive. Alternative evidence-informed strategies to change demand are urgently needed to protect canine welfare. Leveraging the current popularity of 'designer crossbreeds' (intentional crosses of purebred-breeds) offers one route to shifting demand towards more-moderately shaped dogs. However, the health-status and public attitudes towards brachycephalic-outcrosses are poorly understood.



Credit to:
Sayaka
Mochizuki



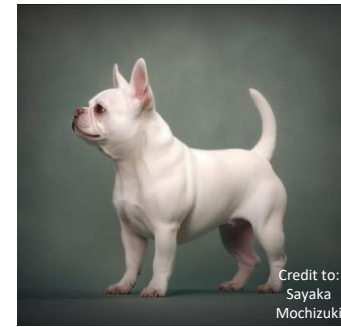
Credit to:
Sayaka
Mochizuki



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Credit: Sayaka Mochizuki, RVC

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Acknowledgements

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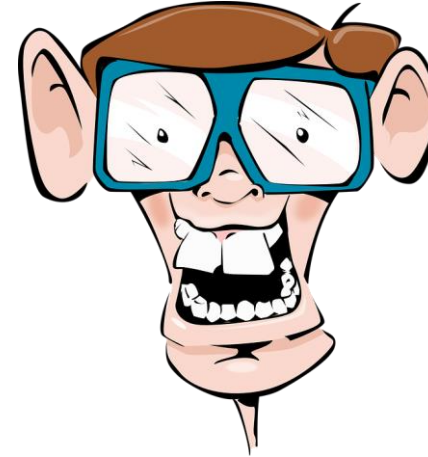
Dr Dan O'Neill



Prof Dave Brodbelt



Prof David Church



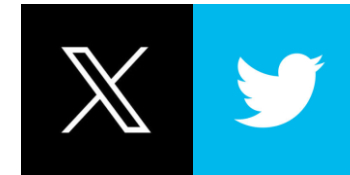
Noel Kennedy



Dr Rowena Packer

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