



General Breeding Strategy 2018–2023

GENERAL BREEDING STRATEGY

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Background

The General Breeding Strategy of Suomen Kennelliitto r.y. – Finska Kennelklubben r.f. (hereinafter the Finnish Kennel Club) applies to all breeds. It is in harmony with the Finnish Kennel Club's general regulations and the Finnish Kennel Club guidelines, which steer breeding practices. In addition, the breeding strategy takes into consideration the Animal Welfare Act, especially Section 8 (Appendices 1 and 2) as well as Section 24 of the supplementary Animal Welfare Decree (Appendices 1 and 2) and the Council of Europe resolution pertaining to the breeding of pet animals (Appendix 4). The breeding strategy complies with Fédération Cynologique Internationale's (World Canine Organisation FCI) Breeding Rules (Appendix 6), FCI guidelines on the crosses of breeds and breed varieties (Appendix 5) and is in line with the FCI's International Breeding Strategies (Appendix 3).

Objectives

- 1. Dogs that are used for breeding shall be above the breed average in desired characteristics in order to achieve genetic improvement.***
- 2. A dog that is suitable for breeding is typical of its breed both in appearance and temperament, and it is free of ailments or characteristics that would make everyday life difficult.***
- 3. A dog that is used for breeding is to its nerves and behaviour one that can manage situations in everyday life. This way, the probability of the dog's progeny to inherit mental traits, that make everyday life difficult and are detrimental to wellbeing, is minimised.***
- 4. The spread of defects and diseases that have a severe impact on the wellbeing of dogs will be prevented. Only clinically healthy dogs can be used for breeding when it comes to diseases that cause pain or discomfort or otherwise restrict the dog's ability to lead a normal life that is typical for the species.***
- 5. Only dogs that can mate naturally and care for their puppies will be used for breeding.***
- 6. Dogs from bloodlines with maximal longevity will be used for breeding. The life length of a dog shall not be unduly prolonged at the expense of its health and wellbeing.***
- 7. The genetic diversity of all breeds will be safeguarded in breeding. Different individuals of the breed are diversely used for breeding.***
- 8. The Finnish Kennel Club supports and produces activities that aim to increase knowledge of the heredity, health and diseases of dogs.***
- 9. Cooperation with veterinarians and researchers will be intensified. The actions undertaken by veterinarians also support the principles and objectives of the breeding strategy.***
- 10. The Finnish Kennel Club influences the international community through the Nordic Kennel Union and the FCI with the aim of promoting greater knowledge of and competence in dog breeding. Our actions within the international community always set the health and wellbeing of dogs as the most important goals.***



The Finnish Kennel Club Breeding Strategy

1. The objectives of dog breeding

On a general level, the objective of breeding is to improve the quality of animal stock. With dogs, breed standards have usually been the guidelines for breeding without, however, overemphasising any characteristic mentioned in them.

Dog breeding and the development of dog breeds should be based on the characteristics mentioned in the breed standard as well as on long-term planning in which the goal must be, in addition to conserving the breed's characteristics, to promote the health, functionality and longevity of dogs. The wellbeing of both the litter and its mother must be ensured in breeding and whelping.

The Council of the Finnish Kennel Club approved a plan in 2006 that lists the following objectives for the General Breeding Strategy:

- *maintain a conformation that enables wellbeing and normal reproduction*
- *maintain and increase genetic diversity, which decreases the probability of occurrence of genetic defects and diseases and protects against problems associated with immune defence and reproduction*
- *maintain a balanced nerve stability and a good ability to function*
- *maintain and improve the working abilities that form the basis of breed-typical behaviour and temperament*

Furthermore, the Breeding Strategy:

- *pays special attention to measures that promote the health of dogs*
- *strives to safeguard the status of Finland's national breeds*

2. Steering of breeding practices in the Finnish Kennel Club and breed associations

The Finnish Kennel Club's breeding-related functions and its steering of dog breeding practices shall be based on this breeding strategy, which outlines, in general terms, the main principles and objectives for breeding. The breeding strategy affects how the Finnish Kennel Club determines its focal areas and resource allocation, and it aims to develop the Finnish Kennel Club's activities in a way that enables the attainment of the objectives mentioned under section 1 and serves dog breeding appropriately and with maximal effectiveness.

The Finnish Kennel Club also steers dog breeding through its existing regulations and guidelines as well as the breed-specific Programme to combat hereditary diseases and defects (PEVISAs) and breed-specific breeding strategies (JTOs). A breed association's breeding activities must be based on the breed's JTO and any objectives and measures possibly presented in its PEVISA programme. Among other things, these programmes aim to ensure that hereditary diseases commonly occurring in a breed are taken under control and that their spread is prevented. Breed associations apply for a PEVISA programme to be authorised for their breed and they are responsible for monitoring the programme's impact. Breed associations and their subordinate clubs are similarly responsible for steering the breeding in their respective breeds as well as for their breed's JTO.



3. Implementation of the General Breeding Strategy

3.1. Hereditary characteristics

Objective:

1. ***Dogs that are used for breeding shall be above the breed average in desired characteristics in order to achieve genetic improvement.***

The desired characteristics of a breed are particular traits that can be enhanced through selective breeding and which are defined by the breed association in a JTO.

Measures:

Comprehensive information gathering is needed to chart the characteristics of individuals, which will be used in breeding. Most breed associations utilise various ways to accumulate information on the dogs of their respective breed. This information is collected in the databases of breed associations and/or the Finnish Kennel Club, and it is freely available to all parties.

3.1.1. Collecting and recording general information on dogs used for breeding

Information regarding characteristics of breeds and individuals is obtained by means of ability and working trials, mental tests, MH mental descriptions, breeding inspections, dog shows, as well as official health examinations.

Statistical data regarding health is obtained by means of the Finnish Kennel Club's health survey and Agria Dog Breed Profiles. In addition, the Finnish Kennel Club wants to further develop the collection of data regarding health and behaviour from dog owners and veterinarians. Data is collected via the Finnish Kennel Club's Omakoira service so that it can be entered to the dog's information. The owner may choose whether the information is public and published in the dog's information in the breeding database or not.

3.2. Enhancing hereditary characteristics through breeding

Objective:

2. ***A dog that is suitable for breeding is typical of its breed both in appearance and temperament, and it is free of ailments or characteristics that would make everyday life difficult.***

Measures:

To further the achievement of this goal, the dogs selected for breeding shall be:

- balanced in behaviour and temperament
- mentally and physically suitable for the use for which the breed was created
- healthy
- able to mate normally
- from a bloodline with good longevity
- typical for their breed in both conformation and appearance



Measures:

3.2.1. Breeders

The aim is that breeders with a kennel affix approved by the FCI and the Finnish Kennel Club will sign the Finnish Kennel Club's breeder commitment declaration and act in accordance with its requirements when breeding dogs.

3.2.2. Basic requirements and recommendations for dogs and combinations that are used for breeding

A dog is, on the part of its conformation and health, suitable for breeding if it is free of diseases and defects that reduce its wellbeing or prevent it from leading a normal, physically active life as well as of a disease that requires constant medical treatment or a special diet. Dogs should likewise be free of defects or diseases that will be exacerbated by pregnancy or whelping. The dog must not be known to pass down defects and diseases similar to those mentioned above (an exception to this is described under the header *Hereditary defects and diseases, defects and diseases passed down through a single gene pair, i.e. qualitative inheritance*). Breeders shall avoid combinations that, in light of existing knowledge, have an above-average risk of passing down unbalanced or non-breed-typical temperament or defects or diseases which compromise wellbeing and longevity of the offspring.

If, however, a dog exhibits such characteristics, it should be transferred to the *EJ registry* (Not for breeding registry). The Finnish Kennel Club may impose breeding restrictions for the most serious hereditary defects and diseases. This presupposes that individual dogs can be routinely tested, examined or measured regarding these defects and diseases. Such restrictions are entered to the *Dog Registry Guideline*.

It is recommended that a dog used for breeding is at least 2 years old and preferably older than this so that the health information available on it and its close relatives is as certain as possible (cf. also the section *Hereditary defects and diseases*). It is recommended that a bitch, which is mated for the first time, is no more than 5 years old. Breed associations will note their breed-specific age recommendations for breeding use in the JTO. Age limits for mating can also be defined in the breed's PEVISA programme.

It is recommended that breeders seek out the breeding counselling (including any information available on the planned combination) provided by a breed association or breed club based on the breed's JTO or avail of the instruction provided by the Finnish Kennel Club before they produce their first litter of puppies.

3.2.3. Breed type

Only dogs, which are typical of their breed and whose conformation is suitable for the intended use purpose, shall be used in breeding. Dog show judges also commit to upholding the principles and objectives of the breeding strategy.

We recommend that a dog, which is to be used for breeding, have an approved result from either a breeding inspection, a dog show or some other authorised review. The most important characteristics are listed in the JTO.

No exaggerated breed characteristic is recommended. The education of dog show judges pays special attention to exaggerated breed characteristics, which endanger the dog's health and wellbeing, and identifying unhealthy conformation traits in dogs. Judges commit to observing the guidelines (*BSI*, Appendix 7) drafted for them by the Nordic Kennel Union as well as the objectives of the breeding strategy.



3.3. Behaviour and temperament

Objective:

3. ***A dog that is used for breeding is to its nerves and behaviour one that can manage situations in everyday life. This way, the probability of the dog's progeny to inherit mental traits, that make everyday life difficult and are detrimental to wellbeing, is minimised.***

Measures:

The Finnish Kennel Club considers it important that dogs are used for the purpose to which the breed in question has originally been bred for according to its breed standard – provided that this purpose is ethical, appropriate for contemporary society and that the users take the wellbeing of dogs into consideration.

3.3.1. Basic requirements and recommendations

In the case of any breed, no dog with a poor nerve stability or that is timid or angry will be used for breeding. Each breed association will record in the JTO its recommendation for evaluating the temperament of individual dogs and what types of results it recommends for breeding dogs, i.e. what type of behaviour is typical for the breed. Surveys on behaviour shall also strive to accumulate more necessary information.

3.3.2. Working dogs

Keeping breed-typical behaviour as one breeding criterion in most cases facilitates the maintenance of both balanced behaviour and a healthy conformation in dogs. For working dogs used in government or other duties, a long-term and successful engagement in mentally and physically demanding work is usually a good demonstration of an individual dog's inclinations. To gauge working characteristics of breeding dogs of other working breeds, a breed-typical working trial or test is recommended.

In some breeds, some working dogs may have fallen outside the scope of the official registries. The Finnish Kennel Club furthers the possibilities for registration of working dogs used in government or other duties as well as the possibilities for breeders to use these dogs in breeding.

The Finnish Kennel Club also collects data regarding health and behaviour of dogs that are not included in the official dog registry. The registration of these dogs to the *identification marking and owner registry* is encouraged; parentage data as well as health, behaviour and mental results are also recorded for them. The data is valuable e.g. when planning breed crossing programmes.

3.3.3. Companion dogs

The characteristics of companion dogs can also be seen as working characteristics: a companion dog that is used for breeding must be social and balanced.

To assess the characteristics, a breed-typical trial or one of the following or an equivalent type of assessment is recommended:

- Mental Tests
- MH Mental Description
- Companion Dog Test (Begleithundprüfung, BH)
- Official breeding inspection of behaviour or other breeding review, if it also includes a behavioural analysis



3.4. Conformation and health

Objective:

4. ***The spread of severe defects and diseases that have an impact on the wellbeing of dogs will be prevented. Only clinically healthy dogs can be used for breeding when it is a matter of diseases that cause pain or discomfort or otherwise restrict the dog's ability to lead a normal life that is typical for the species.***

Measures:

The breeding use of a dog known to pass down a defect or disease that impairs wellbeing can be allowed only if the coupling's other dog is normal to its genotype regarding the respective defect or disease (cf. also the header *Hereditary defects and diseases, defects and diseases passed down through a single gene pair, i.e. qualitative inheritance*)

3.4.1. Conformation and anatomy

The conformation of a breeding dog must suit the use for which the breed was developed. The dog must not display signs of disease or of breathing or mobility difficulties. A dog like this cannot be awarded at dog shows and cannot participate in trials or tests that require physical activity. A veterinarian must inspect the dog's condition, if necessary.

A Council of Europe resolution (Appendix 4) stipulates that breeding should not extend to dogs, which exhibit the following characteristics in exaggerated form relative to their **breed**:

- very large or small size
- height-length ratio in the case of short-legged dogs
- short skull or nose

The resolution also states that a breeding dog must not have the following characteristics:

- persistent fontanelle
- abnormal positions of legs (e.g. very steep hind angulation)
- abnormal teeth
- abnormal size and shape of eyes or eyelids (entropium, ectropium, large protruding eyes)
- very long ears
- markedly folded skin

The conformation and appearance of a breeding dog must be free of severe defects that have a negative impact on the dog's wellbeing. Please also note the BSI list of unhealthy characteristics (Appendix 7).

In addition, breeders must ensure that the genotype of the expected puppies will not cause health problems or defects in relation to, for example, hairlessness, merle, harlequin, blue dilution, bobtail or ridge hair alleles (Appendix 2). If necessary, the Finnish Kennel Club can impose breeding recommendations or restrictions on such characteristics and/or breeds.

Dogs that have been surgically altered to repair a hereditary defect or weakness must not be used for breeding and they should be transferred to the *EJ registry*. Such defects or weaknesses are e.g. exaggeratedly loose skin, lip and nose folds, drooping eyelids, tight nostrils, front leg chondrodystrophy, luxating patella and abnormal bite.



3.4.2. Other hereditary defects and diseases

Breed associations and breed clubs outline their breed-specific areas of emphasis for health-promoting breeding practices and other breeding recommendations/restrictions in their JTOs and PEVISA programmes.

Breed associations, the Finnish Kennel Club and researchers will cooperate in investigating the mode of inheritance of the most serious hereditary defects and diseases, and genetic tests that are necessary for the breed will be adopted into use and their results recorded into the Finnish Kennel Club breeding database. Veterinarians will, if necessary, be consulted to determine the severity of identified health problems.

The aim is to support the development of genetic tests for defects and diseases that are determined by a single gene pair, so that carriers could be identified with certainty. Guidelines regarding the testing needs and measures for each breed should be included in the JTO and, when necessary, obligations and breeding restrictions can be defined in the PEVISA programme. If no genetic test is available, the aim will be to promote the adoption of a standardised and reproducible screening method for the defect or disease (such as exists for, e.g., hip dysplasia).

If a serious hereditary disease exists in a near family (coefficient of relationship 25% or more) of a dog, a healthy individual whose near family is free of the same disease or defect should be selected as its breeding partner.

Registration restrictions can be imposed for dogs in the case of diseases that endanger the dog's wellbeing and/or shorten its longevity.

Breeding use of a dog that has a severe hereditary eye disease or severe dysplasia or growth disorder of the skeleton may be prohibited (cf. also Appendix 6; *FCI Breeding Rules*).

Measures associated with serious defects and diseases passed down through a single gene, i.e. qualitative inheritance

If a genetic test can determine dog's genotype regarding a hereditary defect or disease, it should be used as an aid to prevent the birth of affected offspring. Genetic testing is not performed so that a disease-causing gene can be quickly removed out of the gene pool; instead, its purpose is to enable the breeding use of carrier dogs. Recommended tests are noted in the breed's JTO and mandatory tests in the PEVISA programme.

If a genetic test is not available, attempts will be made to determine the mode of inheritance of the disease, the dog's genotype or disease risk on the basis of its relatives (cf. the so-called EPI-figure for Finnish Spitz dogs). When necessary, the Finnish Kennel Club can help breed associations determine the mode of inheritance.

If a disease is **autosomal recessive**, combinations including one genetically healthy (both chromosomes have normal alleles) party can be used for breeding, as this prevents the birth of individuals with defective genotypes.

If a disease is **X-chromosomal recessive**, the bitch of the combination must have a healthy genotype (both X chromosomes have normal alleles), and the male can be either healthy (X chromosome has a normal allele) or affected (mutation in the X chromosome).

When the inheritance of a disease is either **autosomal** or **X chromosome dominant**, only a combination of two healthy dogs (neither parent is even a carrier of the defect allele) can guarantee that no affected progeny will be born.

Instructions regarding serious diseases passed down through a single gene will be determined breed-specifically in the JTO or the PEVISA programme.



Measures associated with defects and diseases passed down through several genes, i.e. quantitative inheritance

When defects and diseases are determined by several genes, only dogs that are above the breed average in relation to the characteristic in question should be used for breeding to enable genetic progress. Evaluations of the potential breeding dogs will exploit available health test data, either in the form of estimated breeding values (BLUP-EBVs) or, when these are not available, by ascertaining the average health situation of close relatives. The accuracy of breeding value estimation increases when as many progenies of a breeding dog as possible are examined before the dog in question produces its next litter. Necessary measures will target defects and diseases that have been identified to afflict the breed to a substantial degree; these will be more precisely determined in the breed-specific JTO or, if necessary, the PEVISA programme.

3.5. Mating

Objective:

- 5. Only dogs that can mate naturally and care for their puppies will be used for breeding.**

Measures:

3.5.1. Basic requirements

Both the bitch and the male must be willing to mate naturally and capable of it. Mating must not happen by coercion.

Bitches, which were unable to give birth naturally or care for their progeny in the normal manner without good reason, should not be used in breeding again.

Males, which have been unable to mate normally or display a deficient libido, should not be used for breeding. In addition to the libido, attention must also be paid to the male's ability to impregnate a bitch.

The development of a breed's average litter size will be monitored. Information on litter size and the breed's mating success as well as any associated problems will be entered into the breed-specific JTO.

3.5.2. Artificial insemination

Artificial insemination is subject to separate Finnish Kennel Club and FCI guidelines. The reason for artificial insemination must not be unwillingness or inability to mate normally on the part of the bitch or the male.

The use of frozen semen is further regulated by breed-specific as well as demands set in the Dog Registry Guideline.

3.5.3. Bitches and whelping

In addition to meeting the basic requirements, only bitches, whose wellbeing is not expected to be impaired by mating, pregnancy or whelping because of the anatomical features of the bitch or the puppies, should be used for breeding.

Puppies that required resuscitation and special support to ensure their survival especially during their first week should not be used for breeding.



3.6. Longevity

Objective:

- 6. Dogs from bloodlines with maximal longevity will be used for breeding. The life length of a dog shall not be unduly prolonged at the expense of its health and wellbeing.***

Measures:

Breeding will favour healthy dogs from bloodlines with great longevity.

3.6.1. Charting longevity

The development of the average longevity and most common causes of death within a breed will be monitored. These will be analysed breed-specifically in the JTO. The longevity of as many ancestors as possible (3–4 generations) and the longevity of close relatives will be charted in breeds with an exceptionally low average lifespan.

The longevity of relatives will be taken into consideration when selecting dogs for breeding.

3.7. Maintaining genetic diversity

Objective:

- 7. The genetic diversity of all breeds will be safeguarded in breeding. Different individuals of the breed are used in breeding in a versatile manner.***

Measures:

The JTO defines a breed's breeding criteria. The criteria should primarily be based on the wellbeing of dogs; dogs should not be discarded from breeding due to issues in the dog's exterior that are insignificant for health.

The number of progeny after individual males should not be allowed to become too high.

Inbreeding as a factor, which decreases the genetic diversity, shall be evaluated on a breed-specific basis. Necessary measures are defined in the JTOs and PEVISA programmes of the breeds.

3.7.1. Selection of breeding dogs and the maintenance of diversity

It should be ensured that at least 50% of the breed's gene pool, all criteria considered, remains in breeding use. A sufficient number of dogs must remain available for breeding use after the implementation of restrictive measures (e.g. PEVISA or breed-specific conditions for registration). Breeding dogs will be selected from different litters as equally as possible while considering the most important characteristics. To maintain genetic diversity, compromises may be allowed with respect to the quality of breeding dogs, when the case involves defects that are of minor significance to the wellbeing of dogs. Compromises made for the sake of diversity may not, however, permit the breeding of dogs that are clinically ill or of unbalanced temperament, nor should the same defect be repeated in a combination. Diseases, which endanger the wellbeing and health of dogs or shorten longevity, are taken into special consideration when evaluating breeding dogs.



3.7.2. Life-time number of offspring

Breed associations will mark the recommended maximum number of progeny of a breeding dog in each breed's JTO and, if necessary, the breed-specific conditions for registration, which will limit the number of progeny through registration procedures. The general recommendation is that the lifetime progeny number of an individual dog should not exceed 5% of the puppies born over a one-generation (4 years) period in the breed's population. A male's progeny should be divided as evenly as possible across different years. When evaluating the recommended maximum number of progeny, breed population sizes should be scrutinised on the national as well as on the international level, in particular in cases involving breeds consisting of a small number of dogs.

3.7.3. Breeding use of close relatives

Breeding restriction: combinations consisting of first-degree relatives (sire/dam*offspring - inbreeding coefficient 25%, full siblings - inbreeding coefficient 25%) may not be performed. Puppies born from such combinations can only be registered in the EJ registry.

Other combinations of close relatives (grand sire/grand dam*offspring – inbreeding coefficient 12.5%, half siblings – inbreeding coefficient 12.5% as well as aunt/uncle*offspring – inbreeding coefficient 12.5%) are not recommended.

The guideline is to recommend combinations in which an individual dog does not appear more than once during the first three generations of a pedigree (ancestor loss coefficient of 1.0, e.g. 100% of the pedigree consists of different dogs). In a pedigree of four generations, the ancestor loss coefficient should be more than 0.90 (90% of the pedigree consists of different dogs). Breed associations follow the development of the inbreeding coefficient, include their recommendations in the breed-specific JTO and enter possible restrictions in the breed-specific conditions for registration.

3.7.4. Open studbooks as well as crosses of breeds and breed varieties

The breeding use of landraces is encouraged by enabling the introduction of unregistered dogs to breeds that have populations of original, unregistered individuals in the breed's birth or development country or in the surrounding region. The procedure detailed in the Dog Registry Guideline also allows for dogs, which are registered in non-FCI-approved registers, to be introduced into breeds. DNA identification will be recorded for all dogs, which are introduced into a breed.

If a breed's average effective population size over the last 3–4 generations, taking overseas populations into account, has been 50 or less when calculated on the basis of inbreeding rate, or 200 or less when calculated using a formula based on the number of breeding dogs, the genetic variation of the breed should be increased through breed crosses and/or the introduction of native breed dogs.

Crosses of breeds and breed varieties can also be approved if a breed or one of its varieties threatens to accumulate such a large number of serious defects, diseases or disease genes that it makes the testing of breeding dogs for all these conditions impossible, and the breed does not include a sufficient number of healthy dogs, with a breed-typical behaviour, to enable breeding. The same procedure can be followed if the breed's original working traits have been lost and there is a desire to reintroduce them to the breed.

The third situation, which permits the making of breed crosses, is an effort to repair the conformation of the breed's dogs. If the conformation of a breed's dogs is not healthy enough to enable normal mating, breeding can be continued by crossing the breed with another one that has a healthier conformation; the method here is to pair a bitch with a healthier conformation with a male from the original breed in the combination.

Plans for breed crossing and opening of studbooks will be drafted in cooperation between breeders, the breed association, the Finnish Kennel Club and the breed's country of origin. The Finnish Kennel Club has separate guidelines for the practical realisation of breed crosses.



In domestic breeds, dogs representing landraces in Finland and in the surrounding region can be introduced to the breed. Different populations of the breed can also be crossed at the initiative of breed associations.

3.8. Communications and education

Objective:

- 8. The Finnish Kennel Club supports and produces activities that aim to increase knowledge of the heredity, health and diseases of dogs.**

Measures:

Dog organisations shall commit to the goal of a healthy, long-lived dog which can mate normally, and which is as breed-typical as possible to its conformation, temperament and working characteristics. All persons involved in organised dog activities shall aim to promote general awareness of dog-related issues through their actions.

The Finnish Kennel Club organises regular education for breeders, the breeding counsellors of breed associations, district instructors and kennel consultants. The education provides information on topical matters related to the breeding and wellbeing of dogs. The Finnish Kennel Club produces education material on dog breeding, heredity and the raising of dogs. It instructs breeders, dog owners and buyers of puppies to seek out information on the wellbeing, breeding and buying of dogs from breed associations and, with the aid of experts from various fields, educates these associations and their representatives on how to realise this task.

The Finnish Kennel Club keeps in contact with researchers and veterinarians to maintain its knowledge and competence in matters related to dog breeding. Significant new research findings, which have an impact on the breeding selections of breeders, and breeding guidelines will be communicated to breed associations and published on the forums of the Finnish Kennel Club.

The breeding strategy is included as an aspect of the education of dog show, trial and competition judges.

The Koiranet breeding database will be developed and enhanced.

The Finnish Kennel Club will draft wellbeing guidelines for dog keeping and breeding which can be used to evaluate the wellbeing of dogs and their suitability for breeding use.

The Finnish Kennel Club offers breeders a voluntary health care programme for dogs. In order to implement the programme, education is given on dog keeping related the general wellbeing and breeding.

3.9 Cooperation with veterinarians and researchers

Objective:

- 9. Cooperation with veterinarians and researchers will be intensified. The actions undertaken by veterinarians also support the principles and objectives of the breeding strategy.**



It is essential to accumulate information on the health and diseases of individual dogs in order to make progress in breeding. Cooperation with veterinarians and researchers aims to improve the diagnosing of hereditary diseases and defects as well as to make the determination of clinically healthy and ill dogs more effective.

The Finnish Kennel Club educates and instructs veterinarians on the performance of official health tests and on the issuing of reports.

Measures:

The Finnish Kennel Club acts in collaboration with veterinarians e.g. with the realisation of the voluntary health care programme for dogs. Communication geared to veterinarians is intensified. A veterinarian may, by permission of the dog owner, record a disease the dog has been diagnosed with to the Finnish Kennel Club's records. Awareness of the joint Finnish Kennel Club and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Dog *Health Research Fund* will be promoted.

3.10 International cooperation

Objective:

- 10. The Finnish Kennel Club influences the international community through the Nordic Kennel Union and the FCI with the aim of promoting greater knowledge of and competence in dog breeding. Our actions within the international community always set the health and wellbeing of dogs as the most important goals.***

Measures:

The content of breed standards regarding domestic breeds always adhere to the breed ideal and take the health of dogs into account.

The FCI's Breeding Rules and its International Breeding Strategies (Appendix 6 and Appendix 3) are considered general guidelines, which are applied nationally.

3.10.1. Breed standards

Finland and the other Nordic countries will make proposals to the FCI regarding breeds, whose breed standards still permit characteristics that endanger the wellbeing of dogs, so that the FCI would urge the countries responsible for drafting these breed standards to amend and clarify them.

It is appropriate to observe the Council of Europe resolution and set a maximum and minimum height and weight for dogs in breed standards (with the purpose of preventing problems associated with excessively large or small size) and limit the ratio between length and height to avoid spinal injuries. Furthermore, the proportions of the head need to be defined to enable a sufficiently long skull and nose to prevent breathing difficulties, blocked tear ducts or whelping difficulties caused by puppies with large heads. Breed standards should aim for a conformation that avoids persistent fontanelle, abnormal positions of legs, abnormal teeth, abnormal size and shape of eyes or eyelids (entropium, ectropium, large protruding eyes), very long ears as well as marked, health-impeding skin folds.

Some breed standards only approve individuals with a mutation (including ridge hair) that can cause health problems for dogs. Together with the NKU, the Finnish Kennel Club aims to influence the breed standards to allow for so-called wild type individuals that do not have this feature in their phenotype and genotype.



3.10.2. Other measures

We will petition the FCI through the Nordic Kennel Union to define breeds, which share a common origin and are separated by national borders, geographical obstacles or just minor conformational details or colour, as breed variants that can be cross-bred after careful deliberation. An alternative is to ease the granting of approval of inter-breed crosses between such breeds.

The shared use of national databases will be promoted among the kennel clubs of the Nordic countries.

4. Domestic breeds

The maintenance and improvement of health, working characteristics and genetic diversity is the focus of special attention on the part of domestic breeds.

The domestic breeds are included in Finland's national animal genetic resources programme, which is coordinated by the Natural Resources Institute Finland and subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Within the programme, a gene bank of frozen semen has been established in order to ensure the conservation of the domestic breeds' genes.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1	Section 8 of the Animal Welfare Act and Section 24 of the supplementary Animal Welfare Decree
Appendix 2	EVIRA submission regarding the breeding of breeds, whose genes carry lethal factors
Appendix 3	FCI International Breeding Strategies
Appendix 4	Council of Europe resolution concerning the breeding of pet animals
Appendix 5	FCI guidelines on crosses of breeds and breed varieties
Appendix 6	FCI Breeding Rules
Appendix 7	Breed Specific Instructions regarding exaggerations in pedigree dogs (BSI)
Appendix 8	Instruction for artificial insemination and use of frozen semen
Appendix 9	Glossary

