

Overview of the International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD)

The first meeting of the Board of the International Partnership for Dogs was held on Thursday 28th August at the Kennel Club in London. The Board is comprised of Pekka Olson (Chair, Sweden), Caroline Kisko (Vice Chair, UK), Eddie Dziuk (USA), Peter Friedrich (Germany), Jean-Pierre Genevois (France), Patricia Olson (USA), Kirsi Sainio (Finland). Brenda Bonnett (Canada) is the Chief Executive Officer and Ulf Uddman (Sweden) is the Chief Financial Officer.

The International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD), legally registered in Sweden, is a non-profit organization and its mission is to facilitate collaboration and sharing of resources to enhance the health, well-being and welfare of pedigree dogs and all dogs worldwide. Development of the IPFD web platform DogWellNet.com is at an advanced stage (not available to the public at this time, see below) and the site will be launched at the 2nd International Dog Health Workshop in Dortmund, February 2015. The IPFD is coordinating the program for the Workshop, together with the VDH (German Kennel Club).

Several national Kennel Clubs (Sweden, UK, Finland, Germany, France and Norway) as well as The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (USA), the Agria Pet Insurance-SKK Fund (Sweden) and the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI, who represents 87 national kennel clubs) have made formal commitments to move this work forward. Another collaborator is Vet Compass, an initiative of the Royal Veterinary College in the UK. Discussions with other potential partners are ongoing.

The IPFD will be open, inclusive and transparent in its structure and function. The IPFD will soon engage more members from throughout the world, including additional cynological organizations, professional and academic groups, welfare organizations and corporate/industry partners. Our Partnership agreement states that: *“the IPFD and DogWellNet.com will offer a non-partisan and a-political platform where the focus is directly on the goals of advancing the health, well-being and welfare of dogs.”* A funding model has been developed, with consideration of the differences between various organizations that may participate. Some may, e.g., be able to offer more in terms of ‘in-kind’ support. The Board is open to flexible and creative agreements with our partners.

For additional information please contact Dr. Brenda N. Bonnett, CEO, International Partnership for Dogs (brenda.bonnett@ipfdogs.com). We welcome interest from all those who share our commitment to enhance dog health, well-being and welfare.

DogWellNet.com

DogWellNet.com is the web platform for the International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD). It will function as an information hub, providing links, documents and additional resources to breeders and others in the dog world. However, it will be much more than 'google-for-dogs'. The whole design and structure of the platform revolves around 'building community' – bringing people together – and sharing. This will be accomplished both by the way the IPFD will continue to develop the site, i.e., using dedicated staff, contributors from partner institutions, and other collaborators, as well as from the functionality inherent in the site. For example, the software allows for the creation of 'Forums' where groups can effectively communicate, share information, reach consensus, etc. Some Forums and working groups are already active on DogWellNet.com.

One forum, e.g., has been an Expert Panel addressing issues in using genetic testing in dog breeding. These international experts will meet (virtually), have discussions, review evidence, evaluate information available on the web and from around the world, and then produce guidelines and advice publicly on DogWellNet. Their early work has led to a new initiative to involve a broad group of stakeholders to create a Matrix of information and resources needed to support dog breeders and advisors to most effectively and appropriately benefit from this ever-expanding field of molecular genetics.

Another forum will address an important goal of the IPFD and DogWellNet.com, i.e., to facilitate actions; specifically, e.g., to support existing and new efforts in international collaborations on breed-specific health and breeding strategies. Individuals with experience in creating and sustaining such collaborations will offer a practical perspective on such developments and serve as an ongoing support for breed groups seeking to improve international collaboration.

The main content areas of DogWellNet.com include Health and Breeding, Welfare, Research, and Education. Development is continuing by the staff and consultants of the IPFD. The first priority has been to focus on the broadest issues of health in breeds and breeding. However, ongoing funding initiatives are being pursued to increase the breadth, depth and speed of development in order to expand the content as quickly as possible.

DogWellNet.com will be launched at the 2nd International Dog Health Workshop, in Dortmund in February 2015. There will be public access to parts of the site immediately following the workshop. Major efforts, however, will continue to be focused on building a critical mass of collaborators and contributors to the content and function of the site. Further information will be presented in Dortmund.