

Speaker's Abstracts:

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Breed Specific Health Strategies

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Many of the Kennel Clubs and other canine stakeholders around the world have been investing in developing resources to support the breeding of healthy dogs. This has come in many forms – from breed specific strategies in Sweden, to financial support of canine research by international research groups (LUPA). The KC is proud to be one of the Founding Partners in the International Partnership for Dogs as a way to further the mutual goals of a wide array of stakeholders in dog health, well-being and welfare. This presentation is designed to give you an overview of the resources for dog breeders within the UK, and an idea of current and future breeding strategies. Within this session, a review of resources and tools, such as Mate Select, population genetics projects, education strategies, and interfacing with the veterinary professional community will be discussed.

These resources have been designed to support a strategy of effecting change through education and persuasion – encouraging the dog breeder to make sound, evidence-based individual breeding plans to encourage the health of their own dogs and the improvement of the breeds. Working to a longer-term strategy, it is structured so that more dog breeders will see the value in making good breeding choices rather than isolating the breeder from the very support system that can help them to improve their breed.

As more and more tools, such as DNA tests and clinical screening schemes, become available, it will become increasingly important to look at dog breeding with a holistic approach – and at all times consider the impact of an individual's breeding choices on the breed as a whole – particularly for numerically small breeds. The future impacts on dog breeding may well be the pressures of prioritisation and steady gains to work towards long term solutions as opposed to quick, reactive fixes.

At every step, communication and education is paramount the success of any breeding strategy. It is important that the motivations behind breeding are understood to create targeted resources and plans. It is also of vital importance that the responsibilities of the veterinary and professional communities and the general public are understood and utilised to the improvement of dog health and welfare. Any good breeding strategy must also include consideration of the wider stake-holder in order to make real progress.

A selection of open access information guides and online resources will be demonstrated