

Breed Specific Instructions (BSI) regarding morphologic breed type related exaggerations in pedigree dogs

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The routine use of BSI is a practical way to implement updated knowledge into the dog show sport in order to prevent breed type exaggerations challenging the health and soundness of pedigree dogs.

Since dog shows have become more than a means to guard and protect breed types we need an instrument that focuses on the health and soundness in breeds where the specific type characteristics create areas of risk. The highly popular competitive show sport stresses the responsibility of the show judges.

The awareness of the risks in “show breeding” has since long in many countries resulted in lists of high risk breeds and instructions to show judges to beware of exaggerations. These initiatives have not at all been successful and the development towards unsoundness connected to breed type is not inhibited.

In Sweden the listing of risk breeds and instructions regarding areas of risk connected to breed type are based on extensive collaboration between dog show judges, breed clubs, veterinary surgeons and verified by health insurance statistics. The BSI principle has since last year been adopted by the Nordic Kennel Union and the NKU-BSI document is to be implemented in all the five Nordic countries. The positive results seen are due to the instructions being *recommendations* (instead of rules) to the judges and the fact that *BSI is not a manual* connecting issues to fixed quality grades. The judges make *written reports* of their observations which create the basis for updating/revision of the listed breeds, the detailed instructions and also for statistical survey of the observations. The BSI routines have resulted in a significant drop at shows of dogs with areas of risk issues. The judges' awareness has increased and the interest and loyalty of all stake holders are surprisingly great and positive.

The impact on the breeding of the BSI routines is not yet possible to evaluate, but the positive outcome of these quickly established routines has created *a good possibility in theory at least* to influence the breeding of sounder and healthier purebred dogs. A positive outcome will depend on the appropriateness of the instructions and the compliance of the judges to give preference to dogs without type-related exaggerations - and that breeders ensure that such winning dogs are the ones preferred as breeding stock.

Ref. www.sk.se. English: Judging in Sweden. BSI and Swedish BSI Data.