

# Workshop on selection for behavioural characteristics

# International priorities

## **1. Agreement on goals/what we're aiming for in terms of behaviour**

- Should be done on a breed-by-breed basis
- The test itself, or the interpretation of the same test, should vary between breeds.

# International priorities

## **2. Agreement on terminology/traits tested for**

- Should include tolerance levels – not only looking for e.g. fearfulness but describing how intense a test situation should be to gather information on tolerance levels. Must ensure that after the test the dog isn't worse than before (as learning takes place).
- List of behaviours in Swedish BPH are useful/logical starting point but activity level should be included in the interpretation.

# International priorities

**3. When looking at breeds as a population both questionnaires and behaviour tests can have a purpose**

- But...terminology must be comparable between countries

# International priorities

- 4. Both pass/fail testing and tests that aim to give a behavioural description of the animal can have a purpose, depending on the country**
- But... should be adapted to the breeding goal

# International priorities

## **5. Education is critical for behaviour test judges, show/breed judges, breeders and the public**

- Practical attendance should be combined with 'virtual' tools on DogWellNet.

# International priorities

## **Tools could include:**

- Online webinars
- Videos of dogs with specific behavioural characteristics, or of specific test situations, for discussion to ensure conformity
- A forum for the sharing of useful existing information between Kennel Clubs, NGOs etc. E.g. example of info on puppy socialisation.

# International priorities

## **6. Publishing of results**

- This could be useful in terms of applying social pressure to select for behaviour
- There will be limitations (in terms of data protection concerns) in some countries but those that can, should!

# Who else should be engaged?

**Certain stakeholders/countries absent from the workshop:**

- UK, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Balkan countries
- Universities involved in research on behaviour testing

# Who should take this forward?

## **Funding is the major limitation!**

- Pragmatic option: small group formed of key Kennel Clubs (ones which already have behaviour guidelines) to take the next step. Recognised behaviour experts must also be involved.
- Preferred option: contract a designated person to take this forward. E.g. could form a PhD project. Must have suitable experience/qualifications in behaviour and knowledge of dog breeding.