

# Bulldog health

By Anne-Marie Venge Waleue

*When my interest in bulldogs began, I had many questions about the problematic health in the breed. The problem was that it seemed almost impossible to talk about this because the breeders said that the snoring, the C-sections, hip dysplasia etc. was just how the breed was and if I could not live with that, I should not get a bulldog. In addition, the owner has seemed to just accept what the breeders told them. My ethics and moral didn't accept this and I felt that if a whole breed is that bad it's better off with being extinct.*

*Time went by and I had three English bulldogs and one olde English bulldogge in my home. I did start my health research and none of these dogs was good enough for breeding in my opinion. Then I had a French bulldog in 2010 and her health results, and the fact that her breathing ability was better than most frenchies, was better than the average bulldog. How did I know this if no one does advanced and official health testing in Denmark? Well, the OFA database, and the other Northern kennel club's databases had results and this was the evidence and the guideline for now.*

*I still have my ethics about what a dog should be capable of no matter what breed it is. For me it is not O.K. for any breed to live with skin problems, breathing problems and in addition to that problems with high temperatures. It's not O.K. just to accept that a whole breed have problems with natural reproduction! If a breed cannot reproduce itself, it simply should not exist. To make several C-sections on females is not a worthy life. My breeding strategy is to make advanced health tests, x-rays, and further more to breed for a more functional anatomy, so that my bulldogs are able to run and enjoy life in all kinds of weather. I want natural reproduction and want my dogs to live long healthy lives without vet visits. This is also, why I had to skip the show carrier for my bulldogs. Unfortunately, it does not seem to go hand in hand with health in this particular breed.*

*I am fully aware of the fact that my bulldogs are not perfectly healthy. No bulldog is perfectly healthy, and to be honest if someone is telling you that either they have not made enough health tests or they are lying. The breed suffers from many years of ignorance when it comes to health and in addition to that, they have suffered a lot from breeding towards extreme looks and autonomy for decades. However, the bulldog is a very strong dog and hip dysplasia (to take one example) is not their worst enemy as it can be in many other breeds. Most bulldogs have HD but their muscles will make them (in most cases) not suffer from it. The life threatening issues in bulldogs are the breathing problems, skin problems or back problems. Most bulldogs are euthanized for these things. It does not mean we should forget about other health issues, but we just cannot breed away 10 health problems and focus on natural reproduction. My hope is that we can eliminate some of the worst health problems and then concentrate on the rest with time.*

*No breeder can or should promise to make 100% healthy bulldogs. We are just not there yet. However, in my opinion it would help the breed a lot if we could be more open to each other, and if more results were official registered. The problem with unofficial health testing is that you can breed the dog no matter what, the puppy buyer cannot in any way be able to verify the results of x-rays and not even the vet can verify the result as it's not uncommon that DKK (Danish kennel club) is harder when they evaluate the x-rays than the vet is. Not many are aware of this, but results from an ordinary vet cannot be compared to results official registered in the Danish kennel club database. Furthermore the patella result should always be verified by an orthopedic*

*vet to make sure the examination is done correctly. These are all things that you, as a puppy buyer, should make questions about and take into consideration when choosing your new bulldog pup. It is also very important to take notice of the strange idea that seems to be in the bulldog world, that they should be very fat. Overweight will never lead to anything good in any kind of breed, and with bulldogs, you even make their life shorter and harder to live. Bulldogs should never be overweight, and you must allow your puppy to grow slow to make sure you do not exposing the dog's joints and bones.*

*I hope this was helpful to you. If you have any questions regarding health and my breeding you are always welcome to ask freely and expect an honest answer.*

*Note that I'm not a member of the Danish bulldog club as I do not support the ignorance regarding health problems in bulldogs.*