

Dog Fanciers in Europe

European registries insist on soundness as well as beauty in breeding stock.

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For instance, in Sweden, all SKK decisions are made by some 20 central committees/working groups. The results from these committees receive final authority at biennial meetings of the supreme body, the Kennelfullmaktige. Between these meetings, central committees are responsible for running the club with some 60 employees.

Kennel consultants in all areas of the country are appointed as personal contact between SKK and its breeders. Consultants are experienced breeders or trainers who help local breeders with the nuts and bolts of breeding and club regulations. SKK also requires that breeders meet all requirements of the law; failure to do so may result in being reported to health authorities, as well as being expelled from the SKK. Many breeds in Sweden are still required to pass working tests in order to achieve a full championship title. To ensure this, the SKK has devised tests, classes, and breed-specific trials.

Like many of the other FCI clubs, SKK publishes a semi-annual stud book listing not only all new litters and individual registrations, but also the results of all required health checks, positive or negative. This, of course, makes it nearly impossible for breeders to sweep problems under the rug.

Other European countries have similar rules. For example, Norway also uses breeding advisory committees, whose members are considered to be experts in their own breeds, and to whom local members can turn for questions and guidance. These committees handle inquiries from prospective puppy buyers and give formal approval, or denial, to planned breedings.

The committee also keeps a list of show/trial accomplishments and health checks. If the parents of a planned mating have passed breeding rules set out by group clubs, such as the Norsk Retriever Klubb, the resulting puppies will be placed on the club's approved puppy list. Breeders must pay for a monthly listing and their breeding stock must have achieved certain titles in both show and performance events, as well as being officially declared free of canine hip dysplasia, and eye diseases such as cataracts and progressive retinal atrophy.

NKK registration requirements specify only proof of registration and CHD status. The dogs do not even have to be free of CHD, they must simply have been checked! Consequently, puppies on the NRK-approved puppy list from parents that have passed NRK's higher standards are in demand among serious inquirers. Conformation dog shows generally have the same avowed aim, to find the best specimens to perpetuate the future of a breed. Systems vary around the world, but most FCI countries follow similar patterns, with only minor variations. One important difference between FCI and North American systems is the FCI requirement for written judging critiques for all entrants.