

## Breeding of Domesticated Animals

### **Position:**

The Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) does not support the breeding of domesticated animals that compromises the welfare of the animals or their offspring.

### **Definitions:**

Irresponsible breeding: Any breeding that produces animals without considering the animal's welfare and/or contributes to the population of homeless pets. Examples of irresponsible breeding include unplanned litters, breeders who produce animals without considering the welfare of the parents or offspring and breeders who breed for poor or extreme conformations, compromising an animal's welfare.

Selective breeding: The practice of choosing animals for breeding with specific behavioural and physical traits that are desirable to humans, to produce offspring with similar traits.

### Summary

- Irresponsible breeding does not promote the welfare of animals and their offspring.
- Irresponsible breeding does not ensure animals are behaviourally and physically sound and lacks the necessary monitoring and evaluation throughout the entire breeding process, including before during and after.
- Irresponsible breeding contributes to the homeless animal population and does not ensure animals are cared for throughout their entire life.
- Establishing a common understanding between veterinarians, breeders and pet guardians regarding what constitutes an animal suitable for breeding is crucial to ensuring the welfare of the animal and their offspring.
- EHS supports outreach and education on responsible and ethical breeding to help pet guardians and prospective pet guardians choose and care for animals.

### Rationale

- Animals with conditions that compromise health and welfare may be negatively impacted by breeding and can produce offspring with reduced welfare.
- Irresponsible breeding does not ensure an animal is physically and psychologically healthy, and/or has a home throughout their life, does not promote good welfare and does contribute to the homeless animal population.
- Selective and ethical breeding can help improve the welfare of animals. EHS encourages veterinarians and breeders to jointly develop genetically informed breeding plans and practices.

- Responsible breeders provide a higher quality of care to animals by selecting animals to be bred based on an assessment of the animals' physical and psychological health.
  - An animal's physical health is prioritized by selecting healthy parents, completing genetic testing and not favouring appearance over physical health or function.
  - Temperamentally unstable animals who pose a risk to humans, other animals or themselves are not selected for breeding.
- Irresponsible breeding can result in animals with compromised health, temperaments and welfare, leading to a negative effect on the human animal bond with their guardians, increased veterinary care requirements and potential relinquishment because of their condition(s).
- Since conditions that contribute to poor welfare can be hereditary, their impact can extend across multiple generations, affecting multiple animals as a result.
- Potential health and welfare concerns of animals with or who are carriers of genetic disorders and/or bred for extreme conformations include:
  - respiratory abnormalities and breathing difficulties;
  - skeletal and joint disorders;
  - cartilage defects, which can lead to arthritis;
  - eye disease and congenital abnormalities;
  - dental malocclusion;
  - difficulty or inability to give birth naturally;
  - spinal deformations; and
  - skin conditions.
- Breeders should proactively conduct genetic testing, complete appropriate diagnostics and monitor animals in their breeding program to detect carriers of conditions. Breeding programs should be carefully planned to minimize the risk of heritable conditions being passed on in offspring.
- EHS supports the review and updating of breed standards in collaboration with veterinary professionals to promote phenotypic and genetic traits which best promote welfare.
- To ensure animals are ethically and responsibly bred with welfare in mind, a common understanding of what is necessary for good welfare should exist between breeders, kennel and parent clubs, veterinarians and animal guardians.
- Education regarding the health implications and care required for animals bred for specific desired traits and extremes should be provided to the public and stakeholders to ensure these animals have good welfare.

## References

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