

## Kennel Club Addresses Issue of Unrecognised Colour Registrations in Pedigree Dogs

The Kennel Club and breed clubs are increasingly concerned about fashions in unrecognised colours and these colours being advertised as 'rare' and the Kennel Club is putting measures in place to tackle the issue while gathering data to help protect the welfare of all dogs.

The Kennel Club is wary of the dangers of breeding or buying dogs solely for colour, particularly when these colours are unrecognised in the breed and are often advertised as being 'rare'. People breeding these dogs are often doing so with little or no regard for important elements such as health, temperament and conformation, and are effectively duping puppy buyers by claiming certain colours are 'rare' or advertising litters as colours that do not exist.

Having listened to the views of breed clubs and others involved in the dog world, the Kennel Club has announced the first phase of measures to address the problem, which will come into effect immediately. These measures have come about as a direct result of recommendations made by the Kennel Club's Communications Working Party and have involved a considerable financial investment in database development over the past year.

The measures include:

### Kennel Club database change

When registering litters online via MyKC, breeders have previously been presented with a drop-down box which lists all recognised colours in their breed and a generic 'Colour Not Recognised' option. This has been updated so that breeders must now manually enter the colour of the puppy if selecting the Colour Not Recognised (CNR) option. This is mandatory and the colour must be entered to proceed with the registration. This will enable the Kennel Club to collect data on CNR registrations across all breeds, which will be used along with other information to decide what further action that needs to be taken, and will mean that the Kennel Club is the only organisation to hold data on colours in all registered dogs. Although the specific unrecognised colours will not be published, it is planned that the Kennel Club will work in conjunction with breed clubs in order to increase knowledge in this area.

### Engaging with puppy buyers

After data on CNR registrations has been collected for a number of months, the Kennel Club plans to advise CNR puppy buyers, at the point when they transfer their puppy into their name, about the need to choose a mate of a recognised colour if planning to breed from their puppy in the future – if they fail to do this, they will run the risk that the Kennel Club may not register the progeny.

### Education and online resources

To ensure that both puppy buyers and breeders of all levels of experience are made aware of the recognised colours across all breeds and the issues with unrecognised colours, new content has been added to the Kennel Club website for every single breed – on its Find a Puppy tool ([www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/findapuppy/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/findapuppy/)) and on the Breed Information Centre ([www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/breed/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/breed/)). Special focus at this stage will be paid to four breeds that are known to have seen surges in unrecognised colours – Labradors, Pugs, French Bulldogs and Bulldogs - and it is planned to add other breeds to the list in due course.

A specific 'What colour should my puppy be?' web page has also been created with a link to various other areas of the Kennel Club website, to highlight what colours are recognised in each breed and the issues with unrecognised colours. This can be accessed at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy/what-colour-should-my-puppy-be/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy/what-colour-should-my-puppy-be/). It is also planned to develop a web-based seminar on recognised colours, with a view to holding Kennel Club regional seminars on the same subject at a later date.

#### Kennel Club Puppy Naming Service

Some breeders choose to use the Kennel Club Puppy Naming Service when registering their litters. Traditionally, the Kennel Club has made its own kennel name available, e.g. Kensteen, when processing these litters for breeders without a kennel name. However, in another new measure, breeders without a kennel name will no longer have access to the Kennel Club's own kennel name when registering litters containing CNR puppies.

#### Assured Breeder Scheme

Members of the Assured Breeder Scheme who choose to breed unrecognised colours will be required from now on to carry out all health tests in their chosen breed, whether required or recommended, and this information will be checked for compliance at the time of joining the scheme as well as during any subsequent visit from a Regional Breeder Assessor.

Penny Rankine-Parsons, Breed Health Coordinator for French Bulldogs, said: "We should all be encouraged by this first stage, which the Kennel Club has put in place to address the very complicated problem of unrecognised colours across all breeds. This issue affects my breed more than any other and, although these may be viewed by some as small steps, they are certainly positive ones and in the right direction.

"The fact that the Kennel Club will now be able to record exactly what colours the CNR registrations are will enable them to monitor and analyse the statistics and ensure that the next stage and future decisions will be based on facts. The various changes to the Kennel Club website are also important in the education of the public about correct breed standard colours and, as these changes are quite prominent with links to various pages such as the Find a Puppy section, they should prove to be an excellent learning resource for those looking for a puppy."

Vicky Collins-Natgrass, Breed Health Coordinator for Bulldogs, said: "We have had serious concerns with regards to unrecognised colours, and thus, we welcome the Kennel Club's aim of dealing with this issue and look forward to the progression of this project."

Lynda Heron, Joint Breed Health Coordinator for Labrador Retrievers, said: "As the Labrador is the most popular breed of dog in the UK, we are glad to see that the Kennel Club is taking steps to address the problem of unrecognised colours in this breed and across the board. We hope it will serve as a clear warning and help to educate puppy seekers and less experienced breeders or those deliberately breeding unrecognised colours."

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said: "The Kennel Club is taking this action in relation to unrecognised colours, following concerns expressed by serious breed enthusiasts as well as breed clubs. These measures will send a clear message to anyone thinking of breeding a litter or buying a puppy that it is best to avoid doing so based upon one factor only – in this case, colour. There is a lot of really useful information for puppy seekers on the Kennel Club website and we are confident that these latest changes will improve the chances of people making more informed choices when it comes to buying a puppy in a responsible manner.

"With breeders specifying exactly which unrecognised colours they are registering from now on, the Kennel Club will be better placed to analyse the data in order to look at the possibility of a second phase of measures based upon science as well as other factors."

Where there is evidence that certain colours can affect the health of dogs, the Kennel Club may restrict registrations, as it has done for any puppies, for any breed, that are produced as a result of mating two merle (dapple) coloured parents together.

Any breed clubs which have experienced issues with unrecognised colours are invited to submit their ideas for possible further measures to the Kennel Club. Please email [CNR@thekennelclub.org.uk](mailto:CNR@thekennelclub.org.uk), ensuring the subject line of 'Unrecognised colours' is included. Only genuine suggestions from breed clubs for tackling the issue of unrecognised colours should be directed to this email address.