



Facing the Challenges: Safeguarding the Persian and Exotic Breeds

The Persian, with its captivating beauty and gentle demeanor, has long held a cherished place in the hearts of cat enthusiasts worldwide. As one of the oldest and most recognizable breeds, its history within FIFe is deeply intertwined with the organization's own evolution. Over the years, dedicated breeders have tirelessly worked to refine the breed standard, focusing on health and well-being while preserving the distinctive characteristics that make Persians so beloved.

Navigating the Current Landscape

However, the Persian and Exotic breeds, along with other brachycephalic breeds, are currently facing unprecedented challenges. Growing concerns about brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS) have led to calls for restrictions, and in some cases, outright bans, in certain regions.

The Chairman of the Hereditary Disease Committee of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), Dr Jerold Bell DVM, commented against "unnecessary regulatory decisions regarding the banning and breeding of pedigreed cats: efforts should instead be made to improve genetic selection for health-conscious breeding".

It is important to understand that these concerns are mainly due to irresponsible breeding practices, often by non-registered breeders producing kittens without pedigree.



FIFe's Commitment to Responsible Breeding

FIFe unequivocally condemns such practices where health & welfare of cats is not a priority. The organization has consistently emphasized the importance of breeding for health and well-being. Our breeders, through rigorous selection and careful breeding programs, have made improvements the health of the Persian and Exotic breeds such as decreased prevalence of polycystic kidney disease (PKD), a hereditary condition that once plagued the breed. This achievement is a testament to the tireless efforts of breeders, who meticulously screened breeding cats and implemented responsible breeding protocols. FIFe breeders strive to maintain the breed's characteristic features while ensuring they are in harmony with the cat's overall health and well-being. The focus is on breeding for a balanced type, avoiding extremes that can compromise respiratory function or other aspects of the cat's quality of life.

The Role of the Breed Council

The Persian and Exotic Breed Council plays a vital role in guiding breeders and ensuring the highest standards are upheld. They provide valuable resources, education, and support to breeders, promoting best practices and encouraging responsible breeding.



It is important to address the misconception that all brachycephalic cats suffer from health problems. When bred responsibly and not for extreme features, adhering to the FIFe breed standard, these cats can live a long, healthy, and good quality life.

Dr Bell added "Breed health can only be improved by breeding and allowing breeders to breed."

Moving Forward: A Call for Collaboration

FIFe is committed to working with breeders, veterinary professionals, and possibly government to address the challenges facing brachycephalic breeds. We believe that open dialogue, education, and a collaborative approach are essential to ensure the long-term health and well-being of these beloved cats.

Upcoming Webinar for Judges and Student Judges

To further enhance understanding and promote responsible breeding and judging practices, HWC and JSC, under appointment from FIFe Board, are organizing a webinar on the health and well-being of these breeds and a panel discussion focusing on the interpretation of breed standards and judging criteria to improve the health and welfare of brachycephalic breeds. By working together, we can ensure that the Persian and Exotic breeds continue to thrive for generations to come, bringing joy and companionship to cat lovers worldwide.

FIFe Health & Welfare Commission

