



NKU/VK (Scientific Committee) meeting 2021 – Minutes

Time	09:00-16.00 April 12, 2021 (Day 1) and 09:00-16.00 April 14, 2021 (Day 2)
Place	Teams
Present	DKK: Britta Sørensen, Helle Friis Proschowsky FKK: Kaisa Metteri-Gold, Kirsi Sainio SKK: Helena Skarp, Sofia Malm, Åke Hedhammar (Day 1), Tomas Bergström NKK: Nina Hansen, Kim Bellamy, Frode Lingaas, William Bredal NKU X-ray panel: Hege Kippenes (Day 2 item 8)

Meeting chair: Nina Hansen (NKK)

Meeting secretary: William Bredal (NKK)

1. Opening of the meeting (09:00)

Welcome and short presentation of the participants.

2. Short presentation and organizational news from the national kennel clubs

Updates since previous meeting September 2019. Obviously the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all organizations.

DKK: Events and shows have been cancelled, leading to economic consequences and changes in staff. On-line courses and training have been put into place. A new satellite office in Jylland has been opened.

SKK: The pandemic has had an economic impact on the organization, however the registration numbers have increased. Long-time SKK CEO Ulf Uddman will retire in August 2021, and a replacement has been found.

FKK: In addition to the pandemic effects, 2020 also included a 5-month long workers strike at FKK. Since FKK only is involved in the Helsinki show, the economic impact of show cancellations has not been severe. Registration and membership fees constitute the core income, and these have increased. As of 2023 it will be mandatory for all dog to be microchipped. Decision regarding the ID-database (ownership, location) are pending.

NKK: During the last meeting in September 2019 Norway was experiencing a dramatic situation in the canine community with sudden onset fatal hemorrhagic gastroenteritis leading to cancellation of many events and shows and economic set back going into 2020. This was followed by the Covid-pandemic and lead to a serious economic situation with most of the staff being laid off for several months; several employees left the organization and a few were let go. The ensuing re-organization process lead to the previous Health department being merged with the Registration and the Activity department to become one of the two departments comprising the NKK. Previous NKU/VK members from NKK: Astrid Indrebø retired in April 2020 and Maria Kjeldaas Johannessen left NKK in February 2020. Veterinarian William Bredal joined in June 2020. An animal rights organization has filed a lawsuit against the NKK, two breed clubs and several breeders for unethical breeding, and the case will be tried in court during the fall of 2021.



3. Minutes from the last meeting in Norway, 19th September 2019

Minutes - Approved

4. Decisions from the NKU/AU

- a. Minutes from the NKU/AU meeting 16 October 2019
- b. Minutes from the NKU/AU meeting 16 November 2020
- c. Next meeting of the NKU/AU is to be held on June 2, 2021

5. Update from each country regarding health issues

a. RAS

DKK: Does not have mandatory RAS.

SKK: Sofia Malm had prepared and shared (on the NKU Google drive) a presentation of RAS in Sweden/SKK, briefly covering the history and the work ahead. At SKK Anne Bucksch (avelkonsulent@skk.se) is coordinating RAS and the development of a new guide.

FKK: The plan is that RAS will not be updated every 5th year but every 10th. A designated person, Maaret Tapio, is employed to aid the work on RAS.

NKK: Currently the staff situation at NKK does not favour work needed for RAS. A new guide is necessary to efficiently expediate the work.

In general: Who has the final say in RAS? The breed clubs or the KC?

b. BSI

BSI 2nd Edition from 2018 has not been revised. As of March 2020, BSI is digitally available for judges to completion on show critiques. Although this is required it seems that it is mostly Nordic judges that comply.

c. Mentality

SKK: Sofia Malm had prepared and shared (on the NKU Google drive) a report and quantification of three mentality assessment programs in Sweden (BHP, MH and MT), including breeds where mentality assessment is required for puppy registration. BPH (Beteende- och Personlighetsbeskrivning Hund) is SKKs own mentality assessment and two scientific articles/reports are in the process of publication by etiologists (Dr. Svartberg, SLU and professor Forkman, Copenhagen University). In addition, a new distance education 'Mera mentalitet' has been launched and an education on fear in dogs 'Den rädda hunden' is in the making.

FKK: Mentality was a FKK-planned theme for year 2020, with many activities, trainings and courses. Due to Covid-19 most of these were either cancelled or postponed.

DKK: Growing interest for mentality testing

d. Death cause registration

SKK: Sofia Malm had prepared and shared (on the NKU Google drive) a description of SKKs plan for implementing owner registration of death causes.

DKK: Owners can register death causes on a voluntary basis.



FKK: Has registered death causes voluntarily for many years. Over 150 000 cases have been registered. Veterinarians are permitted to put in data.

NKK: Owners can register death causes on a voluntary basis.

e. Other health projects

SKK: IVDD-screening of dachshunds is to start during 2021.

DKK: Starting a project on cryptorchism in the Broholmer.

6. International activities and conferences

No reports shared.

7. Report from the DNA-group

The meeting of the DNA group was held on Tuesday April 13, 2021. As all participants Day 2 except one were also attendees of this meeting no additional report was provided.

8. Report from the NKU X-ray-panel (Hege Kippenes, chair of the NKU X-ray-panel, Day 2)

Hege Kippenes presented briefly the most recent 'Facts and Procedures' document (replaces previous: "Faktarutan").

a. List of the chondrodystrophic breeds that the NKU X-ray-panel recommends not to include in the current ED screening program

The current screening procedures are defined to diagnose the typical ED diseases and can result in erroneous diagnosis if applied to chondrodystrophic breeds. Chondrodystrophic breeds should be excluded from the current ED screening to avoid erroneous diagnosis and their potential negative effect in selection of breeding animals. The NKU X-ray-panel has made a list of breeds considered chondrodystrophic either by appearance or detected mutation of the Fgf4 that are excluded from the ED screening. NKU-VK delegates to the NKU X-ray-panel the responsibility of updating and maintaining this list of breeds. The NKU X-ray-panel informs the NKU/VK secretariat within two weeks after meetings of NKU X-ray-panel where changes to the list have been made. The kennel clubs then incorporate the changes to their programs the following January 1st or July 1st. The Facts and Procedure document will be sent from the NKU X-ray-panel to the NKU/VK secretariat with any new alterations.

b. Appeal statistics

NKU X-ray-panel has evaluated the appeal statistics from 2019 and 2020. The appeal statistics shows that more than 80% of the cases remain unchanged after appeal. This demonstrates high degree of harmonization between the Nordic scrutinizers. The NKU X-ray-panel will continue to evaluate the appeal statistics annually and present this to the NKU/VK.

c. Appeals regarding HD/ED appeal from the Estonian Kennel Club

SKK has been asked to handle appeal procedures from the Estonian Kennel Club and has put the



question forward to the NKU/VK. The NKU X-ray-panel is not either able to take on this request, based on the fact that the Estonian KC is not part of the calibration process in place within the NKU.

9. Report from the FCI Scientific Commission

Kirsi Sainio (chairman) reported: There had been no physical meetings since Portugal 2019, but an online meeting is planned. Kirsi will share the decisions on the NKU Google drive.

10. Report from the FCI Breeding commission

Kim Bellamy (member) reported from a digital meeting. Topics discussed were: Implications in the Netherlands following legislation changes for breeding brachycephalic dogs, dental topics, and movement of dogs between countries.

11. Report on other FCI activities of relevance

Åke Hedhammar reported from the Dog Health commission, the FCI webinar on fighting anti-breeding propaganda held 26 March 2021.

12. Brachycephalic health issues

- a. Background for the topic given by Nina Hansen.
- b. When developments regarding the Robinow-like syndrome are available they are to be followed up with NKU/AU.
- c. Health programme in Sweden. Discussions with breed clubs on which scheme to follow.
- d. BOAS-grading and registration

NKK: As of August 2019; 282 dogs had been graded and registered in DogWeb according to Jane Ladlows Cambridge -scheme and three certification courses for more than 70 veterinarian scrutinizers held. A new course is planned for September 2021.

DKK: Agreement with the Kennel Club to incorporate the Cambridge -scheme. Uncertainty as to when this can start up, including the training of veterinarian scrutinizers.

FKK: Approximately 700 dogs have been graded according to a Finnish-scheme including a 1-minute walk test and results registered. Grading is mandatory for English bulldog and pug.

SKK: Have developed own scheme, but now moving towards using the Cambridge scheme as a parallel opportunity (see 12.c). Looking into calibration of veterinarian scrutinizers. Involvement of veterinary specialist groups seems appropriate.

- e. Registration of dogs that had surgery and/or are dead due to BOAS. SKK has 140 recorded cases, require owner consent.



- f. New book to be released July 2021: Health and Welfare of Brachycephalic (Flat-faced) Companion Animals. A Complete Guide for Veterinary and Animal Professionals. Editors: Rowena Packer & Dan O'Neill.

13. Index

General update from each country. Information and communication on indexes are challenging and time-consuming, particularly towards individual owners.

DKK: has index for HD and IVDD. A special FAQ (frequently asked questions) page is available on DKKs web site.

SKK: has HD-index for 44 breeds and ED-index for 17 breeds. Pilot project regarding mentality index in 6 breeds.

FKK: Index available since a long time for HD, ED, IVDD and spondylosis

NKK: has HD-index that is updated 5-6 times annually.

14. Hip and Elbow Dysplasia

- a. SKK: New IT system for digital transfer of x-rays in Sweden is now in place, although not without struggles. New elements include: registration of subluxation, name of scrutinizer, publication of grading of each joint (left and right) individually. SKK scrutinizers evaluate x-rays for Iceland. IVDD-screening registration to start in 2021. Cases of clinical ED will be possible to register following clinical examination without accompanying x-rays (FKK also registers ED-grade based on clinical examination).
- b. NKK: Nina Hansen reported on current roll-out of new IT system for digital transfer of x-rays (HD & ED) in Norway. Pilot clinics are using the system and plan is to have rolled out completely by end of 2021.
- c. FKK has had digital transfer in place for many years for HD, ED and IVDD. In addition patella and ophthalmological examination results are also electronic. When ordering an examination consent on having the results published are mandatory.
- d. Appeals regarding HD/ED from the Estonian Kennel Club have been received and declined by SKK.
- e. Long-awaited International FCI-seminar on HD in Copenhagen is now scheduled for May 2022.

15. Stifle joints

- a. Improvement on screening for patellar luxation, may be obtained through harmonization of the Nordic protocols.
- b. Sofia Malm has co-authored an article: Nilsson et al (2018) Heritability of patellar luxation in the Chihuahua and Bichon Frise breeds of dogs and effectiveness of a Swedish screening programme. The Veterinary Journal.
- c. Harmonization topics: Age at examination, appeal procedures, scrutinizer calibration.
- d. Status/News:



NKK: Scrutinizers are general practitioners with minimum 5-years clinical small animal practice and approved by NKK. A study by two specialists has been initiated to evaluate effect of concurrent heat on patella luxation-grading.

SKK: Scrutinizers are specialists in Small Animal Medicine or equivalent and approved by SKK.

FKK: Veterinary students can complete a course at vet school to become scrutinizers. Appeal panel available.

DKK: No specific requirement in place for scrutinizing veterinarians.

- e. At next meeting initiate general discussion with aim to seek harmonization in screening protocols, scrutinizer calibration and appeal procedures.

16. IVDD in dachshunds

- a. Harmonizing Nordic routines for grading and procedures. At the NKU/VK meeting 20th September 2019 a working group was set down to study the issue of screening for IVDD closer and make proposals on how to handle this matter within the NKU. The working group proposal document '*IVDD in the Dachshund*' was completed by October 27th, 2020 and will be forwarded to the NKU/AU meeting June 2nd, 2021 together with proposal below (16 e).
- b. New breed included on voluntary basis in NKKs IVDD-screening program as of March 1, 2021; coton de tulear.
- c. New breed included on voluntary basis in DKKs IVDD-screening program as of May 1, 2021; coton de tulear.
- d. SKK to start IVDD-screening in dachshunds shortly. Decision taken some time ago, implementation has been delayed due to IT-development.
- e. A group composed of one member from each KC; Helena Skarp (SKK), Helle Friis Proschowsky (DKK), Kaisa Metteri-Gold (FKK) and William Bredal (NKK); was given the task of making an addendum proposal to '*IVDD in the Dachshund*' for the NKU/AU-meeting regarding harmonization of IVDD-X-ray-screening between our countries, with specific focus on calibration of the X-ray evaluators and on establishing an appeal procedure.

17. Harmonizing practices regarding "inmönstring" in Nordic breeds

Each country to send rules to FKK (Katariina Mäki) for a summary. Follow-up on status prior to next meeting.

18. Registration of health results

- a. DCM in Dobermanns in centrally registered in SKK, same protocol as breed club and based on Professor Jens Häggströms work. In DKK only great danes get DCM centrally registered.



- b. Mandatory registration of auscultation in Cavalier King Charles Spaniel in NKK, decided in 2019, but due to IT-reasons implementation has been delayed. However, this is on the verge of being resolved. Differences in age limits and procedures between the Nordic countries was recognized. In Denmark scanning is also permitted and scrutinized by a specialist.
- c. BOAS-grading. See also Item 12. SKK started registering results in summer of 2019 using scheme similar to Finland and has approximately 100 results. Now moving towards Cambridge scheme for some breeds. DKK has signed agreement with The Kennel Club and is in implementation phase. FKK has registered a few hundred results using own scheme but are also in contact with Jane Ladlow. NKK has signed the agreement with The Kennel Club and has been using the Cambridge scheme since August 2019.

19. Breeds and varieties/recognition of new breeds

- a. New routines for recognition of new breeds in Sweden was shared on NKU Google drive by Sofia Malm.
- b. FKK recognized two new breeds: medimurje (Croatia) and markjes (The Netherlands).

20. Gonioscopy in Norway

- a. Update on situation given by Nina Hansen, after Samoyed club discovered discrepancies in results between examiners.

21. New animal welfare legislation

- a. FKK: ID-chipping will become mandatory in 2023.
- b. DKK: New Animal Welfare legislation regulating canine husbandry and 'erhvervsmæssig hundehold'. In regions where wolves have been registered, certain breeds may be allowed as 'herd dogs' to safeguard sheep following owner certification.
- c. NKK: New regulations in Animal Welfare legislation are being prepared and include more specifics on dog breeding. Mandatory microchipping seems to be inevitable as part of this, however, decisions and timings are pending.
- d. SKK: Trials with 'herding dogs' have proven complicated. Since 2001 Sweden has had mandatory ID for dogs, managed by Jordbruksverket. Will most likely include cats soon.

22. Smuggling of dogs/puppies

- a. SKK: Number of cases increased. Increasing awareness also politically after 'Lucy's Law'.
- b. DKK: Increasing problem, but closed borders and increased regulation with the Covid-pandemic have reduced this. Web site for consumers developed in collaboration between Danish Veterinary Association, Fødevarestyrelsen and DKK: www.tjekhvalpen.dk
- c. FKK: Definitely an issue, particularly due to geographic location close to the Baltics (i.e. multiple daily ferries between Tallinn and Helsinki), Russia and eastern Europe where puppy farms are abundant.



23. New EU-legislation that regulates the use of AI in dogs between countries

- a. EU-regulation from 2019 with intent based on farm animals, but includes dogs.
- b. <https://www.jaktojagare.se/kategorier/aktuellt/nya-eu-regler-hot-mot-jakthundsaveln-20210328/>
- c. <https://www.skk.se/?newsitem=177589>
- d. How has the FCI responded

24. Any other business

- a. Vaccination rules:
 - DKK: Up-dated vaccination rules (for participation in competitions). Accept titer tests (recommended by WSAVA)
 - SKK: titer tests not accepted
 - FKK: titer tests not accepted
 - NKK: titer tests not accepted
- b. Law suit in Norway: Nina Hansen informed that The Norwegian Society for Protection of Animals (Dyrebeskyttelsen) has filed a law suit against NKK, The bulldog breed club and the Cavalier breed club + 3 breeders from each club based on unethical breeding. In their opinion all individuals of cavalier and English bulldogs are too sick to be bred. The NKK has argued the case dismissed since neither NKK or the breed clubs actually breed dogs, however, the Oslo court district has ruled that the case comes to court in November 2021.
- c. FKK: The outcross project in French bulldog has been initiated by private individuals. It has not been approved by FKK or the Finnish French Bulldog Club. It is paramount that projects of this kind have the appropriate approval prior to commencement. Should the project become approved it will need to start from scratch with appropriate individual selection.
- d. Finnish report from Livsmedelverket (translated to English) in May 2020: Improving the implementation of animal welfare legislation in animal breeding initiated discussions on dog breeding and brachycephalic breeds.
 - a. «Kalla fakta» Swedish TV-documentary focusing on SKK causes a lot of noise and reactions shortly after release earlier this year. No lasting negative effects have been seen.
 - b. FKK has released new sales contracts and 'fodervärdsavtaler'.

25. Next meeting

Proposal:

1. Informal discussions on Teams on a case-to-case basis for special issues between official meetings can be useful.
2. Next official meeting will be in spring 2022 - hopefully a physical meeting (new secretariat will be SKK)
 - a. NKU-DNA: 29. March, 2022 (12-16)
 - b. NKU-VK: 30-31. March, 2022 (9-17+ dinner, 9-14)