

# New science-based dog breeding standards to enter testing phase

September 29 2015, by Keith Robinson

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Science-based standards developed for the care and well-being of dogs bred commercially will soon go through pilot testing among breeders as part of a two-year Purdue University research project.

Participating [breeders](#) are expected to begin testing the recently completed draft standards before the end of this year, said lead researcher Candace Croney, head of Purdue's Center for Animal Welfare Science. The well-being of the dogs will be evaluated before and after the breeders implement the standards.

"Breeders have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to participate," she said.

The goal of the research is to provide breeders with uniform standards for care and well-being in all states to ensure the quality of life that dogs deserve, said Croney, an associate professor of comparative pathobiology and animal science whose research focuses on the behavior and welfare of animals.

The draft standards take in all areas of health and well-being and address the needs of adult dogs, juvenile dogs and puppies, including dogs' access to food, water and shelter; availability of veterinary and preventative health care; behavioral wellness; and genetic selection. The research also is addressing ethical issues such as the end of breeding careers and rehoming of animals.

"All animal care policies must be grounded in science as well as ethics and social responsibility," Croney said.

Input from breeders, veterinary practitioners and other experts on canine care, reproductive management and welfare was incorporated into the standards, which have been reviewed by [animal welfare](#) experts including Temple Grandin and Bernie Rollin of Colorado State University and James Serpell of the University of Pennsylvania.

Croney said researching the scientific basis for the standards revealed major gaps in the existing scientific literature pertaining to housing and management that affect the welfare of kenneled and breeding dogs. The research team therefore prioritized several new areas of study and have begun collecting data with the support of dog breeders who volunteered their facilities for study. That data as well as the final standards are to be released next year.

Meantime, a project summary, table of contents of the [standards](#) document and several Purdue Extension publications on dog welfare are available on the Center for Animal Welfare Science's website at [vet.purdue.edu/CAWS/engagement.php](http://vet.purdue.edu/CAWS/engagement.php) . The researchers also will provide periodic updates on the website and at conferences, webinars and other venues.

"The dialogue, constructive feedback and collaboration offered by breeders and animal health and welfare experts and others have greatly facilitated Purdue's capacity to develop scientific and educational approaches needed to advance the welfare of [dogs](#) in commercial breeding operations," Croney said. "The research team looks forward to the continuing support and input of the various communities invested in improving dog welfare."

The project, begun last year, is funded by the Pet Industry Joint

Advisory Council, Pet Food Institute and World Pet Association and is drawing on the varied expertise of many Purdue researchers and colleagues at other institutions. Additional support is being provided by the Science Fellows program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the USDA-APHIS Center for Animal Welfare.

Provided by Purdue University

Citation: New science-based dog breeding standards to enter testing phase (2015, September 29) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2015-09-science-based-dog-standards-phase.html>

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