Minutes from Breeding Group Meeting ISIC 2025, Norway

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Notes: Louise Roer

1. National Updates and Implementation of Recommendations

US – Still new to the process and trying to inform breeders. Main issue: many males are neutered early; breeders need to keep them intact until age 3, but not everyone is willing to wait. Some puppies are not registered.

Iceland (IS) – Some puppies are not registered, and some parents lack hip scores. When litters are close to moving to new homes, breeders often skip the tests. National kennel club rules are close to the ISIC recommendations, so adaptation is not too difficult.

Germany (DE) – 4 female litters and 8 male litters registered. Data distributed among breeders, but overall interest is low. Encouragement needed for hip and eye scoring of all pups to strengthen knowledge about the breed.
Observed issue with missing teeth (P2, P1); missing more than two causes restrictions when choosing breeding partners.

Sweden (SE) – The current ISIC recommendations are similar to the Swedish national ones, so only minor adjustments needed. No major issues reported.

Netherlands (NL) – Discussion on how to use males, also for international matings.

France (FR) – Situation varies. Some breeders follow recommendations closely; others only partly. Kennel club rules are mainly advisory.
Most dogs live as pets and are neither shown nor tested. Breeding is mostly done by established breeders, and few pet owners use their males. Many breeders travel abroad for suitable stud dogs.
If more than one litter is bred, the breeder must register as a professional. Breeders that register as professional breeders are no longer obliged to adhere to the rules of the breeding club. The French breeding club has no influence on these breeders. It's also possible to register puppies from parents without pedigrees (open studbook?) – question: how do they ensure the dogs are truly purebred?

Denmark (DK) – Implementation ongoing. A new law complicates things. Work continues to merge ISIC recommendations with DKK's and new national breeding rules.

Conclusion:
All countries are in the process of implementing the ISIC recommendations. Overall, the feedback from national clubs and breeders has been positive.

Follow-up point:
Consider adding a feature in the ISIC database to display the number of offspring or litters per dog, potentially flagging when a breeding limit has been reached.

2. The ISIC reports for 2024 from the countries:

Data/report distribution:
Not all members receive the reports. The group recommends finding a new system for data and report sharing.
A regularly updated list of contact persons (chairs and breeding coordinators) should be maintained.

Comments to the reports:
Suggestions to include information directly in relevant sections and omit the appendix.
Possibility to include feedback from judges (from the breed compendium) to highlight key points for the breed.
Consider whether to add show results to the annual report.

Statistical overview (past six years):
Litters
Many countries, especially those normally producing many litters, have experienced a 50% decrease in the number of litters.

Main explanations:

- Breeders fear they cannot sell puppies.
- Market fluctuations and oversupply.
- Increased popularity of designer dogs.
- Younger audiences are moving away from Facebook and websites to other platforms, reducing traditional outreach

Inbreeding coefficient (5 generations):
There is inconsistency in calculation methods between countries. Some use annual averages, others individual litters. A clear definition of required data fields is needed.

Dogs Global database:
Questions were raised about how data enters the Dogs Global system.

- The committee will ask the chairman group for approval to contact Dogs Global for clarification on data sources and usage.

Concerns were raised because commercial use of data is not permitted for Icelandic and Norwegian data.

- The chairman group must decide whether Dogs Global data should be included in future reports.

If included, only data from countries that approve this use will be added.
The breeding committee will not input or summarize data from countries opting out.

It was previously decided (2024) that ISIC should be the main database.
Any reporting based on Dogs Global data could include a disclaimer noting chance of incomplete representation.

Future topic suggestion:
Proposal to focus on *mentality* in 2026, comparing results from national questionnaires.

3. What can ISIC/countries do about mistreatment of dogs, failure to comply with welfare regulations?

The group discussed how ISIC and national clubs can respond when cases of dog mistreatment or welfare issues occur, including situations where breeders or owners fail to meet welfare regulations.
Currently, neither ISIC nor the national breed clubs have formal sanctioning authority.

Discussion points:

- **Information and prevention:**
  Clubs can help by clearly communicating what it means to own and care for an Icelandic Sheepdog — including temperament, mental stimulation needs, and training requirements. Preventive education could help reduce welfare-related issues and misunderstandings among new owners.
- **Handling cases:**
  When serious cases occur, breed clubs can contact national animal welfare organizations, who have the authority and resources to act. If necessary, relevant authorities should then be involved.
  National rescue groups already play an important role in handling such cases locally. Coordination with ISIC could strengthen their impact.

Ideas discussed:

- Develop educational materials: *"How to live with an Icelandic Sheepdog"* (covering stimulation, training, and breed-specific needs).
- Provide guidance on where to seek help and what to expect when adopting a dog from a welfare case.

- Consider establishing an ISIC-supported rescue sub-organization or network, possibly with a shared Facebook page for awareness and coordination.
- Increase visibility of ISIC among national members and dog owners.

4. Increase in puppies not being registered (not pedigree) which means loss for the breed

Several countries report an increase in puppies being sold without pedigree registration, leading to a potential loss of valuable genetic information and weaker traceability for the breed.

In some countries it is possible to get the pedigree back in, even though the puppies where not registered.

5. How can we increase the use of different males, and across country borders?

The group discussed concerns about limited male usage, which can reduce genetic diversity in the Icelandic Sheepdog population.

Discussion:

- Greater awareness is needed about the males currently used and their contribution to the breed.
- Information and education should target both:
    - Owners of male dogs who might not realize their dogs could contribute to breeding.
    - Male owners overusing their males in breeding
    - Breeders who may rely too heavily on popular sires.
- Breeders should be encouraged not to exclude dogs for minor faults (e.g. C-hips or one missing P1), as the breed overall is healthy.
- The committee recommends that countries make a special effort to identify and include underused or unknown males in breeding programs.

Ideas discussed:

- Create an ISIC male list or an international male database to improve visibility and promote broader use. This will be up for the chairman group to discuss.

6. Piebald and too much white in ISD

The issue of piebald and dogs with excessive white markings was discussed. These dogs may be of high quality in other respects. Great dogs with too much white should not be stopped from breeding, but be breed with caution.

You should not combine piebald with piebald.

7. Tranquilizers used for barking and separation anxiety

An increasing number of owners are using tranquilizers to manage barking or separation anxiety, reflecting changes in modern living conditions and expectations of dog behavior. This trend is being observed in several countries.

National rules on how long you are allowed to leave your dog were discussed. National regulations differ regarding how long dogs may legally be left alone, which may influence owners' choices.

Medication should not be considered a long-term solution for behavioral problems such as excessive barking, separation anxiety, or stress-related behavior.

Training and adaptation must always be the primary approach to help the dog cope with everyday situations.

In cases where a dog shows signs of high stress, the first step should be to reduce stress through predictability and structured routines. Only once the stress level has decreased can effective training and behavioral modification begin.

If management strategies and environmental adjustments are not sufficient to lower the dog's stress, medication may be used as a short-term supportive measure and in collaboration with a behavior trainer. The purpose of such medication is to reduce stress temporarily, making the dog more receptive to learning and training.

Medication should therefore be viewed as a temporary aid to enable rehabilitation and training, not as a replacement for it.