FVE/FECAVA view on consequences of online trade

The online market place; an argument for self regulation

Ann Criel
FECAVA Honorary Secretary
FVE’s mission

The European veterinary profession, embodied by FVE, strives to enhance animal health, animal welfare, public health and protect the environment by promoting the veterinary profession.
Most vets work with dogs and cats

FVE is the umbrella organisation for all veterinarians, irrespectively in which areas they work

>50% vets work in area of companion animals

For all companion animal issues, FVE works in close collaboration with FECAVA, the umbrella organisation of all companion animal veterinarians.
Illegal online trade:

- Most owners only come to vet after having bought a new companion animal
- Origin of animal is not always known by veterinarian
- In many countries, online trade plays an increasing role in obtaining puppies due to the decline in local breeders
- Online trade enhances ‘impulse’ buying!
- Illegal online trade is difficult to control - it poses a challenge to official veterinarians
- Often pups are younger than officially declared
Potential consequences online trade:

- **Animal Health** problems
e.g. Too young vaccinated, Parvo, Leptospirosis, respiratory infections,..

- **Behavioural** problems
e.g. too early separation with mother and not socialised

- **Animal Welfare** problems
e.g. mortality due to transport, overcrowding, etc

- **Public health** problems
e.g. zoonotic diseases, international disease transfer (32 zoonoses from a dog)
Internet trade of shelter dog:

- More and more seen in some countries
- ‘Want to save a dog’ reflex
- Often import via non-commercial transport (legally incorrect)
- Owners select a dog without proper background knowledge
- Possibility to introduce infectious diseases
- Some countries (thinking to) prohibit
CALLISTO
healthy and safe human-animal relationships in Europe
Callisto outcomes:

- Companion animals greatly contribute to the wellbeing of human society.
- But can also pass zoonotic diseases, such as:

  **VIRAL PATHOGENS**
  - Rabies virus
  - Crimean-Congo fever virus
  - West-Nile virus
  - Foot-and-mouth disease virus (non-zoonotic)
  - Bluetongue virus (non-zoonotic)

  **PARASITIC PATHOGENS**
  - Echinococcus
  - Leishmania infantum
  - Toxoplasma gondii
  - Giardia species
  - Toxocara canis/cati

  **BACTERIAL PATHOGENS**
  - Campylobacter jejuni
  - Leptospira
  - Salmonella enterica
  - Bartonella henselae
  - Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase
  - **BITE WOUND INFECTIONS**
Rabies

• Deadly disease!

• Long incubation time

• EU has successfully eradicated rabies from most of its territory, but still endemic just outside EU borders

• Main risk factors:
  • dogs and cats illegally imported from countries which still have rabies
  • citizens travelling and having had contact with infected animal
Echinococcus

- Tapeworm
- In 2016, 775 confirmed echinococcosis cases were reported in the EU/EEA.

Figure 1. Distribution of confirmed echinococcosis cases per 100,000 population by country, EU/EEA, 2016

- Notification rate:
  - 0.00
  - 0.01-0.09
  - 0.10-0.99
  - 1.00-4.99
  - ≥5.00
- No data reported
- Not included

Countries not visible in the main map extent:
- Luxembourg
- Malta

ECDC Map produced: 19 Dec 2017
Need for preventive treatment

• ‘Prevention is better than cure’
• Including:
  – Regular veterinary visits, vaccinations, anti-parasite treatment
• Contact your vet **before** buying a puppy!

Welcome to The Puppy Contract, a free tool kit developed to encourage those buying and breeding puppies to do so responsibly. Whether you’re a puppy buyer or a puppy breeder - this website will guide you through the process of buying a puppy using The Puppy Contract.
Working together to make online trade of companion animals safer

✓ FVE, FECAVA together with other organisations wrote letters to policy makers and online platforms
✓ FVE, FECAVA is part of the voluntary initiative subgroup on companion animal (dog) trade
✓ FVE, FECAVA Works on promoting owner awareness
BREEDING FOR EXTREME CONFORMATIONS
What is the problem?

Extreme breeding

Examples of breed specifications

Causes

- Increased demand instead of certain breeds, boosted by advertising, movies, social media and influencers
- Lack of owner awareness about the health and welfare impact of extreme breeding (e.g., thinking that smaller is normal)
- Lack of regulations (e.g., extreme breeding, breeding conditions)

Consequences for animals

- Increased demand instead of certain breeds, boosted by advertising, movies, social media and influencers
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Consequences for owners

- High unexpected medical and surgical costs
- Heartache due to poor health and wellbeing of many of their pets
- Complicated care of unhealthy dogs (avoid frozen wastewater, replacement, sickly)
- Unrest among pet owners
- Emotional and legal battles for dealing with unhealthy animals

Consequences for society

- More and more unacceptable breeders and puppy farms to satisfy demand
- Health problems of dogs from frozen wastewater (e.g., early weaning, poor socialization)
- Higher risk of introducing disease with dogs that come from abroad (e.g., salmonella, resistant bacteria, disease-carrying ticks and fleas)
- Increased numbers of unwanted puppies and dogs

> 67,000 People Reached
< 1700 Reactions, Comments & Shares

Very successful!!

FVE Facebook alone:

Infographic - European Parliament 26 June
Potential Solutions:

- Obligatory identification and registration of all dogs
- Promoting consumer awareness and empowerment
- Stricter movement and animal welfare laws
- More resources and guidance for effective enforcement
- Clearer and better enforced vending legislation particularly on electronic purchases
- The use of other legislation (for example, fraud) to challenge offenders with high penalties
- Cooperation between authorities
- Training of the officials
Warning signs

• Puppies are not with their mother

• You cannot see their breeding environment

• Breeder reluctant to show you around

• Breeder wants to ship the animal to you or to get payed in advance
You can report an illegal breeder!

• Contact your responsible authority!

• Even if the breeder is from abroad, you can still help!
Thanks you for your attention