

# *My breeding ethics*

*By Anne-Marie Waleue, Canes Gratia*

*There are many discussions about inbreeding, pure breeding and breeding according to the written FCI standard etc. on the internet. To me, many of these discussions do not make sense in terms of my breeding ethics and morals in relation to animal welfare.*

*I have different breeds with different issues but what's comparable to the discussions about both breeds is that people in general use the same arguments for their breeding decisions – the FCI standard, which automatically makes it pure breeding to them. To me it sometimes looks like people are blinded by this and has lost their own will or ability to make decisions according to an ethical consideration. Yes, even sometimes it seems that they don't own an ethical consideration about breeding at all.*

*In bulldogs the discussions are often about their looks. If you're breeding towards a healthier look, many will oppose this because of the breed standard, without taking into consideration that this standard is not written by God – it's even changed from time to time so it's NOT the only and final answer. So, let's get this clear – it does not replace your own ethical and moral decisions. Let me put this to the limit: Even it's legal in some countries to stone women and other countries to fur dogs live, shouldn't people be able to think for themselves and have an ethical code for their own lives instead of just following the "rules" of the place where they're living? I do see this the same way. Standards are made by humans, judges are humans and humans are mistakeable. Don't follow anything blindly – search in your heart and search for knowledge and find your own ethical codes and morals.*

*In my opinion breeding for healthy dogs (both mentally and physically) must be the first and foremost priority. Then of course many dog breeds have a function other than being good companions and those dog breeds should be "fit-for-function" as well – this too requires good health.*

*In azawakhs there are discussions about whether to use desert bred dogs and if those dogs are even real azawakhs. For me this discussion is complete nonsense and unnecessary. They are nomad dogs travelling around with their people. They are closely related to other African and oriental sighthounds and surely, they have been crossed both before the Europeans discovered the breed and today. All sighthound breeds have been divided at a time – some breeds have even been crossed with other breeds (look up e.g. whippet history) to make a breed that fits a certain purpose or need.*

*Pure breeding is traditionally made from closing the genepool and some people strictly stick to this idea, but pure breeding is also to keep certain traits in a breed, and primarily to make sure to breed healthy dogs so the breed can survive, and this can also be done without closing the genepool; There are several breeds where the genepool has been too small and then a certain disease pops up and then what? Luckily some FCI kennel clubs takes responsibility to their breeds and make breeding programs with crossing in other breeds to expand the genepool and eliminate a health issue. These breeds are still considered as purebred dogs. And I must admit that if I was given the opportunity to cross in another breed to make healthier French bulldogs I wouldn't hesitate! So, to sum up on this issue I can't see the problem in using desert bred dogs in breeding no matter how "purebred" they are – they are the closest we get to azawakhi and they carry a lot of healthy functional traits to contribute positively to the European azawakhi.*

*Let me tell you how I see it; when voting at a political election there's two types of voters: Those who vote to make their own life better, to make sure they get what they need to be happy, and there's those who vote for an ideology about what's best for the society. I see breeders a little bit the same way – those who breed every litter to make champions and the most beautiful dogs they possibly can, and those who thinks in generations and thinks about the whole breed. It's all about egos or ethics.*

*We all want beautiful dogs of course and that's the easiest thing to make if you are inbreeding heavily for generations, but what about the cost? – who will pay in the end. I can't help noticing that many sighthound breeds that has always been considered very healthy, today have many*

*cases with heart deceases, cancer or other autoimmune deceases. Does this have anything to do with heavy inbreeding years ago and the consequences starts showing now? I do not have the answer but I believe that we should care about this fact and take into consideration if we dare continuing close inbreeding year after year in certain breeds. And beautiful dogs can be made with careful breeding too.*

*Another thing that has been on my mind lately is how awfully superior man is in relation to nature. We decide to plan C-sections and inseminate bitches that do not want to be mated or when the male shows zero interest in reproducing himself, and now it has also come to my attention how a high number of breeders uses hormones to control their females' cycles instead of just respect nature and listen to what it tells us. I can't help feeling that we are overruling nature by far and that even healthy and viral dog breeds one day will be made cripples and with no reproductive drive because humans are so eager to make show dogs, pleasing their own egos and find an easy solution to almost everything regarding breeding that they forget to care about the future of the dogs.*

