



International Federation of Rottweilerfriends

Dirk Vandecasteele
Kermtstraat 56
3510 Hasselt (Belgium)

0032 (0) 475/90.09.36
dirk.vandecasteele@telenet.be

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Dear Rottweiler Friends,

While preparing the Meeting of Delegates (MOD) dd.18.09.2019 (and the prior meeting on 17.09.2019) in Denmark, the Board has reflected on the discussions by the Meeting of Delegates 05.05.2017 and the Meeting that was organized on 07 and 08 July 2018 in Wohlen (Switzerland). All Delegates received the minutes of those meetings.

At the Meeting of Breed Wardens dd. 04.05.2017 and the Meeting of Delegates dd. 05.05.2017 in Serbia, emphasis was laid on the constitutional definition of the purpose of the IFR, the instruments at its disposal and then in particular the conditions for IFR-Membership.

An extract from the Minutes of the MOD OF 05.05.2017 :

(a) Breeding regulations, breeding suitability & social behaviour tests, etc

*... The IFR is about breeding Rottweilers around the world on the same basis – **member clubs must organise social behaviour and Breeding Suitability tests.***

*The minutes of the Meeting of Delegates in Moscow in 2011 (and the IFR-Constitution since then) and Denmark in 2013 record that clubs accepted this **obligation.***¹

The questionnaire reveals that not all clubs are meeting this constitutional requirement.

¹ The IFR considers it of prime importance to introduce, continue or intensify efforts, in order to breed exclusively with dogs that are healthy in body and mind, with a self-assured nature, a well-balanced nervous condition and a sufficiently high stimulus threshold.

For this, all members of the IFR commit themselves to:

- introduce and organize tests of social acceptable behavior.
- introduce and impose breeding regulations to ensure that a minimal conformation of all breeding dogs to the FCI breed-standard is guaranteed. These breeding regulations must concern the health of the dogs and their physical and mental conformation to the FCI breed-standard. Part of these regulations must be the successful participation of all breeding dogs to breedsuitability tests.

It was accepted that it will be impossible to have homogeneity in all tests due to differing political, cultural, ... situations in other countries but the IFR needs to know these tests.

There must indeed be minimum criteria in such tests and they must be mutually recognised. We want to work towards a gene pool that we can trust worldwide.

Dirk Vandecasteele outlined the way forward:

- *Verify the answers that had been submitted in the questionnaire*
- *Template a uniform test or at least tests that strive for the same characteristics.*
- *Minimum health tests and breeding regulations*
- *Help new members get started*
- *Extra meetings of Breed Wardens in future to discuss methods and content.*

In particular, an event must be organized where all existing Breeding regulations and especially also all Breed Suitability tests will be demonstrated and evaluated (example : by judges and ethologists).

At this occasion, an evaluation will be made if these regulations and tests are complete (cover all characteristics – also mental + health – that define the breed that is in the context of the IFR above all else a utility breed).

Those that are complete and valuable could then be recognized as such by the IFR (so on mutual basis). On certain conditions (trustworthy prior testing of health, genetic identification of x-generations, ...) dogs bred from parents that passed such tests might then be recognized as to belong to a trustworthy world wide genepool.

Dirk Vandecasteele emphasized the need for such a broad world wide genepool and did so by referring to the establishment of genetic diseases evolving from an ever more reduced gene pool but also to the fact that the Rottweiler is bred and kept in differing contexts : in some countries as a utility breed (with sometimes differing definitions), in other countries only as a pet or show dog. Opening this genepool depends of course on the trustworthy knowledge of the genetic characteristics of breeding dogs and the certitude that these are correct and breed specific. He explained that what is not emphasized in breeding, goes lost and to emphasize a characteristic one must know it and for that one must test for it.

The same goes for tests of social behaviour. Here also, more homogeneity must be attained, maybe not by imposing identical routines but by ensuring that they all hold certain minimal criteria.

He discussed the possibility for an IFR-diploma / certificate for dogs / litters that are bred and kept within such IFR-criteria and of the publication of such knowledge.

Of course, tests are never worth more than the judge and here also there is work to be done and more homogeneity must be reached.

Ultimately, IFR-events should maybe be only open for dogs that were bred within the before mentioned mutually recognized genepool (suggestion by Mr. Hellmann).

A meeting was announced to define these conditions for Membership more concretely and to discuss the mandatory compliance of all Member clubs to these conditions.

On 07 and 08 July 2018 in Wohlen (Switzerland) the IFR organized this meeting. All Member clubs were invited - repeatedly and timely, incl. the communication that the opinion of absent Member clubs will not be taken into account and will not weigh on the conclusions of the meeting and therefore the subsequent proposals for the Meeting of Delegates.

Discussions at the meeting ranged from the definition of the breed to already existing regulations and breed suitability tests (with demonstrations) and the need to complete or refine these towards a homogeneous consolidation and/or improvement of the breed's physical and mental traits and its physical and genetic health.

The lively meeting was highly constructive, proved the existence of unanimously shared concerns but also of shared expectations and demands for the IFR's future work and activities and the result to follow.

The meeting led to some very concrete conclusions for a strategy to ensure or at least promote the breeding and keeping of the Rottweiler worldwide on more homogeneous grounds and characteristics, these concerning both health and (mental + physical) conformation.

In this context the present IFR-Board proposes to the Meeting of Delegates what follows.

1. Change of the IFR Constitution :

The Board proposes to adapt the IFR Constitution by adding a new art. 3.4 :

To encourage national Rottweiler clubs to endorse and support the IFR's ideals and goals and to encourage them to actively help achieve these goals, the IFR recognizes two levels of membership :

- *Full membership : can be awarded to clubs that unconditionally endorse and support the IFR's goals and whose regulations and activities are fully in accordance with the IFR's constitution, decisions and directives.*
- *Provisional membership : can be awarded to clubs that state to unconditionally endorse and support the IFR's goals but whose regulations and activities are not or not fully in accordance with the IFR's constitution, decisions and directives.*

The said decisions and/or directives are taken and/or issued by the Meeting of Delegates that can mandate the IFR-Board to elaborate and implement such decisions and/or directives and to submit them to members or candidate members for signature and therefore their written commitment to compliance.

Provisional membership can be awarded for maximum 3 years. Should during this period be established that the club concerned is not actively working towards full compliance to the IFR's constitution, decisions or directives or if after expiration of the three year period it is established that the club's regulations and/or activities are still not in accordance, then their provisional membership can, respectively will, be terminated.

Provisional members may attend but have no vote in the Meeting of Delegates nor in any other organ of the IFR and their Delegates or members cannot be elected in any function. During the period of provisional membership, they can participate, but not organize, IFR-activities.

Acceptance of Membership by the Meeting of Delegate is preceded by a motivated but non-advice by the IFR-Board. The IFR-Board can appoint and mandate a committee to assist in the assessment of applications for Membership.

Step 2 : decision / directive by the MOD (must be on the agenda of the MOD)

Whereas the IFR-Constitution underlines the necessity to introduce, continue or intensify efforts, in order to breed exclusively with dogs that are healthy in body and mind, with a self-assured nature, a well-balanced nervous condition and a sufficiently high stimulus threshold and clearly states that all Members must mandatory :

- introduce and organize tests of social acceptable behaviour.
- introduce and impose breeding regulations to ensure that a minimal conformation of all breeding dogs to the FCI breed-standard is guaranteed. These breeding regulations must concern the health of the dogs and their physical and mental conformation to the FCI breed-standard. Part of these regulations must be the successful participation of all breeding dogs to breedsuitability tests.

A non compliance by IFR-Members of these constitutional conditions for membership is to be understood as to be totally unacceptable :

- this is in contradiction to the formal conditions for membership
- this is a negation of the interest of the breed and of the shared concern for the breed's conformity and health. It is therefore a negation of the very core of the IFR's reason of existence.
- the need for compliance is experienced to have become higher than ever, given the establishment of both deviations from the standard (mental and physical) and of the reduced genetic diversity in the breed (which leads to genetic disorders).

The IFR emphasizes the need for a more homogeneous understanding of the breed's definition and of the criteria for breed suitability and also the need to be able to freely exchange breeding animals, which is only possible if all breeding animals are correctly identified and were tested on their physical / mental / genetic health and conformity and this in a more or less homogeneous and reciprocal accepted credible manner.

The compliance to the constitutional conditions for membership is not only in the interest of the breed on national levels but is on the long term a necessity for all Member clubs to ensure genetic diversity and – as is part of a loud warning in cynology – is even essential for the breed's survival ! (Cfr. the IFR-publication : “A Laymans Walk Through Basic Canine Genetics, genetic diseases and the correlation with a reduces genetic diversity of the breed” - <http://www.genetics.rottweilerclub.be>)

The Board therefore proposes to approve and sanction the discussions and conclusions of the Meeting dd. 07 – 08 july 2018 in Wohlen and to give the Board the mandate :

- **to elaborate and implement the following directives and to submit them to all members or candidate members for their written acceptance and commitment of these principles.**
- **to look for means to support all efforts by giving education (f.i. regional seminars) and by giving an added value to compliance so all breeders will want themselves to comply (f.i. publication of results, issue diploma's, recognizing and certifying international breed suitability).**
- **to found a committee to evaluate all existing regulations and to advise the Board and the next MOD on the conformity of these tests to the conditions for Membership.**
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The mandatory directives proposed by the Board :

A. Mandatory tests of social behaviour.

Social behaviour is part of the breed's definition and is essential to prove the breed's ability to function and preserve its place in human society and to maintain its acceptable public image (and prevent breed specific legislation).

Although also based on education and experiences, genetic factors also play their role in social behaviour.

Testing all breeding dogs on their social behaviour prior to breeding with them is therefore a necessity in all breeding strategies.

As imposed by the IFR-Constitution, **all Member clubs must mandatory organize tests of social behaviour and this must be part of breeding regulations.**

The following criteria are to be implemented :

- Tests of social behaviour can be organized as separate tests but are preferably a part of the club's breed suitability tests.

The latter is in particular the case when the breed suitability test (BST) holds protection work (bite work). In that case, a test of social behaviour must mandatory be part of the test and follow the protection work.

- Minimum age to participate the test is 12 months, preferably 18 months.

- All clubs must organize such tests several times a year, preferably every 3 months to ensure that all dogs can participate.
- The test can only be judged by FCI-recognized judges. These can be working judges or judges approved to judge the Rottweiler breed.
- Before the test starts, the dog must be invited to play / move to ensure that the dog is showing normal natural behaviour and is not sedated or under the influence of anything meant to calm him down. We must see playful happy behaviour.
- The identity control of the dog is an essential part of the “wesen-test” and must be done by the judge. The handler is however allowed hold the head.
- The test must contain as a minimum :
 - passing and crossing a group of people (strangers to the dog),
 - the group closing on the dog
 - behaviour of the dog while participating in daily traffic (human and motorized) The dog must show to be stable and manageable in all situations and during all confrontations with humans, other dogs. He must undergo all stimuli proper to daily traffic without showing fear, aggression or in general unwanted or socially unacceptable behaviour.
- In case of successful participation of the test, a diploma must be issued. It must be signed by the judge and must mention his full name, place and date of the test.

Printing the IFR logo on the diploma is possible and even advised to ensure its image and public value but only :

- if the regulations of the test have the prior approval by the IFR
- if the Member club certifies and guarantees – and is able to proof – that these regulations were followed to the full, that the dog was identified before the test and has participated effectively.
- the diploma is signed both by the officiating judge as by a representative of the Member club.
- the judge has the prior approval / recognition by the IFR for this.

B. Mandatory breeding regulations.

Based on the unanimous decision by the Meeting of Delegates dd. 2011, the IFR constitution demands that all Member clubs issue and impose breeding regulations to their members and must organize breed suitability tests as part of these breeding regulations.

Compliance to these regulations, including participation to breed suitability tests, is mandatory before a dog is allowed to breed.

All arguments to dispute this, such as that in many countries such regulations and tests that are issued and organized by the breed club are not sanctioned by the national kennel club so all non-members can still breed and obtain pedigrees for their litters while not complying to those more demanding regulations so competition between breeders is distorted, are rejected as to be irrelevant : such arguments may not detract from one's idealism and concern for the conformity and health of the breed. IFR-Member clubs must comply to the IFR-constitution even if on the short term this might mean losing members. In the end, quality (conformity and health) will prevail and this must always be the goal.

Minimal requirements :

All breeding regulations by all IFR-Member clubs must at minimum demand of their members to breed exclusively with dogs :

- that are minimal 18 months old / max. 9 years old at the date of the breeding²
- that have an FCI pedigree mentioning 3 generations.
- that are identified by chip (tattoo is accepted but not advised).
- that were tested and rated on HD and on ED by a veterinarian :
 - o at minimal age 12 months but preferably 15 months
 - o all results must be registered by the national kennelclub
- that have passed a breed suitability test organized or recognized by the club.

These requirements must not only concern the dog owned by the member of the respective IFR-Member club but also the dog who is a partner in the breeding, even if that partner is from another country and/or if the owner of that dog is not a member of

Breed Suitability Tests (in short BST) must answer to the following conditions :

a. Format of the BST :

- o Breed suitability tests must be actual tests, not a combination of all sorts of parts (ex. a combination of show results + BH does not suffice).

The assessment of the dog must be done in one coherent test that covers all physical and mental characteristics of the dog that may have an impact on the dog's breed suitability. The test must therefore have the format of an actual test that is concluded with the decision : pass / no pass. It must declare the dog to

² Cfr. Decision by the Meeting of Delegates in 2017 on the minimal age of breeding dogs.

be breed suitable or not breed suitable and may not leave this to the will of the breeder.

A mere assessment of the dog's characteristics is therefore not sufficient.

- Of each individual test, a written report must be made. These reports must :
 - preferably show a photo of the dog and handler at the test.
 - certify that the dog's identity was controlled by the judge and found to be correct.
 - mention a detailed physical and mental assessment of the dog :
 - detailed description of the dog, incl. measurements of the dog done by the judge (height, length, chest depth, chest circumference, proportions of muzzle / skull, eye color), the nature and completeness of dentition, etc.
 - a detailed report of the behaviour of the dog during each part of the mental test.
 - be made and signed by the judge and a representative of the IFR-Member club. - a copy must be kept by the IFR Member club.

These reports must be available for and communicated to (in original language) all IFR Member clubs who would ask for a copy.

b. Minimal content of the BST.

While not asking for all tests to be completely identical, to ensure a minimal homogeneity, all tests must at least contain the following routines :

- gunshot to test if the dog is shot shy.
- crowd test (slow / fast closing group – market situation - ...)
- testing the dog's reactions on all sorts of external stimuli.
- a confrontation of the dog with persons in friendly situations
- a confrontation of the dog with persons in taxing / threatening situations (such routine is meant to check taxability and hardness but especially the ability to change drives and regain balance. This routine is acceptable if the threat is not exaggerated.)
- a confrontation of the dog with other dogs
- testing the prey drive of the dog.
- social part in traffic (the dog's ability to function in a social acceptable manner must be assessed in daily traffic.)

The following criteria must be part of judging these routines and must be recognizable in the judging forms and the report (and where opportune motivated) :

- manageability under all circumstances
- taxability – hardness
- self-assuredness and alertness
- soundness of the dog's reactions on all external stimuli
- social behaviour.

In no circumstances may the dog show to be overly aggressive or shy.

BST's may be organized with or without protection work (ZtP) but both formats must test for the same characteristics so homogeneity is ensured as much as possible and their conclusions are then of equal merit.

If there is no actual protection work in the BST, then at least a test of the dog's prey drive is to be part of the routines and this in a confrontation with strange persons. Ex. by provoking the dog with a sleeve or inviting the dog to play with a toy (bag / bite sausage, ...). A dog that lacks the necessary prey drive during such testing but shows free behaviour with absolutely no fear / mistrust / uncertainty towards the third person, must at the very least show a high liveliness and alertness to be able to pass the test.

All BST's – especially if with bite work – should hold a part that is in particular meant to judge the dog's social behaviour in normal daily traffic. Example : the social part of the BH after protection work is finished.

If a dog is totally inactive during a BST and not responsive to stimuli, then he should be declared "unable to be judged".

c. Diploma :

A uniform diploma, issued by the IFR-Board and mentioning the IFR logo, may be issued to all dogs that pass a BST on condition that :

- the member Club's breeding regulations and breed suitability test were prior approved by the IFR (cfr. ut supra).
- the judge was approved / recognized by the IFR to judge the BST.
- the member club guarantees that all conditions are met.
- control is possible on the credibility of the dog having been identified and having participated the test.

Step 3 : Recognition of International Breed Suitability.

Whereas there is need for both a more free but reliable exchange of breeding animals and a need to ensure that all breeding animals comply as homogeneous as possible to the definition of the Rottweiler by the FCI-breed standard as a healthy utility dog, it

is also clear that the above mentioned minimal criteria for national breeding regulations will not ensure a total homogeneity as national regulations and BST's may differ.

It is therefore esteemed necessary, at least opportune to recognize breeding regulations, incl. a BST that is a mandatory part of such regulations, that ensure an reliable / credible internationally recognized breed suitability of dogs.

It must be understood that this recognition of international breed suitability would be proper to the IFR only and would in no way or measure replace the breeding regulations issued by national kennel clubs or in other words, the compliance to these IFR-regulations would and must be additional to a prior compliance to national regulations.

The breeding regulations that may in our opinion lead to this additional, IFR recognized international breed suitability, should be identical to the breeding regulations of the ADRK, including passing a ZtP that is organized according to the regulations issued by the ADRK but with an additional test of social behaviour that is similar to the social part of the BH and that is to be passed / assessed after protection work.

This international ZtP can only be judged by FCI-recognized judges who have participated seminars especially organized by the IFR on the assessment of breed suitability. For this, the assistance of the ADRK is to be searched for.

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