Summary of the 2022 Breathing and Temperature Regulation Survey

Due to the reactions around the world regarding brachycephalic breeds (short skull, short muzzle) to which the Affenpinscher belongs, the Swedish Affenpinscher Club board decided to conduct a study regarding breathing and temperature regulation. These are the areas that can primarily affect brachycephalic breeds negatively.

The method used is the one developed by the Swedish Kennel Club (SKK) for brachycephalic breeds. Since the Affenpinscher is not currently covered by special rules regarding this, the test can only be carried out unofficially for our breed, and the result is therefore not registered with SKK.

The goal was about 30 dogs to get a large enough basis to see if there is a need to proceed further with the issue at this time.

The examination consists of an animal owner part, a clinical examination and a stress test with subsequent examination.

The veterinarian performing the examination must be at least a specialist in dog and cat diseases and be well familiar with the procedure.

Dogs allowed to undergo the examination must be at least 24 months old, be healthy, not have undergone surgical procedures in the respiratory tract or be pregnant.

Two examination sessions have been arranged; on January 22, 2022 at SKK's premises in Sollentuna and on November 12, 2022 at Segragymnasiet, Östra Ljungby (Skåne).

On both occasions, veterinarian Monica Stavenborn has been hired.

Here's how it works (a certificate is drawn up for each participating dog)
When the dog arrives at the examination site, it is allowed to rest for a while so that it becomes comfortable with its surroundings and in the meantime the owner fills out the dog owner section of the certificate.

- The vet checks the dog's ID number.
- The vet examines the dog's bodyshape, general condition, mucous membranes, respiratory rate and breath sounds, nostrils, circulatory system/heart rate and rectal temperature. The nose and skull are measured and compared, called the craniofacial ratio and indicates the degree of brachycephaly. Everything is noted on the certificate.
- The dog and owner go for a brisk walk on a measured track indoors or outdoors, but never on a treadmill. The walk is 1000 meters and may take a maximum of 12 minutes.
- Immediately after the walk, the veterinarian checks the dog's mucous membranes, breathing sounds and rectal temperature and notes them on the certificate.
- The dog is then allowed to rest for 15 minutes and the veterinarian again checks the mucous membranes, respiratory rate and breath sounds, heart rate, rectal temperature and notes on the certificate.

The result
Gladly enough, we can state that it does not appear that our affenpinschers have any major problems with the elements included in the survey.

Number of participating dogs: A total of 29 dogs, divided into 15 males and 14 females. The age range was between 2 years and 13.5 years.

The dogs came from 11 different breeders, 3 of the dogs were imports.

The vast majority were easy to examine and were very cooperative. With the exception of one who could not have a rectal temperature taken (according to the owner, he was worried about his "butt" after anal sac problems) and a couple who got a little excited.

Bodyshape: The bodyshape assessment is done on a scale of 1-9. 5 of the dogs were on the number 5. 11 were on the number 6 but 13 dogs were between 7-9, so we can conclude that many of our participating dogs were in a slightly high bodyshape.

Nostrils: Only two dogs were noted as having completely normal nostrils. The others were noted as having “mildly pinched in the horizontal plane,” which means they are round in shape but pinched at the bottom, so to speak. This type of mildly pinched nostrils does not cause any breathing problems or abnormal sounds.

Breathing: A couple of dogs were noted for mild respiratory noises and mild labored breathing with the comment “panting.” The other dogs were without any notes.

Temperature: 2 of the dogs were stressed before the exercise and had an increase in temperature but this was then normal after both exercise and rest. 12 of the dogs had a rectal temperature above 39 degrees. 15 dogs had a rectal temperature around 38.5 degrees.

Craniofacial ratio (ratio between nose length and skull length): Nose length and skull length were somewhat variable, the smallest ratio was 0.19 and the largest 0.48. The vast majority (19) were from 0.3 and up (0.3 is the ratio that Holland has stated as the limit value for breeding restrictions).