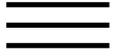


Breeding dogs for beauty and behaviour: Why scientists need to do more to develop valid and reliable behaviour assessments for dogs kept as companions.

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## Applied Animal Behaviour Science

Volume 137, Issues 1&2, February 2012, Pages 1-12

Review

Breeding dogs for beauty *and* behaviour: Why scientists need to do more to develop valid and reliable behaviour assessments for dogs kept as companions

Tammie King <sup>a</sup> ... Pauleen C. Bennett <sup>b, 1</sup>

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2011.11.016>

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### Abstract

In the past, dogs were bred to perform specific utilitarian roles. Nowadays, the dog's most common role is that of human companion. Our world has changed dramatically since the first dog breeds were developed, yet many of these existing breeds remain popular as companions. While dogs kept as companions can provide a range of benefits to humans, in some cases the relationship between dog and human can be tenuous or even dangerous. Many dogs exhibit behaviours their owners consider undesirable and these dogs may cause disruption and injury to humans and other animals. As a consequence, many are relinquished to shelters. It is proposed that some of this

consequence, many are relinquished to shelters. It is proposed that some of this unsuitable behaviour may be the result of inappropriate dog-owner matching, made more likely by the general change in the role of dogs, from working dog to companion animal, coupled with a strong tendency for modern owners and breeders to select dogs primarily on the basis of morphological, rather than behavioural, characteristics. This paper highlights how roles for dogs have changed and the importance of taking physical health and behaviour, as well as perceived beauty, into consideration when breeding and selecting dogs as companions. The measurement of behaviour and limitations of existing canine behaviour assessments are discussed. Finally, it is suggested that scientific development of accurate behavioural assessments, able to identify desirable canine behavioural traits, would provide invaluable tools for a range of dog-related organisations.



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## Keywords

Behaviour; Behaviour assessment; Companion dog; Dog breeding; Human-animal interaction; Modern dog

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