

Dear Dr. Fox: Thank you for your column that ran in the June 25

Tulsa World regarding breathing problems in flat-faced dogs. Fortunately, our local paper does not

run ads for "Munchkin cats." I remember being horrified when I saw one of

these kittens in an online video. I don't run across them anymore, so either

the media is aware, or people have quit breeding them, or both. Someone on

Facebook recently posted a picture of his hairless cat. Her face was grotesque. Her

name was "Dermis." I understand that some people take these poor animals in as

rescues. I am not talking about them. I am talking about people who deliberately

breed animals selected for deformities and the people who pay money specifically to own

a deformed animal. Please keep up the good work. " G.B., Tulsa, Oklahoma Dear

G.B.: Many people are waking up to some of the horrors caused by the

selective breeding of dogs, cats, rabbits and some other domestic animals for novel, abnormal

traits, often linked with multiple health and behavioral problems. I see this as a

perversion of whatever love or affection people may have for such creations, on the

one hand, and on the other, a selfish indulgence for ego-gratification and in some

instances, making money. These and other human activities that harm other creatures and the

natural environment have become socially accepted cultural norms. Like a life unexamined is a

life unlived, the same can be said about cultural values, which today must be

examined for the common good and the good of the commons. Dutch government's ban

on breeding flat-faced dogs: Pedigree dog critic and welfare advocate Jemima Harrison ([pedigreedogsexposed.blogspot.com](http://pedigreedogsexposed.blogspot.com))

on May 30, 2020, that the Netherlands had banned the breeding of bulldogs and

other short-faced breeds (and crossbreeds), prompting outrage from some dog-lovers " and a standing

ovation from others. Faced with continuing high-profile media attention on the plight of brachycephalics,

the Dutch government commissioned a report from the University of Utrecht entitled "Breeding Short-Muzzled

Dogs" which was published in January 2019. It provided the basis for six new

breeding criteria that Carola Schouten, minister for agriculture, introduced in March 2019. These cover

eye conformation, nostril stenosis, abnormal breathing, excess skin folds and â€” most controversially â€” that all dogs bred in the Netherlands (crossbreeds as well as purebred) must have muzzles at least one-third the length of their head (and, in time, half the length of their head). The Dutch Kennel Club announced that it will no longer issue full pedigree certificates to specific â€œextremeâ€• brachycephalic (short-faced) breeds â€” unless the parents have passed an independent vet check confirming that at least one of them has a muzzle the required length. Breeds of concern include the Affenpinscher, Boston terrier, bulldog, French bulldog, Griffon Belge, Griffon Bruxellois, Japanese Chin, King Charles spaniel, pekingese, Petit Brabancon, Pu and the Shih Tzu. Other abnormalities in these and other breeds, such as tightly curled tails, abnormal limb structure and over-long backs, also need to be rectified by changing breed standards and breeding practices. Certain dog breeds at high risk of heat-linked illness: Dogs that weigh more than 110 pounds or that have flat faces are more prone to heat-related illness than other dogs, but any dog can develop heat stroke in hot, humid weather, particularly if they are overweight or elderly, according to a study in Scientific Reports. Chow chows, bulldogs, French bulldogs, Dogue de Bordeaux and greyhounds were found to be the least heat-tolerant breeds. Full Story: HealthDay News (6/18)

Dear Dr. Fox: We had a Maine coon cat who lived for 22 years and loved my wife but never bonded with me. I had to be careful around him because any time I sneezed, he would attack me, teeth and claws. Even if he was in another room and heard me, he would rush in and go after me. How do you interpret this reaction? â€” R.N.H, Derby, Connecticut

Dear R.N.H.: I am a very loud sneezer and cannot stop it when I know a sneeze is on the way, so you have my sympathy. Possibly the first time you sneezed this cat was startled and took it as a threat. From then on, he was conditioned to respond aggressively to the challenge your sneeze represented to his psyche. The human sneeze can vary greatly from person to

person, with some intense sounds and occasional release of oral and nasal mucus possibly mimicking one cat yowling/growling and hissing/spitting with that hack-cough sound when challenging and readying to fight another cat. I would like to hear from other readers who have such curious responses from their dogs and cats when they sneeze, cough or have the hiccups. I know of one dog who would always bark anytime his human companion coughed. My interpretation was that the dog probably thought the human was barking at something, so he gave vocal support. Another dog barked every time her caregiver sneezed, and that was often during the spring pollen season! Send all mail to [animaldocfox@gmail.com](mailto:animaldocfox@gmail.com) or to Dr. Michael Fox in care of Andrews McMeel Syndication, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106. The volume of mail received prohibits personal replies, but questions and comments of general interest will be discussed in future columns. Visit Dr. Fox's website at [DrFoxOneHealth.com](http://DrFoxOneHealth.com).