

October 26th, 2023

Dear advertisers and media organisations:

The Advisory Council on Companion Animal Welfare (ACCAW) was established in 2021 to advise the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on issues impacting welfare of companion animals in Ireland.

ACCAW membership includes representatives from the DSPCA, ISPCA, Irish Kennel Club, Dogs Trust, The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, The Irish Blue Cross, Veterinary Ireland and officials from the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine.

The Advisory Council on Companion Animal Welfare requests that advertisers, media organisations, social media influencers, manufacturers and retailers refrain in future from using imagery of brachycephalic (flat-faced) dog breeds.

Brachycephalic breeds such as Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs have a high risk of severe, health and welfare issues, including difficulty breathing, eye ulceration, skin infections and spinal problems. In addition, many brachycephalic dogs have reduced life expectancy or require surgery to attain a tolerable quality of life.

ACCAW considers that use of images of brachycephalic breeds in advertising and marketing has contributed to increased popularity of brachycephalic dog breeds in Ireland. Although these breeds are often portrayed as cute, ACCAW is of the opinion that widespread use of imagery of brachycephalic animals has helped to normalise the abnormal features (flat faces, protruding eyes and excessively folded skin) of brachycephalic dogs that can have a negative impact on both animal health and welfare.

We therefore call on all responsible organisations and influencers to refrain from use of images of flat-faced dog breeds in publications, on merchandise, or to endorse or sell products and, instead, to use imagery of dogs that do not have brachycephalic characteristics, in order to help promote responsible ownership of dogs in Ireland with a high chance of excellent health.

We thank you for your co-operation in this important matter.

For further information please see link below : “Please don't buy flat-faced animals”
<https://youtu.be/XaG9nYgY4tA> , produced by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA)

Signed

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ACCAW Chairperson

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