

Tuesday 26 April 2022
Updated 5 May 2025

Finnish CKCS club goes ahead with crossbreeding program

The Finnish Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club (CKCS ry) was mandated unanimously by the club members in a biannual general meeting on April 23rd 2022 to start Cavalier King Charles spaniels crossbreeding project.

A preliminary crossbreeding committee was formed in the late summer of 2021 in order to collect information and draft together a plan for a potential crossbreeding program for Finnish Cavalier KC Spaniels. Nine months later the plan was put forward for the club members resulting in a unanimous decision to start the program.

In the general meeting in April 2022 was a chairperson chosen for a crossbreeding committee. The crossbreeding committee's goal was to carry out a transparent project that will not only help sustain our beloved breed, but to offer valuable information to other CKCS clubs and breeders around the world.

The completed and approved program has the following goal: to improve the health of the breed, particularly regarding

- Mitral Valve Disease
- syringomyelia and
- Chiari like malformation.

The Finnish CKCS Club recognises that particularly MMVD is fixated in the breed and thus traditional Cavalier x Cavalier breeding cannot eradicate the condition nor notably decrease the number of affected dogs. Crossbreeding will introduce Cavalier with genetic material from another breed that is free from these severe health conditions, increasing CKCS's genetic diversity. The breed club's plan is to carry out several litters with several breeds, in order to see long-term health results and to ensure sufficient material for further study.

Partner breed decisions have been approved by the Finnish Kennel Club's Scientific Committee. There are setted guidelines, such as the partner breed must not show any brachycephalic traits and its temperament must match that of the typical CKCS.

In Finnish crossbreeding programs, which are also ongoing in several other breeds, either due to small populations or fixed health problems, the dogs used for crossbreeding must be tested for the diseases that the crossbreeding aims to improve. In addition, the dog of the other breed must meet the health requirements and registration conditions of its own breed.

Health requirements

Shortly in Cavaliers crossbreeding the minimum requirements are for both parents

- MRI-scanning, no symptoms of syringomyelia
- a valid heart certification, "no murmur"
- an ECVO eyereport
- a knee certificate

The partner breed must have, at least, the above health tests and the dogs must be healthy. If the partner breed has mandatory health tests for its own breed, they must also be completed (e.g. genetic tests, HD, ED, IDD). Cavaliers must have known CC, DE and EFS status, either genetically tested or based on the parents being healthy.

The breeds that have been carefully studied, also their temperament, and considered, are not closely related to the Cavalier or the most common spaniel breeds. The reason for this is that the Cavalier's degree of inbreeding (COI) is around 30 and it is not necessarily possible to definitely target foreign genetics and a different model for changing e.g the skull volume from other spaniel breeds. That's how it is at the moment, but of course, the program is being refined and may change as it progresses.

Register

All eventual crossbred CKCS litters will be bred by registered CKCS breeders under the supervision of The Finnish Kennel Club and the Finnish CKCS Club. The first generation (F1) of crossing should be registered to FKC's local crossbreeding register (FIRR). Before an individual dog can be applied for transfer from the national crossbreed registry to a special registry under the FCI (a registry where the dog does not have three purebred generations), crossbred Cavaliers must be minimum over 2 years old and have undergone comprehensive health examinations as well as behavioral and conformation assessments.

A single crossbred line will include four generations, the final one being FCI-registered as purebred Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. Completing a single 4-generation line is estimated to take approximately 10 years.

In the beginning of 2025 the crossbreeding project was transferred to the CKCS Breeding and Health Committee. The official crossbreeding project for approved breeds continues under the control of the breed organization and the Finnish Kennel Club.

For further information, please contact
roturisteytysposti@cavalieryhdistys.com