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## ***Can the law help us to tackle genetic diseases that affect the welfare of dogs?***

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### **Abstract**

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*Some pedigree and other dogs suffer from serious genetic health problems. It is sad to acknowledge that this is not new. Dogs have been exposed to an increasing number of hereditary diseases for decades. Some of the diseases are the result of naturally occurring processes that result in mutations and the close linkage of undesirable traits with desirable ones, others, however, are the result of choices made by breeders and owners about what is desirable for the dog breed. An owner with a sick dog, has recourse to consumer's legislation should they wish to get some of the money back that they paid for the 'defective' animal. Consumer's law is based on EU standards, and does give the owner some opportunities to litigate. This paper explains EU legislation, and provides an overview of the opinion of (Dutch) judges regarding cases involving animals with genetic defects. Legal and veterinary perspectives do not always work together in a satisfactory manner. The need for further legislation to prevent the continued breeding of dogs with serious genetic defects is discussed.*

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