

## **Open letter to the FCI Breeding Commission from the Rhodesian Ridgeback World Congress Health Committee**

It has come to our attention that the FCI Breeding Committee is proposing a ridgeless variety of the Rhodesian Ridgeback. The Rhodesian Ridgeback World Congress Health Committee considers it our duty to advocate for appropriate breed organizations to have a voice in any changes affecting our breed and breed standard, as well as for transparency and dialogue in any processes involving the same.

Let there please be no confusion about this: **The Rhodesian Ridgeback clubs of the world – including the parent club in Zimbabwe as well as the South African club – are singularly opposed to the idea of a ridgeless variety.**

**((# CLUBS)) Rhodesian Ridgeback clubs from around the world have affixed their names to the attached formal objection of FCI's breeding commission proposed ridgeless variety.**

The research paper that the FCI relies on for its argument for a ridgeless variety represents only a first attempt at understanding the underlying genetics involved in forming the ridge, but does not provide direct scientific proof of a causal link between the presence of the ridge and dermoid sinus incidence. It also does not explain the steady decrease of dermoid sinus rates across the globe, which now stand at only 1.7 percent within surveyed FCI breed clubs (*please see attached documentation*)

In addition, we cannot dismiss the breed's hallmark ridge as just a cosmetic feature: Ridges and whorling clearly provided a benefit to the canines of southern Africa, or they would not have been retained and cherished by local hunters in the naturally breeding indigenous canine population

In short, the equation is not as simple as ridge = dermoid.

The present FCI standard does not disqualify the breeding of ridgeless dogs, and breeders are free to breed them. At the 2016 Rhodesian Ridgeback World Congress, where more than 200 breeders and judges from around the world participated, a formal declaration was issued that:

*"The 2016 Rhodesian Ridgeback World Congress recognizes that breeders are autonomous and are the best arbiters of what should happen in their whelping boxes. To that end, the 2016 RRWC strongly encourages breed clubs to avoid punitive language in their codes of ethics or other official documents regarding the breeding of healthy Rhodesian Ridgebacks with only cosmetic faults, and strongly encourages openness and honesty between breeders."*

**We respectfully request that the FCI acknowledge the grave concern and opposition present in the Ridgeback community to the proposal of a ridgeless variety, and provide us a seat at the table to ensure that truly informed decisions are made about the breed to which many of us have devoted our lives.**

We look forward to your response. Committee co-chair Helle Lauridsen can be reached at [helle.lauridsen@gmail.com](mailto:helle.lauridsen@gmail.com)