



*Hinke van het Bossche Front (Ch Paramount Stylish Smooth x Fokeline van het Bossche Front).  
Photo Ineke van Beekum*

Going for smooth and healthy

## *Outsider becomes insider*

*Janneke Leunissen-Rooseboom (the Netherlands, kennel name Het Bossche Front) was completely happy with a position at the Chow sideline. Being involved in saving the smooth was enough a challenge.*

*Feeling not completely happy, she tried to sneak somewhat away from the Chow world, seeking involvement in another breed. But this escape worked only temporarily. Now she is back, in the middle, and one cannot deny: as an insider.*

*For six editions of The World of Chows, together with Bas Bosch, she acted as the editor-in-chief.*

*BBPress is partly responsible for the turn her life took towards the Chow, and asked her to write her story for this seventh The World of Chows edition.*

*Text: Janneke Leunissen*

To my amazement we have landed in the breed Chow Chow. As a school girl I started to get interested in cynology. My father took me to the Rotterdam dog show and I was immediately fascinated by this world. I studied dog breeds, in books and real life. At a young age I already recognised most breeds and was thinking about which breed to choose when I could have a dog of my own.

I must admit: never thought about the Chow. I fancied Terriers – especially the Welsh and the Irish – as well



*'s-Hertogenbosch 1975: Leo and Janneke leaving the show venue with their first Chow Zol-Che van Mongolië (Ch Wamchow Goe-Neng x Onyx van Mongolië), who won CAC/CACIB*



*Maastricht, early 1980: Janneke with Newfoundland Baldur van de Zonnedaauw and the Chows Anne van het Bossche Front (puppy), his mother Warnsborn Shi-Kari and in front black smooth Laika vom Haus Herth*



*First Dutch Smooth Chow meeting, 1980, in Sonsbeek, Arnhem. Organized by Ms Chr. A. Veldhuis, attended by Dutch smooth owners and smooth Chow fanciers from France, Belgium and Germany. At the right Janneke with Warsborn Shi-Kari and Schipperke Nomke van de Noord-Oost-Hoek*

as the Schnauzer, the Schipperke, the Curly Coated Retriever, and the Newfoundland. When, in 1970, Leo and I had our first house with a garden, we got an adult Newfoundland male. In his former home he had a mate, a German Shepherd, and soon we could see he longed for doggy company again. That was OK, but no German Shepherd for us, also no second Newfoundland: two of that breed would make a bit too much dog, at that time. Then what? The dog books were opened again and the descriptions of the temperament were studied. The new dog should be happy with himself, so no working breed. We did not have that much time for dog entertainment, as in that period we both combined a job with a university study.

The Chow Chow seemed to come up best to the requirements. We choose the breed for its temperament. I did not like its looks. This did not change when we met Chows (later I learned their very famous names) at Mr and Mrs Van de Wouw's place. "What are we doing here?" was my main thought. But of course did not say that, now I had Leo at a place where we would get a puppy. Our black rough Zol-Che van Mongolië ('Solke') was really adorable and stole our heart. His temperament was as promised. Only later we learned one element was not according to our list of wishes. Never I got a decent answer on my request about hunting instinct, and I forgot about it when we went to see the pups. Solke was a hunter, indeed. As were all Chows who came after him. Now I am happy I did not know. Better not to know everything beforehand. Otherwise it would not have been a Chow for us in 1971.

### *GOING SMOOTH*

At the Dutch Chow Chow Club Clubshow in 1973 – the second Clubshow we attended with Solke – five smooths were entered. In the pause they were joined by a few more, for a presentation given by Ms Christina Veldhuis.

Ms Veldhuis knew the smooth Chow from her youth in the Dutch East Indies. She told us that this tiny group were some of the last smooth Chows in the world, and the variety was on the verge of extinction. I was moved by Ms Veldhuis' story and by the looks of these dogs. To my taste, they were so much more beautiful than the big winners. Later on I understood these smooths were not bred for competition in the ring. The show winners were what I thought to be overtyped 'hairy Bulldogs', and the smooths real Chows, like Chow VIII, the model of the original standard.

Ms Veldhuis' presentation won me for the breed, and I knew my next dog would be a smooth. I am the kind of person who gets inspired hearing a difficult job must be done.

As at that time two dogs was a maximum for us to keep, there was no hurry. But I kept contact with Ms Veldhuis and talked with her at every show we met. I told her I would like to contribute to her aim to save the smooth, and was ready to show and breed a smooth Chow.



*Belgian Chow Chow Club show 1981, Ecaussines. Eric Egerton makes Warsborn Shi-Kari BOB*

In May 1978 Ms Veldhuis bred a litter, in which one bitch was born. "That puppy is mine", I thought. Ms Veldhuis had other ideas. The bitch was first supposed not to be smooth (but she was), and later on she had entropion (but she hadn't). But no, no, I could not get her. With all my enthusiasm I insisted, and in the long run Ms Veldhuis revised her views and allowed me to have her. And so we got our wonderful Warnsborn Shi-Kari (Pandee's New World Ambassador x Warnsborn Binna).

Later on I heard that Ms Veldhuis – who founded Pug breeding and the Pug club in Holland, surely we shared the love for canine challenges – sold her pups to excellent pet homes only. No way a breeder or exhibitor would be able to buy a puppy from her.

I have been the only person ever whom she entrusted with a Warnsborn puppy knowing I had serious interests in supporting the breed. Lucky me!



*Warnsborn Shi-Kari (Pandee's New World Ambassador x Warnsborn Binna), 1978-1992. Photo Ron van Driel*

#### *FOUNDATION BITCH*

In December 1979 Warnsborn Shi-Kari had her litter. Together with Ms Veldhuis we had been looking for an unrelated smooth male to mate her to. But there was of course not much choice, and no one fulfilled our wishes. So her uncle Warnsborn Mombo (Emir von Haus Herth x Ukwong Tiga) mated her. This would not been allowed

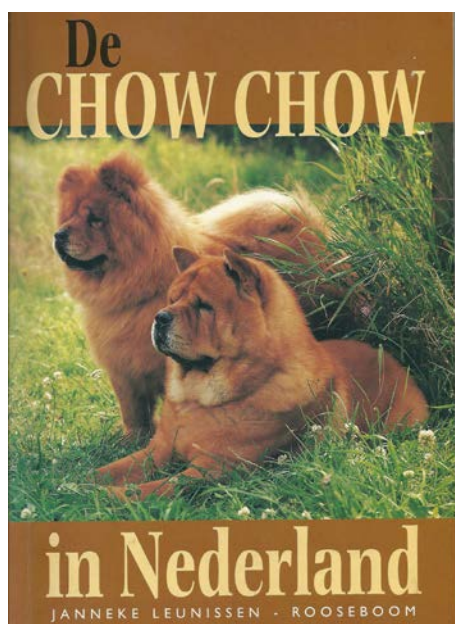
these days. The litter consisted of 2-2 smooths and 1-0 rough. The interest in smooth at the time was very low, but we were lucky too have serious owners waiting for the bitches and one smooth boy went to live with his father. There was however no interest for the second smooth male. So we could do no other than keep him.



*Warnsborn Shi-Kari and Anne van het Bossche Front with Schipperke Nomke van de Noord-Oost-Hoek, Winter 1982*



*Warnsborn Shi-Kari (left) and Anne van het Bossche Front on the cover of Chow Life, 1984.  
Donated by The Society for the Preservation of the Smooth Chow Chow*



*Cover of the breed monography by Janneke, published by BBPress in 1998. The smooth on the cover photo is Bilbo Baggins van het Bossche Front*

This Anne van het Bossche Front (1979-1992) proved to be very important for smooth breeding in our country. Without him it would look different today. Kari never had a second litter because of cysts in the ovaries. Anne became our link to the future.

Looking back, I wonder how often good things result from what is experienced as a drawback the moment it happens. A lot in life just goes as it goes, unplanned, and you have no idea how lucky you are at the moment it happens. Anne's stay was such a kind of luck.

Our youngest generation – Ploon, Viking, Wichertsje van het Bossche Front – all have Anne (and of course Kari) back in their pedigree.

#### *MENTOR*

Ms Veldhuis was a very clever, educated and well to do lady. Not shy at all and very outspoken in her taste: she absolutely detested Chow overtypes. These dogs, “which whom you can chase children to bed”, were not according to the standard, she said, and the type was detrimental to their well-being.

Although she was respected as a person – she was appointed as a honorary member of the Dutch breed club – her opinion was more or less ‘outcast’. At that time the Dutch breeders were famous for exactly the type she criticized.

I shared her ideas about type and health. And I am happy to have lived long enough to experience that she has got it right. Health and well-being matter nowadays, and she was not at all a fool to plead this.

#### *AMBASSADOR*

In the 1980’s I participated in, and later took over, Ms Veldhuis’ informal task as ‘ambassador for the smooth Chow’.

It was the time before the internet. No e-mail, no surfing, no search machines.

Communication went mainly by writing letters, sharing images by printed photo’s, names and addresses were found by reading or meeting.

Ms Veldhuis of course knew a lot of owners. The partner of UK judge and breeder Anita Westlake helped me to find details about new smooths and their owners all over Europe, which he discovered accompanying



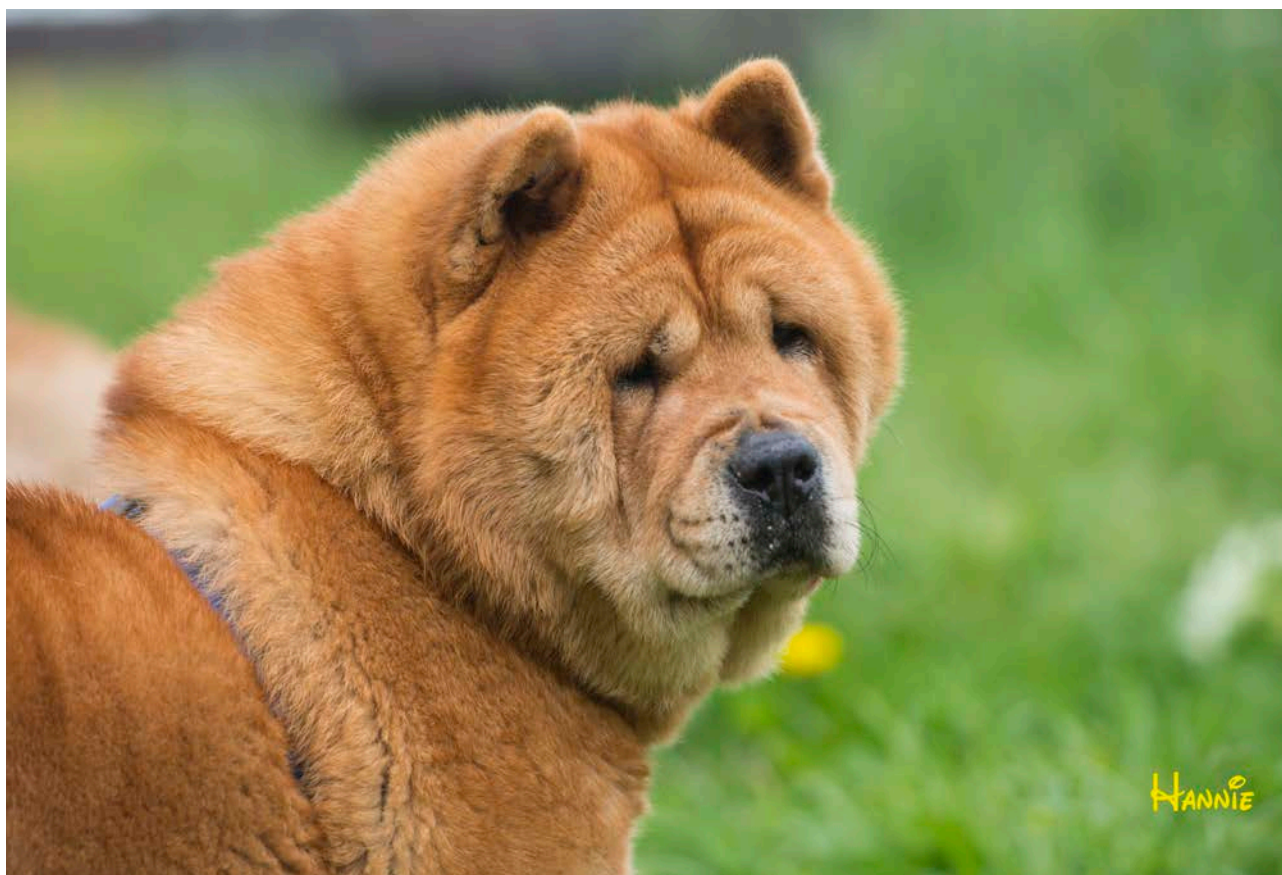
*Bilbo Baggins van het Bossche Front (Brosscroft Harvy Pooka x Ciao Jenny Wren) as a puppy (1990), with Curly Coated Retriever Ch Serafine van het Bossche Front*

Anita on judging trips. More people helped me sharing ‘discoveries’.

I contacted new smooth owners and asked them to see their smooth as a precious dog, and please, breed or show it.



*Fokeline van het Bossche Front (Ch Walk on Ice of the Royal Club x Eb-be-Hout van de Rekels), in 2005 with her puppy Isidorus (by Ch Sweet Talkin Romeo of the Royal Club)*



*Ch Ploon van het Bossche Front (Ch Chi Ming Zung Tzung Le x Ch Krijntje van het Bossche Front).  
Photo Hannie Warendorf*

At that time smooths often were seen as a ‘by-product’, an accident. For instance Mr Eric Egerton (Ukwong), who always had a smooth in the kennel, to support its survival, gave smooth pups for free in the neighbourhood.

During this most interesting period we met, and sometimes visited, smooth lovers in Switzerland, Germany, France, UK, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and with some of them, I still have good contact.

I also got to know people in USA. The smooth over there was written out of the standard. A group was founded to do PR for the smooth and to support its re-introduction in the standard. Leo and I were invited to become co-founders of that ‘Society for the Preservation of the Smooth Chow Chow’, which I have experienced as a great honour.

We organised international meetings here in Holland for smooth Chows and their owners, for PR reasons and to check the dogs and let the owners meet each other.

#### *SHOW*

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We showed Kari and Anne, and learned about ring politics. Often Kari and Anne were placed: a strange model behind the number 3 or 4 position. But there were also judges who at that time did not know the smooth at all, and gave Kari

and Anne a low qualification to get rid of the problem. A friend with a smooth even once was sent out of the ring: her Chow was no real Chow. Or we heard: “Your Chow is the best in the ring, but you understand: I can not make it number one.” What we had to understand, was that a choice for the best dog would hurt the interests of the judge for a subsequent judging appointment. We however once had our moment of glory, in Ecaussines in 1981, when Eric Egerton judged the Belgian Chow Chow Club Championship show. Kari won BOB and CAC, and she and her son Best Brace and there were other competition wins which I have forgotten, but the load of prizes we had to take home was amazing. Kari won another BOB in Mouscron, Belgium, in 1984, and both Kari and Anne won several resCAC/IB’s. So in fact they did rather well, at that time, when competition in the Chow ring was a lot more heavy than today.

I still show, and often with pleasure. But during our first years I learned the relativity of this game. Good show results are nice, and winning is really great, but I know the value. A good score from an expert judge is really a credit. But how often does one meet a real expert? Often judges seem to be insecure, and see a relation between the quality of the dog and the suit or the familiar face of



*Ch Krijntje van het Bossche Front. Headshot published in FCI magazine 2, as example of an excellent Chow head.  
Photo Ineke van Beekum*



*Ch Germke Grazyna van het Bossche Front (Ch Sweet Talkin Romeo of the Royal Club x Parmelia Kuukivi).  
Photo Ineke van Beekum*

the handler. Handling is important, of course, a show is a beauty contest. But a well handled dog is not the same as a well constructed dog, and it is the latter the judge should place first, to my esteem. But I better keep silent as judging is not my job. I once wanted to become one and did all the education needed. But concluded it will not be my passion to spend the weekend with somebody else's dogs. I prefer to be with my own. The education was useful anyway. As a breeder, one must be able to judge your own dogs, to know their positive and negative points.

#### *CHOW WORLD*

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Although I loved the smooth Chow and liked the smooth Chow people, I felt not that much at home in the Chow world in general, because of the mainstream preference for type and lack of interest in health. In fact I was most happy with my sideline position and did not long to get involved.

In 1983 we had moved out of town, to our first house in the country, with a big garden. And got a bit more time. Kari and also our Schipperke were mated, but stayed empty. I took my chance to get a puppy from another favourite breed: the Curly Coated Retriever. We got



*Parmelia Kuukivi (Ch. Ming-Bear Velvet Trigger x Ch. Parmelia Velvet Ramona), 1996-2010,  
b: Päivi Parmala, Finland.  
Photo Alice van Kempen*

Darelyn Quassia from UK. The Curly Coated Retriever was a rather unknown breed here in Holland. Indeed, another PR challenge for me.

Quassia was the start of our twenty years involvement in this gorgeous breed. Four litters were bred (R, S, T and U), and several titles won. A great time. The Retriever world was like a warm bath for me. Retriever people have quite different opinions about health than Chow people, and also the atmosphere in a working breed differs. Not only beauty counts here, but brains as well. I liked that.

I tried to escape a bit from the Chows to the Curly world. And I think it would have succeeded, had not the dam of our wonderful last ‘beauty & brains’ litter proved to be epileptic when her pups were one year old. That was a shock I did not overcome.

Exit Curly dreams. Back to Chow reality.

### *BACK TO BASICS*

In the meantime, and to my great luck, cooperation with some Chow people had been excellent. We were so happy to meet Jet Vermeulen (kennelname ‘van de Rekels’) who allowed our males Anne and later Bilbo Baggins (from our

second litter, born in 1990) to mate some of her bitches – our Bilbo-daughters Dy-Na-Mies and Eb-Be-Hout van de Rekels were bred by her – and also a few other breeders supported the smooth by letting their rough bitches mated by our smooth boys, among them Roswitha Kukowski (Ca-Caliban) in Germany and Menno de Jager (Anhwei) in the Netherlands.

In 1998 Bas Bosch asked me to write a book about the Chow Chow in the Netherlands. I was not pleased at all, as this meant I had to connect to the Chow world. Objective descriptions should be made about things I personally had quite an outspoken subjective opinion about. Did I want this? No. But Bas Bosch convinced me. And fortunately Menno and Riet de Jager (Anhwei), and Martha Visser (You Two), who were far more involved in Chow history than I ever had been, wanted to support me.

Bas was right, it was a most interesting job indeed. After that, I got involved in *The World of Chows*, first edition was the 2000 one. And I became, for ten years, partner in BBPress and made several more *The World of Chows* books. It meant a total involvement in the breed, without restrictions.



*Ch Magnus van het Bossche Front (Hidde van het Bossche Front x Ch Germke Grazyna van het Bossche Front).  
Photo Ineke van Beekum*

### COMMITTEE WORK

Committee work is something I like to do. My task usually is the real worker, in other words the secretary. My first job was for a local club, when we lived in the south of Holland. Then I was a member in the Committee of the Schipperke Club. One year (1985) I was in the Dutch Chow Club committee, but left when I realised I was there at the wrong time. My theme for the breed in general was (and still is) 'health'. We got support from Professor Bouw of Utrecht Veterinary Faculty, but the response at that time from the fellow Chowists was most unpleasant. I got strongly involved in Curly life. Later on this was awarded by a honorary membership of the Curly Club.

At the moment, more or less to my own surprise, and by an unexpected development in the breed club in 2011, I am back in the Dutch Chow Club Committee. This time in a very good team, and at the right time. The Raad van Beheer, the public opinion, members of the club, everything and everybody now is focused on health. My personal ambitions and the spirit of the time now resonate, so to say, and it feels good.

### HET BOSSCHE FRONT

After a slow start – A-litter in 1979 with Warnsborn Shi-Kari as the dam, B-litter in 1990 with Canadian import Ciao Jenny Wren as the dam – we got more time for Chow breeding after we moved from Limburg in the

south, to Beekbergen in the centre of Holland, in 1995. There our C-, D- and F- litter were born out of Eb-Be-Hout van de Rekels (a Bilbo Baggins daughter and Anne-great-granddaughter). She was a homozygous smooth as Anne van het Bossche Front had been, so all pups were smooth.

Finnish import cream smooth Parmelia Kuukivi, bred by friend Päivi Parmala, arrived in 1996 and whelped our E- and G-litter.

We were so lucky to be allowed for some time to have matings by dogs bred and owned by Kitty and Ben Buurman (Royal Club) and these dogs have brought us a lot.

Once in Pieterburen, in 2003, we really got the time for breeding and concentrated on the Chow alone.

Germke Grazyna, Kuukivi's daughter by Ch Sweet Talkin Romeo of the Royal Club, gave us five litters (J, L, M, O and Q).

Fokeline, a daughter of Ch Walk On Ice of the Royal Club and Eb-Be-Hout whelped two (H and I).

Hidde and Hinke (Ch Paramount Stylish Smooth x Fokeline van het Bossche Front) have been very important for us. Hinke, so we learned later on, suffered from cysts in several parts of her reproduction system, but fortunately in 2005 she whelped one puppy, Krijntje. So much time and costs were involved to get this only daughter, and so charming she looked, that we did not want to sell her and to our luck we've kept her, 'forgiving' her that she is a



*Leo Leunissen with pups of the M-litter and their grandmother Parmelia Kuukivi.  
Photo Ineke van Beekum*



*Janneke with mother and daughter Krijntje and Ploon van het Bossche Front.  
Photo Hannie Warendorf*

rough. Krijntje's head figured in the article 'Special Breed Specific Instructions (BSI) regarding exaggerations in pedigree dogs' by Göran Bodegård, Chairman of the BSI group of the Swedish Kennel Club, in FCI Newsletter nr 2 and was indicated as 'excellent', in a row of four, from 'good' to 'grotesque'. Krijntje whelped three litters: N, P and SS. Oopke Germkes was the mother of our RR-litter, Ploon of the TT and V litter and Quinta was the mother of the UU's, Renske Rufina of the W's.

I feel very happy to have been able to keep all those years to the type I already liked in the 1970's. A type which keeps everything in the middle, overdone in nothing, but with allure, a head with typical scowl expression, and a good front and neck.

In many of our present Chows I still see Kari and Anne. Especially proud I am to have bred the bitches Germke Grazyna, Krijntje and Ploon, all three champions, and Hidde, our beloved male who recently died and still is missed, sire of the J, M, O and Q litter.

We have always been fortunate to have lived in big houses. Since the eighties, also with big gardens – we like gardening – and the dogs always have lived with us in the

house. No kennels at all. Their number has been around eight to ten, for about thirty years.

When we keep a puppy, the idea is to breed and show it. But when it is not meeting our high standards for breeding as an adult, this does not mean it can not stay. Our main relationship with the dogs is one of love, not of profit.

It would have been much easier, and economically surely a lot wiser, to keep the group smaller. But when you breed – and breeding is the most fantastic part of this hobby – there always will be a kind of abundance of dogs, a little too much of them, but that's the game. Although we should consider to go down in numbers – our age and ratio dictate that – two Schipperke pups joined the team in 2014, as well as two rough Chow pups.

Yes, roughs, indeed, as these were to our esteem the best of their litters. And why not? The smooth does not need us anymore. And now that I am pensioned, coat care time must be available.

There will be more breeding (we hope to fulfill the alphabet, at least) but maybe not so much more keeping. But a life without dogs: we can not imagine how that would look like.

### *HAPPY END?*

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Looking back I can say that I feel very lucky to have witnessed the smooth coming out of the danger zone. For a long time already. Most present day new smooth owners probably have no idea about the narrow escape the variety made in only thirty, forty years ago. Smooth is now 'common'. And so it should be.

Looking back the other way I must say I am still very worried about health. Indeed, the times have changed since my start in cynology. Finally cynology became aware of the critique that pedigree dog breeding should make a turn.

The public discussion about pedigree dogs inspired the Dutch Kennel Club a couple of years ago to start with a serious health policy program. The breed clubs now get serious support in this respect, which feels very well. Finally people like me feel to be at the right time at the right place. I am very happy to be able to have this experience.

What still worries me, is that unfortunately large parts of the Chow community, national and international, seem to be unaware about what is going on. And that we lose precious time.

It is such a pity that otherwise dedicated breeders do not use the expertise we have available nowadays to breed for health. Why should one want to stay ignorant? I can not understand why people want to breed the 'Russian-roulette' way. Knowing the real facts about your dog is not always pleasant, that is for sure. But isn't it far better not to breed, than to breed pups with a hereditary taint, the consequence of which will be taken not by the breeder, but by innocent puppy buyers?

Maybe I will live long enough to experience, one day, that also in this respect a step forwards has been taken. So many good things have happened, why not also this one?



*Chairman Gerard Jipping of the Dutch Kennel Club (Raad van Beheer) awards Janneke in 2013 with the Raad van Beheer Golden Pin. Photo Peter Wellinga*