

Dear congress members, dear Afghan Hound friends,

My name is Willem Buitenkamp and chairman of the organizing committee. In their name and on behalf of our association, the NVOW, I'm very pleased to welcome you all to the 10th Afghan Hound World congress. 25 Years after the first one in the UK, a fantastic initiative at that time when the Afghan Hound was a popular breed, we landed in Amsterdam after having had congresses in various parts of the world.

I'm very happy to see quite a few oldies in the room who, like me, visited many congresses but I see also participants for whom this congress is the first one. It cannot be said enough that a congress like this caters the social aspect, the networking possibilities and increased knowledge of the breed. In the social media we can spot many names of Afghan Hound fanciers who show the world their interest in the breed but most of them are not here today. A pity; they are going to miss so much.

As organization we discussed quite a long time about which subjects to bring to the congress. Not easy. Some topics deserve, so to speak, a place on the agenda of each congress, others have been discussed to almost the end. Also the transfer from a rather solid numbered breed to where we are now, not so large anymore, had –in our opinion- to play a role. Taking the decreasing breeding numbers in mind, you find some regional ones in your congress map, and forgetting the breeding peaks at the end of the past century, we thought that it is time to do an Afghan Hound self-examination by means of a SWOT-analysis. Tomorrow during the Open Forum, visions, standpoints, disagreements or new ideas can find a place in the discussion thereabout.

That is related to the title of this congress, i.e. Back to Basics, a brainteaser in itself! Everybody could have an interpretation about it. It meant for us organizers that it should be good to realize where we are coming from, think it over and do we foster our heritage enough? A reason why you will see a lot of pictures of older times during this congress and they could help defining the mindset for discussion. For us it meant as well that the congress title can be related to the 'fit for function' issue. Are our today's Afghan Hounds still fit for function? The FCI tries to do something on this subject. In 2013, the general

meeting in Helsinki decided to publish their opinion to judges about this subject. The name of the leaflet is: FCI BASIC STATEMENT FOR SHOW JUDGES; subtitle, DOGS FIT FOR THEIR ORIGINAL FUNCTION. A few abstracts from this leaflet: The task of a show judge is to help preserve the inner and outer characteristics of each breed. Next one: dogs must always be fit for the function for which they were **originally meant, developed and bred for** and the last one: Dogs have to be fit for their **original** function at all times.

Wow, isn't that something? Realize what this text implies! Judges and of course in their slipstream, breeders should think about the original function and breed and judge accordingly. Food for thought and discussion. When not completed this congress then maybe a topic for the next one.

I wish you –in all aspects- a very successful congress and hope that it will contribute to enjoy our wonderful breed for the many years to come.