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In the UK, people have a consciousness of their nation being a leader. For instance, they call their dog organization “The Kennel Club”, while here in Japan we call ours “The Japan Kennel Club”. In a broadcast from two years ago in January, the BBC criticized certain rules within the Club’s standards that can be judged as tantamount to animal abuse. One typical example related to bulldogs which, in most cases, are unable to give birth naturally. A Cesarean section needs to be performed in order to deliver the puppies. The BBC criticized this practice as animal abuse.

As you may know, the world’s largest dog show, Crufts, is organized by the Kennel Club. The show is held in March every year. Being a very traditional and high-caliber dog show, there is always some prince or other member of the Royal Family in attendance. However, in the wake of the BBC’s broadcast, the Royal Family has let it be known that none of its members will be attending Crufts in the future. The Kennel Club also suffered other set-backs including the withdrawal of several pet food makers from their sponsorship of Crufts.

The Club took the criticism about its dog breed standards sometimes amounting to animal abuse very seriously. It decided to make changes to the standards in the interests of breeding healthier dogs. As a result, with considerable effort, the club has made significant modifications relating to nearly 20 dog breeds.

On the other hand, The FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale: the world’s largest international canine organization, with over 80 member countries) holds standards for some 350 breeds. The FCI has decided that the country of origin for each breed should set the

standards for that respective breed. As many breeds of dog are native to the UK, including the bulldog, the FCI has accepted the modified standards. At the same time, it has appealed to dog show judges not to give too much attention to certain exaggerated body features when they are making their assessments. So, overall, there is a movement in judging for considering overall canine health and giving the top marks to the healthiest individuals. So we are now, at least, in an era in which our work as a kennel club is no longer limited to checking that dogs are of pure stock, improving breeds, and issuing pedigree certificates.

It is against this background that I am chairing today’s workshop. In this booklet, it states that Prof. Ohta of Azabu University is scheduled to deliver a talk at today’s workshop. However, as Prof. Ohta is unavailable today, Prof. Uchiyama, also of Azabu University, has kindly agreed to talk to us in his place. After Prof. Uchiyama’s talk, there will be two other speakers, namely, Prof. Hayashi of Tokyo University of Agriculture and Mr. Ishiyama, the Vice President of Mars Japan Limited, which is sponsoring this conference. These speakers will provide us with today’s topics.

We are allocating 30 or 40 minutes for each speaker to deliver their talks and then we will move on to free discussion plus a Q&A session, which will take up the final hour. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody in advance for your cooperation. So, Prof. Uchiyama, please start your talk.