

**Kennel Club Press Release:
REGISTRATION OF MERLE FRENCH BULLDOGS**

At the request of the French Bulldog breed clubs, the Kennel Club has agreed that it will no longer accept the registration of any merle French Bulldogs from 1st January 2013. Coat colour in the French Bulldog is complex because a range of colours is acceptable. Merle patterning - patches of lighter colour appearing in the coat - is the result of the M gene in the dog. There are two alleles of this gene: M (merle) and m (non-merle), with merle (M) being dominant to non-merle (m). In some breeds, the effect of the merle allele (M) is termed 'dapple'. Unfortunately, the effects of the merle allele (M) are not confined to coat patterning and it is known that there can be an increased risk of impaired hearing and sight associated with it, particularly in dogs that are homozygous for M (dogs that carry two copies of the M allele). In addition, the merle colour is not a naturally occurring colour in this breed, and therefore the Kennel Club General Committee has agreed that it will no longer accept the registration of any merle French Bulldog puppies from this date. For further information, please contact Gary Johnson, Breeder Services Manager for the Kennel Club, at gary.johnson@thekennelclub.org.uk. ENDS
1st November 2012