

Annual Report: Health and Welfare Committee

To: The Board of the World Cat Congress (WCC)

Date: February 26th, 2026

Subject: Six-Month Progress Report and Strategic Roadmap

1. Introduction and Governance

The Health and Welfare Committee has been officially established following a unanimous vote during the WCC meeting in Hong Kong in August 2025. This inaugural report is submitted after just six months of activity to align with the administrative deadlines for the upcoming meeting in April 2026.

Each WCC member association has appointed two dedicated representatives. This has created a broad, heterogeneous group with robust expertise, fostering a high-level exchange of ideas that will provide significant, long-term benefits for feline welfare globally.

2. Operational Challenges

The primary challenge remains logistical: our members are distributed across all continents, making virtual meetings exceptionally complex due to time zone differences. Despite this, the Committee has maintained momentum through structured email exchanges and has successfully held its first online meeting.

3. Technical Initiatives

3.1 State of the Art: Dominant Blue Eyes (DBE)

At the request of the WCC Secretary, the Committee has produced a comprehensive report on the global status of the **Dominant Blue Eyes (DBE)** trait among the Members.

- **Findings:** There is a shared concern among all Members regarding the potential health implications of this trait.
- **Action:** Most associations have implemented containment strategies pending further genetic data. The full report is attached.

3.2 Scientific Repository

To streamline the evaluation of emerging research, the Committee is developing a review sheet, a standardized form for the assessment and dissemination of scientific articles.

- **Objective:** Create a shared repository of neutral, peer-reviewed material to monitor emerging issues, such as the recently reported skin pathology in the Lykoi breed. Circulation of scientific updates will be faster and widespread diffused among all Members.
- **Impact (case study):** Since the Lykoi is not universally recognized yet, this shared repository will allow each Member to make evidence-based decisions, avoiding the duplication of efforts in data evaluation and ensuring that the eventual breed recognition is based on shared scientific data. This could be considered as an opening action to evaluate the validity of such a tool and approach among all WCC Members jointly.

4. Strategic Initiative: establishing a Welfare Baseline

A critical point emerged from our recent meeting: the WCC must take a proactive, science-based lead in defining what constitutes a "healthy cat."

- **The Challenge:** Legislation worldwide is intensifying its focus on "hot topics" such as naked breeds and brachycephaly. Currently, many animal welfare groups base their assertions on "gut feelings" or anecdotal evidence. Conversely, the Cat Fancy often lacks the standardized scientific data necessary to counter these claims effectively.
- **The Proposal:** It is vital to establish a dedicated working group to develop a **Standardised Welfare Assessment Protocol** for pedigreed cats worldwide. This framework—inspired by tools like "Innate Health" used for dogs in the UK—would allow the WCC to provide authorities with high-quality, comparable data.
- **Goal:** Ensuring that future legislation is informed by the expertise of the Cat Fancy and hard science, rather than external, uninformed restrictions.

5. Communication and Visibility

The Committee aims to better highlight the massive commitment of its Member associations to feline Health.

- **Digital Strategy:** The current static WCC page should be replaced by a modern, content-rich platform, including active social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) to showcase our foundational commitment to cat welfare.

6. Financial Sustainability and Sponsorship

To fund these initiatives without straining the WCC budget, we request official authorization from the Board to explore sponsorship opportunities.

- **Approach:** We will prioritize partners aligned with our ethical values (e.g., Royal Canin, pharmaceutical industries, or genetic testing laboratories) to maximize our impact while maintaining WCC independence.

7. Conclusion

In just six months, we have moved from establishment to active strategic planning. We believe the shift toward standardized welfare protocols is essential for the survival and protection of our breeds. We thank the Board for their trust and all Members for their active participation.

Respectfully submitted,

For the Health and Welfare Committee,

Sara Moroni, Chair