

KING SHEPHERD

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The build of this breed is slightly long, robust and muscular; the structure is solid. The proportion between height and length, and the angulations of the bone elements, must be in such a relationship as to guarantee easy trotting and ruggedness. The coat should be highly weather-resistant. The sexual characteristics should be well marked. A dog who fulfills the requirements of the standard should give the impression of strength and vigor, of intelligence and agility, and should also be well proportioned. The general behavior of the dog and his movements should indicate complete physiological soundness--a quality which makes the King Shepherd particularly fitted to carry out his tasks as a working dog continuously and willingly.

His natural exuberance should be tempered by obedience and by the pleasure he takes in carrying out any task, adapting himself with good will to every situation. In the defense of his master and his master's property the King Shepherd should show courage and hardiness in his role of protector. At the same time he must be an agreeable companion in familiar company, vigilant, faithful and friendly toward children and other animals. He should also be at ease in the presence of strangers, and in such behavior he will give an impression of self-confidence and natural nobility.

ANGULATION AND GAIT

The King Shepherd is a trotter, and consequently his gait is diagonal (which means that he has two diagonally opposite feet on the ground while the other two diagonally opposite feet are off the ground). His limbs should be harmonious and angulated in such a way as to make it possible for him to move his hind legs as far forward as the midpoint of the trunk, and to extend the forelegs to the same degree, without noticeable displacement of the backline. The proper proportion between height and length and an adequate and well-proportioned length of the limbs permit a trot that covers a lot of ground, stays close to the ground, and gives the impression of easy movement with minimum effort. In a dog that trots with his head pushed forward, and with his tail slightly raised, the movement is homogeneous and tranquil; as he moves, his back describes a gently waving line which extends harmoniously from the point of the ears to the tip of the tail, following the nape and the back.

BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTER

The chief qualities of an outstanding dog are: a well-balanced nervous system, readiness, lack of inhibition, vigilance, faithfulness, characteristics which together make the King Shepherd such a fine working dog and, particularly, a watch dog, companion, guard dog and sheep-herder.

HEAD

The head is in good proportion to the body and moderately wide between the eyes. The forehead, seen from in front and in profile, is only slightly rounded, with or without a edial furrow which is moderately well defined. The cheeks are not too full, are moderately curved and when viewed from the top should be much in the form of a "V", well filled in under the eyes. There should be plenty of substance in foreface, with a good depth from top to bottom. The muzzle is powerful and in proportion to the rest of the head--neither extremely long nor too blunt and neither too narrow nor too broad---and with a well defined stop. The lips are well drawn and the teeth are very strong, with the incisors meeting in a scissors bite; the jaws must never be undershot or overshot.

Full dentition is not required. However if 2 dogs are equal in every other respect the dog with full dentition is to be preferred.

EARS

Of medium size, moderately wide at the base, set on high and pointed; they are carried erect and slightly forward. The ears should be thick and firm and should not be too large or too small in proportion to the head. The ideal carriage should be one in which the center lines of the ears, viewed from the front, are 5-10 degrees from parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground. Kite ears (those that point east and west, away from the center of the head, more than ten degrees off center) are considered a serious fault. Dogs with hanging ears or clipped ears are to be eliminated (puppies up to the age of 4-6 months, and sometimes older, do not carry their ears completely erect).

EYES

Of medium size and almond-shaped set somewhat aslant and not protuberant, as nearly as possible matching the surrounding coat in shades of brown, and from very light to dark are acceptable. The expression should be one of liveliness and intelligence.

NECK

Robust, of medium length joining the head with sharp angles. Neck muscles are well-developed and fitting gracefully into the body without throatiness. The neck is carried erect when the dog is excited, normally being carried horizontally.

TRUNK

The chest is deep and broad. The ribs are never flat nor barrel-shaped. The belly is moderately drawn up. The back (including the lumbar region) is straight and well developed; it must not be too long between withers and croup: the length of the trunk is greater than the height at the withers. Dogs with square body outline or high on their legs should be rejected. The loins are broad and robust, the croup is moderately long and slightly hollowed.

TAIL

Thickly feathered, the tail reaches at least to the hocks. The tail is carried down and slightly curved; when excited or in movement, the dog raises the tail, which becomes more curved, without however going beyond the vertical. It must not, moreover, lie on or curl up on the back. Docked tails are inadmissible.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders are moderately long, sloping flat, close to the body and not thrown forward; with the upper arm they form nearly a right angle. The upper arm and the shoulder should both be well muscled. The forearm seen from any side, should be straight. The pastern is solid but not too straight; the elbows should turn neither in nor out, nor should they be pinched or too close to the body.

HINDQUARTERS

The thighs are broad, and strongly muscled. The femur is rather long and, seen from the side, oblique in relation to the tibia, which should be of proportional length. The tarsus and metatarsus are solid and robust.

PAWS

Round, short, well closed, arched. The pads are very hard. The nails are short and strong, generally dark in color. Front dewclaws are neither a fault nor a virtue. Since hind dewclaws if any, can cause wounds or be harmful to the gait, they should be removed at birth.

COLOR

The King Shepherd comes in a wide range of acceptable colors. These are as follows: Sable (a brownish tan with brown or black markings or a grayish silver with black markings); black saddle with tan, gold, cream, tan or silver markings. Strong, rich colors and pigments are highly preferred. Small white spots on the chest are acceptable. Pale, washed-out colors are serious faults. The undercoat is invariably little colored, except in black dogs. White, blue, or liver colored dogs or a dog with a nose that is not black must be disqualified. Puppies change color from birth until they get their final coat.

COAT

Coarsehaired variety: the top coat is as dense as possible. Each single hair should stand straight and close to the body. On the head the hair is short, as also on the inside of the ear, the forward side of the legs, the paws and the toes, while on the neck the hair is longer and denser. On the hindquarters and buttocks the hair is longer, down to the pastern or the metatarsus: the thighs are moderately trousered. The length of hair varies from one dog to another, and thus there are many types within the single variety.

Longhaired variety: the coat is longer than on the preceding variety, not always completely straight, and especially not close to the body. The individual hairs are noticeably longer, particularly inside the ears and behind them, on the back part of the forearm and often in the lumbar region: they form tufts at the ears and fringes from the elbow to the pastern. The trousers are long and dense. The tail is densely feathered with light fringe below. There is no hard and fast rule for the length of the hair but short, moletype coats are faulty.

SIZE

The minimum height for males is 27 inches, at the highest point of the shoulder blade, with an ideal height of 29 inches or more preferred. For females the minimum height is 25 inches, at the aforementioned point, with an ideal height of 27 inches or more preferred. Any male or female not meeting the minimum height requirements at maturity (three years of age) must be disqualified. The minimum weight for dogs should be not less than 110 pounds at maturity, with the ideal weight being 130-150 pounds. Minimum weight for females is 75 pounds at maturity, with the ideal weight being 90-110 pounds.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS

Any male (older than 36 months of age) measuring less than 27 inches at the shoulders or any female (older than 36 months) measuring less than 25 inches at the shoulders. Any unreasonable expression of, or any form of, fear or sharp-shyness. Dogs with hanging ears or any dog with clipped ears. An undershot or overshot bite. White, blue, or liver colored dogs or dogs with lack of pigmentation, or having a nose that is not all black. A docked tail, or one that curls forward above the vertical line from the croup. Any dog that attempts to bite the Judge.

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