

## German Shepherd Dogs

### GERMAN STANDARD

As adopted by the SV on September 20, 1899 and amended July 28, 1901; September 17, 1909 and September 5, 1930.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The German Shepherd Dog is slightly over medium size. He is fairly lengthy, strong and well muscled up. Lively and alert in temperament, owing to his keen intelligence few things escape his notice. The height at the withers averages about 24 in., ranging between 22 and 26 in. The measurement should be taken as height of the skeleton, the hair being well pressed down, along a vertical line from the withers through the elbows to the ground. The ideal dimensions for the German Shepherd Dog as a working dog are between 24 and 26 in. for dogs and between 22 and 24 for bitches. Anything above the maximum measurement or under the minimum is apt to lessen his breeding value. Temperament (i.e. the salient characteristics of watchfulness, fidelity incorruptibility and alertness) fits him eminently for use as a guard, watch and companion dog. Although an outwardly pleasing appearance is to be aimed at, the primary consideration is his capability and usefulness as a working dog.

### HEAD

The head should be proportionate to the size of the body, but without coarseness, elegant in appearance and fairly wide between the ears. The forehead seen from front and side should be only slightly arched, with at most only a trace of a centre furrow. The cheeks form a rounded curve and should not protrude. Looked at from above, the top of the head should gradually taper obliquely from the ears to the tip of the nose, without too pronounced a stop and running into a powerful, lengthy and clean-cut muzzle.

The lips should be stretched tightly over a strong jaw. The bridge of the nose should run practically level with the line of the forehead. The dentition should be very powerful; the correct bite being a scissor bite, neither over- nor under-shot. The ears should be of medium size, broad at the base and set high. They should be carried erect, tapering to sharp points and inclined slightly forwards. One occasionally meets with an ear-carriage similar to that of a collie (i.e. tipped ears). However, the erect ear is preferable. For dogs who are working sheep ear carriage is immaterial. It is, however, desirable to breed only from dogs with erect ears. Dogs with cropped and pendulous ears should be discarded. Puppies and young dogs frequently do not put their ears up before the fourth or sixth month and in some cases even later than this. Eyes are medium sized, almond shaped, obliquely set and not protruding, preferably dark in colour (matching the colour of the coat). The expression should be lively and intelligent, showing reserve and distrust of strangers.

### NECK

The neck should be powerful, with well-developed muscles, of medium length and without dewlap. When the dog is alert it should be carried erect.

## BODY

The chest should be deep and not too broad. The ribs neither flat nor barrel ribbed. The belly moderately tucked up. The back straight and powerfully developed - not too long between the withers and the croup. The measurement of the body - length should exceed the measurement of the height taken at the shoulder. Square dogs and those too high on the leg should be rejected. The Shepherd Dog should not be aggressive. The agility he requires as a sheep-herding dog is achieved by the power and angulation of his hindquarters. Loins broad and powerful. Croup long and slightly curved.

## TAIL

The tail should be bushy, reaching to the hocks, forming sometimes a sideways bent hook. When at rest it should hang downwards in a slight curve. When the dog is in motion or excited the curve is more pronounced and the tail carriage higher - but it should not pass the horizontal. \*) It should therefore not be straight nor be curled over the back. Dogs are sometimes born with stumpy tails and should not be used for breeding. Artificially docked tails should be rejected.

## FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders should be long and sloping; laid flat to the body; well muscled up and not placed forward. The underarm viewed from every side should be straight and the pastern not too steep but springy.

## HINDQUARTERS

The thighs should be broad and powerfully muscled - the upper thighs moderately long and viewed from the side slanting to a stifle of proportionate length. The hocks should be powerful.

## PAWS

The paws should be rounded; well closed and arched. The pads should be very hard with short and strong nails which are mostly of a dark colour. Dew claws either single or double are often found on the hind legs; they are neither a defect nor are they required by the standard. As they often cause a wide gait and can also cause injuries to the legs it is advisable to remove them soon after birth.

## COLOUR

Colour can be black, iron grey, ash grey, reddish yellow, reddish brown as one colour or with regular reddish brown to greyish white markings, tan with black saddle. The usual colours are dark clouded (i.e. blackish tint or grey). Yellow tan or light brown ground with corresponding lighter markings - the so-called wolf colour (the original colour of the wild dog). White markings on breast and legs are allowable. In all except black dogs the undercoat is of a light colour. The final colour of a puppy can be known only when the top hair has grown through. Pure white is permitted only with the old German Sheep Dogs.

\*) Mr. Schwabacher made an error in his translation, the original reads "vertical". (Sch.)

## COATS

There are three varieties, viz. short-haired, rough - or wire-haired and curly coats. The close undercoat (underwool) is a feature characteristic of all three types and gives the coat its weatherproof quality. The short-coated dog has as thick an outer coat as possible, each hair being straight - hard and lying close against the body. The hair on the head, including that on the inside of the ear and on the front of the legs, paws and toes, is short. On the neck the hair is longer and thicker. On the inside of the front and hind legs the hair grows longer as far as the joint of the forepaws and the hock, and forms breeches on the thighs. The length of the hair varies. Too short hair is a fault and too long hair merely acts as a harbouring place for dirt. When it is too soft the undercoat (underwool) is often missing.

## DEFECTS

All faults impairing usefulness, endurance and efficiency, particularly an expression lacking in sex character and a temperament unbefitting a Shepherd Dog, such as apathy, weak nerves, excitability or shyness. Monorchids or cryptorchids should both be excluded from shows or breed surveys. Lack of vitality, aversion to work, soft and spongy constitution and weedy body construction, pronounced colour paling. Albinos (with complete lack of pigmentation, pink noses, etc.) may not be admitted at breed surveys; nor may they be placed at shows. This bar applies likewise to pure whites with black noses. The only exceptions to the bar on white dogs are Old German Sheepdogs. Other faults of detail are deviations from the standard measurement, be it over the maximum or under the minimum; highleggedness and a body too short in proportion, too light or too heavy build, soft back, straight position of the legs and any other features which hamper a good stride-mobility and endurance of gait. Further faults are a muzzle that is too short, too stumpy, too blunt or too long and lacking in power; over - and undershot jaws and other faults of dentition, especially under-developed (weak) or decayed teeth. Finally, these are faults of less importance: too soft or too short hair and lack of undercoat; clumsy head formation or head lacking depth of construction; paws too spread out or too long haired; drooping or consistently faulty ear carriage; ring tails and gay or otherwise faulty tail carriage; ears and tails that have been docked, or tails that are naturally short from birth.