



FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)

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FCI-Standard N° 171

BOUVIER DES ARDENNES

TRANSLATION : Mrs Jeans-Brown with the collaboration of Mr. Triquet.

ORIGIN : Belgium.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VALID STANDARD : 25.10.2000.

UTILIZATION : Originally a true cattle dog, used to the open air and to the tough work of rounding-up, guarding and driving cattle. Even today with a minimum of training for maximum efficacy, it is a good all-purpose working dog and a specialised guard of stock and property.

FCI-CLASSIFICATION: Group 1 Sheep and cattle dogs
(except Swiss cattle dogs).
Section 2 Cattle dogs (except Swiss cattle dogs).
With working trial.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY : It has always been called the cowdog in the Belgian Ardennes and been selected for its abilities. It gets its name from the practice of guarding and driving cattle in the region where it is active rather than from its physical appearance. The harsh climate, the hard specific work, the difficult terrain and the poverty of the region have all served to fashion its type.

Only the most hardy and the most hardworking of a deliberately restricted population were retained to drive the herds, usually consisting of milking cows and sheep but also pigs and horses in the 19th century.

From the 19th century they were used to track deer and wild boar, and then during the two World Wars they became poachers' dogs.

At the end of the 19th century the drover's dog looked like a sheep dog with a harsh coat, but stronger, bigger and more biting. In Belgian shows classes were opened to drovers' dogs as an experiment to try to establish similarities of type.

On April 27th 1903, at the Liege Show, Professor Reul discovered Tom, the first example of the ideal type of drovers' dog. (no more details provided at the time).

In 1913 « The Society of Liege for the improvement of the drovers' dog from the province of Liege and the Ardennes » was founded and it drew up a proposed standard. The definitive text was adopted by Belgium in 1923 and published by the FCI on June 16th 1963.

The disappearance of many farms in the Ardennes plus the reduction in milking herds considerably diminished the number of working dogs.

In about 1985, the collection of colostrum from milking herds led cynophiles to discover a few survivors of the Bouvier des Ardennes, more or less typical of the breed. By about 1990, some breeders set out to produce dogs which corresponded better to the type laid down in the standard and they began from these breeding lines in the Ardennes. Oddly enough, it was in the north of the country that a few drovers and shepherds, astounded by the way that these dogs drove herds, began a breeding programme, from a line transplanted there about 1930 - a breeding programme which was out discreetly but with care and confidence. It was only in 1996 that this breed line was discovered by the official cynophile authorities.

GENERAL APPEARANCE : It is a hardy strong dog of medium size which makes no concessions to elegance. It is short and thick-set with a bone structure heavier than its size would suggest and a powerful head.

The adjectives short, compact and well-muscled describe it best. Its harsh tousled coat (except on the head where it is shorter and flat), its moustache and little beard all give a forbidding appearance. The Bouvier des Ardennes is to be judged in its natural stance, without physical contact with the handler and without stacking.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS :

- The length of the point of shoulder to the point of buttock is about equal to the height at withers.
- The depth of the chest is about half the height at withers.

- The head is relatively short and the muzzle is definitely shorter than the skull which is itself a little longer than broad.

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT : The Bouvier des Ardennes is a dog which shows much endurance and energy. It is playful, curious, agile and sociable and its main quality is its adaptability, so that it feels at ease in every situation. It is obstinate and extremely courageous when it comes to defending its people, its belongings and its territory.

HEAD : Strong, rather short.

CRANIAL REGION : Broad and flat, with an upper line parallel with that of the muzzle. Frontal groove and occipital crest are practically invisible. Superciliary ridges are emphasised by bushy eyebrows. Cheek bones are neither prominent nor too arched.

Stop : Pronounced but not excessive.

FACIAL REGION :

Nose : Broad, always black.

Muzzle : Broad, thick and well-filled-in under the eyes clearly shorter than skull. Furnished with upstanding hairs masking the internal angle of the eye. The sides of the muzzle and the cheeks form a continuous line.

Lips : Thin, close-fitting, always with black edges. The corner of the mouth must not be slack. Top and bottom lips, lower jaw and chin are all furnished with hairs about 5-6 cm long forming a moustache and little beard.

Jaws/Teeth : The jaws are powerful. Dentition should be complete according to the dental formula. The absence of 2 premolars 1 (2 PM1) is acceptable and the molars 3 (M3) are not taken into consideration. The incisors in a scissor bite are set regularly in an open arc. The pincer bite with no lack of contact is accepted without being favoured. The mouth cavity must be as pigmented as possible.

Cheeks : Flat but well-muscled.

Eyes : Medium size, not too wide apart, slightly oval, neither round nor protruding, as dark as possible. The lids are edged with black and no haw should be visible.

Ears : Un-cropped. Set high, triangular, rather small. When flattened, the tip should not reach further than the outer corner of the eye. Erect, straight pointed ears are preferred. Straight ears with tips falling forward or half-pricked ears, folded outwards are equally acceptable.

NECK : Strong, well-muscled, with good reach, reasonably cylindrical, slightly arched, carried sufficiently high, without dewlap.

BODY : Powerful but not heavy, ribs rounded rather than flat. Length from point of shoulder to point of buttock is about the same distance as height at withers. Short-coupled.

Topline : Horizontal, broad, powerful and tight.

Withers : Slightly pronounced.

Back : Well-muscled and well-supported. Supple without appearing weak.

Loin : Short, broad, well-muscled, transversally quite flat.

Croup : Broad, slightly sloping but preferably horizontal.

Chest : Broad, descending to elbows, ribs well-sprung especially in top third. The underside of the chest should have a certain roundness transversally. Seen from the front of the chest is quite broad.

Underline : Belly quite full with little tuck-up.

TAIL : The majority are short-tailed with a good number born tailless. The tail is thick and set high.

Short tail : Follows the topline.

In countries where docking is prohibited, the tail should be left natural.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS :

General appearance: Powerful bone. The well-muscled front legs are upright viewed from all angles and parallel seen from the front.

Shoulder : Reasonably long and oblique with thick muscle. Shoulder blade and upper arm form angle of about 110 degrees.

Upper arm : Long, well-muscled.

Elbow : Firm, neither set in nor out.

Forearm : Straight and strong.

Wrist (Carpus) : Firm and clearly defined, near the ground.

Pastern (Metacarpus) : Strong, short and very slightly sloping.

Forefeet : Round, tight, arched toes, dark, thick elastic pads, strong dark nails.

HINDQUARTERS :

General appearance : Powerful, well-muscled, with reasonable angulation, seen from rear parallel. Standing in profile the foot must be placed just behind the vertical line of the end of the ischium (point of buttock).

Thighs : Very well-muscled and with prominent muscles.

Lower thigh : Reasonably long, very well-muscled.

Hock joint : Near the ground, broad and sinewy.

Rear Pastern(Metatarsus) : Seen in profile, slightly sloping. No dew claws.

Hind feet : Like front feet.

GAIT/MOVEMENT : The limbs move in parallel lines, remaining in line with the body and do not crab. A fast free walk and a lively trot are the usual gaits. The Bouvier des Ardennes is not usually a galloper but it can spin round instantly, whatever its speed or gait. The trot covers the ground well with a regular gait and an excellent rear thrust, with the topline retained well on the move. The dog should not amble. Because it is an active dog, the Bouvier des Ardennes rarely remains still. When off the lead, its ability to drive herds means that it often follows its owner, making sweeping semi-circles.

SKIN : Tight fitting, without wrinkles, but supple. The edges of eyelids and lips are always well-pigmented.

COAT

Hair : The coat must allow the dog to live outside, to guard and drive herds, however extreme its local atmospheric conditions may be.

The topcoat must be dry, coarse and tousled, about 6 cm long over all the body but shorter and flatter on the skull, even with the presence of eyebrows. The hair must form a moustache and a little beard about 5-6 cm long and hide the internal corner of eye. The forearms are covered by shorter dry hair, a little shaggy, giving them a somewhat cylindrical aspect with the addition of short fringes on the back of the limbs. The back of the thighs has longer hair making the breeches. The outer side of the ears is covered with soft straight short hair with occasional longer hairs. The auditory canal is protected by longer hairs which blend with those from the collar effect of backward sloping hairs around the neck. The spaces between the pads are filled with very short hairs.

The undercoat is very dense whatever the season and even more abundant in winter, protecting the dog from extremes of weather. It is also present on the limbs. Its length is about half that of the top coat.

Colour : All colours are acceptable except white and the colour of the undercoat varies according to the shade of the top coat. A white mark on the chest or the tips of the toes is acceptable without being sought after. The coat is often formed from a mixture of grey, black and fawn hairs; a grey coat going from pale grey to dark grey; a brownish, red or straw coloured coat.

SIZE AND WEIGHT :

Height at withers : 56 - 62 cm for males.

52 - 56 cm for females.

With a tolerance of plus or minus one centimetre.

Weight : 28 - 35 kg for males.

22 - 28 kg for females.

FAULTS : Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

- General appearance : Too heavy, too elegant, too high off the ground.
- Head : Poor proportions, lack of parallel lines, too slight a muzzle, too little or too much furnishing, Roman nose or convex nose, stop too pronounced or too slight, skull too rounded.
- Teeth : Badly placed incisors. Missing one incisor (I1), one premolar 2 (1 PM2) or one premolar 3 (1 PM3).
- Eyes : Light, round, protuberant or sunken.
- Ears : Too broad at the base, set low, rounded tips; diverging or converging if carried erect.
- Neck : Slender, long, stuffy.
- Topline : Weak, long or narrow back and/or loin; sway or roach backed.
- Chest : Not deep enough, underline without transversal rounding, too narrow.
- Tail : Set too low, carried too high, tucked under, hooked or to the side.
- Movement : Narrow movement, not enough drive, mincing gait, hackney action.
- Coat : Not harsh enough, lying flat, head furnishing too short or too full, hair too long on skull, limbs with too much or too little furnishing, fringes on a long tail. Undercoat not dense enough, too short or too long.
- Colour : Too much white on chest or feet.
- Temperament : timid, sluggish.

DISQUALIFYNG FAULTS :

- Temperament : Aggressive or nervous.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- General appearance : Lack of type.

- Nose, Lips, Eyelids : Lack of pigment.
- Dentition : Over or under shot jaw, even without loss of contact (inverse scissor); wry mouth; lack of one upper carnassial (1 PM4) or lower carnassial (1 M1), one molar (1M1 or 1M2 but not M3), one premolar 3 (1PM3) together with another tooth, or in total 3 missing teeth or more.
- Eyes : Yellow, China, wild-looking.
- Ears : Cropped or flat against the cheeks.
- Tail : Vertical whip tail or curled tail.
- Coat : All trimming : hair long or very short, straight or curly, woolly or silky, lack of head furnishing or so much that it completely masks the eyes or even the head shape, lack of undercoat.
- Colour : White coat or white other than on chest or toes.
- Size : Outside the limits designated in the standard.

N.B:

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation, should be used for breeding.

ANATOMICAL FEATURES

