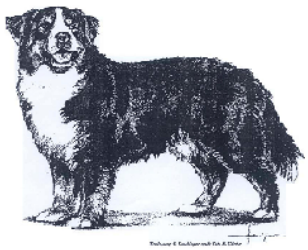
KUSA

Official Breed Standard

Bernese Mountain Dog (Working Group)



A Breed Standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function with soundness essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be mindful of features which could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.

UTILIZATION:

Originally used as a guard, draught and cattle dog on farms in the Canton Bern, today also family dog and versatile working dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a farm dog of ancestral origin which was used as a guard and draught dog and for driving cattle in the prealpine regions and in the midland areas around Bern. Originally he was named "Dürrbächler" according to the name of the hamlet and of the inn of Dürrbach, near Riggisberg in the Canton Bern, where these longhaired tricoloured farm dog was especially appreciated. In 1902, 1904 and 1907 specimen of this breed had already been exhibited at dog shows and in 1907 some breeders of the region of Burgdorf decided to promote the pure breeding of these dogs by founding the "Schweizerischer Dürrbach-Klub" and fixing the characteristic traits of the breed.. In 1910, at a show in Burgdorf where many farmers of that region brought their Durrbachler dogs to, already 107 specimen were shown.

From that day onward this dog, renamed "Bernese Mountain Dog" following the example of other breeds of the Swiss Mountain Dogs, became rapidly known all over Switzerland and in the neighbouring parts of Germany. Today the Bernese Mountain Dog is well known and appreciated all over the world as a family dog thanks to its striking tricoloured coat and its great adaptability.

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

Long haired tricoloured, strong and agile working dog, of above medium size, sturdily built limbs, harmonious and well balanced.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:

Height at withers: length of body (measured from the point of shoulder to the point of the buttock) = 9:10, rather compact than elongated.

Ideal relation of height at withers: depth of chest = 2:1

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT:

Self-confident, attentive, vigilant, fearless in situations of everyday situations, good natured and devoted to his own people, self-assured and placid towards strangers; of medium temperament, docile.

HEAD: Strong in size balanced to general appearance, not too massive.

CRANIAL REGION:

Skull: Viewed from the front and in profile little rounded. Frontal furrow hardly marked.

Stop: Well defined, but without being too pronounced.
FACIAL REGION:
Nose: Black
Muzzle: Strong, of medium length; nasal bridge straight.
Lips: Close fitting; black.
Jaws/Teeth: Strong, complete scissor bite (molars 3 (M3) are not taken into consideration). Pincer bite accepted.
Eyes: Dark brown, almond shaped, with well-fitting eyelids. Neither too deep-set nor prominent. Loose eyelids are faulty.
Ears: Medium sized, set high, triangular in shape, slightly rounded at the tips in repose hanging flat and close to the head. When alert, the rear part of the set-on is raised while the front edge of the ear remains close to the head.

NECK: Strong, muscular, of medium length.

BODY:

Topline: From the neck running slightly downwards to the withers in a harmonious line, then running on straight and level.
Back: Firm, straight and level.
Loins: Broad and strong; seen from above slightly less broad than the chest.
Croup: Slightly rounded.
Chest: Broad and deep, reaching to the elbows; forechest distinctly developed; ribcage of wide-oval section extending as well back as possible.
Underline/Belly: Slightly rising from chest to hindquarters.
Tail: Bushy, reaching at least to the hocks; hanging straight down when at rest; carried level with back or slightly above when moving.

LIMBS:
Strong bones.

FOREQUARTERS:
General appearance: Forelegs standing rather wide apart, straight and parallel.
Shoulders: Shoulder-blades long, strong and well laid back, forming a not too obtuse angle with the upper arm, well attached to the chest, well muscled.
Upper arm: Long, set oblique.
Elbows: Close fitting; neither turned in nor out.
Forearm: Strong, straight.
Pasterns: Seen from the side almost upright, firm; seen from the front in straight line with the forearm.
Forefeet: Short, roundish, with well-knit, well arched toes. Turned neither in nor out.

HINDQUARTERS:
General appearance: Seen from the rear straight and parallel, not too close.
Upper Thigh: Long, broad, strong and well muscled.
Hocks joint: Strong, well angulated.
Metatarsus: Set almost vertically. Dewclaws to be removed (except in those countries where is is prohibited by law)
Hind feet: Slightly less arched than forefeet, turned neither in nor out.

GAIT/MOVEMENT:
Sound and balanced movement in all gaits, covering a lot of ground; free stride reaching well out in front, with plenty of drive from behind; at the trot, coming and going, legs moving forward in a straight line.

COAT
Hair: Long, shining, smooth or slightly wavy.
Colour: Jet black with rich tan markings on cheeks, over the eyes, on all four legs and on the chest, and with white markings as follows :
Clean white symmetrical markings on the head : blaze extending towards the nose on both sides to a muzzle band; the blaze should not reach the tan markings above the eyes, and the white muzzle band should not extend beyond the corners of the mouth,
Moderately large, unbroken white markings on throat and chest,
Desirable : white feet
: white tip of tail
Tolerated : small white patch on nape of neck
: small white anal patch.

SIZE:
Height at withers: dogs: 64-70 cms at withers, ideal size 66-68 cms.
bitches: 58-66 cms at withers, ideal size 60-63 cms.

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.
Unsure Behaviour
Fine bones structure

Irregular set of the incisors provided that the bite remains correct.
Absence of any other than 2 PM1 (premolar 1); the M3 (molars 3) are not taken into consideration

Coat:
Distinctly curly coat
Faults of colour and markings:
Absence of white on head
Blaze too large and/or muzzle band reaching noticeably beyond the corners of the mouth.
White collar
Large white patch on nape of neck (maximum diameter more than 6cm)

White anal patch (maximum size 6cm).
White markings on forelegs reaching distinctly beyond halfway of pasterns (“boots”)
Disturbingly asymmetrical white markings on head and/or chest
Black ticks and stripes within the white on the chest
“Dirty” white (strong spots of pigmentation)
Black coat with a touch of brown or red

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

Aggressive, anxious or distinctly shy.
Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
Split nose
Undershot or overshot, wry mouth.
One or two blue eyes (wall eye)
Entropion, ectropion.
Kinky tail, ring tail.
Short coat, double coat (Stockhaar)
Other than tricoloured coat
Other main colour than black.

NB:

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.

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