



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.

PREAMBLE

Historically the Boerboel developed as a general farm dog for the pioneers who settled in South Africa since the seventeenth century. These dogs often were a first line of defence against predators and were valuable in tracking and holding down wounded game. Old farmers told many a tale of the strength, agility and courage of the Boerboel. The dangers and harsh conditions of southern Africa allowed only the fittest to survive.

The protective character of the Boerboel is today still evident and is much sought after, as is the calm, stable and confident composure of the breed. It remains the guarding breed of choice amongst current day farmers and is also very popular for the same reason in the urban communities.

The origin and purpose of the Boerboel should be understood in order to preserve the unique identity and qualities of the breed as a South African developed mastiff. Type, conformation, functional efficiency and mentality are equally important in the evaluation of the Boerboel as a whole. The aim with the Breed Standard is to provide clear guidelines for breeders and judges to promote a singular vision of the ideal Boerboel.

BREED STANDARD

1. GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Boerboel

- Is large, with a strong-boned structure and a well-developed musculature. The profile of the head and body appears blocky
- Has an impressive demeanor created by the combination of conformation, carriage, confidence and powerful movement
- Has powerful, buoyant and unencumbered movement, notwithstanding its size
- Is symmetrical and perfectly balanced within the desired proportions for the breed
- Has a distinct sexual dimorphism, with the bitch less prominently developed

2. TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTER

The Boerboel

- Is intelligent, trainable and manageable
- Has a strong protective instinct and is loyal to members of the family
- Is steadfast and calm, with a balanced and confident nature when approached

- Is fearless and shows courage when threatened
- Requires training and firm handling from an early age

3. HEAD

- **The head** is impressive and a distinctive feature of the Boerboel
It is blocky, broad, deep, fairly short and in proportion to the body
It is muscular with well-filled cheeks
The roof of the cranium (skull) is square, flat and muscular
The zygomatic arch (cheek bone) is well muscled, but not too prominent

3. HEAD (Cont'd)

- The **stop** is definite, but not prominent gradually sloping and well filled between the eyes. It should not be steep, or an almost straight line between the nose and the occiput.
- The **muzzle** is broad, deep, well attached, filled below the eyes and narrows slightly towards the nose. The top line is straight and almost on a parallel plane with the cranial roof. The muzzle measures slightly more than a third of the total length of the head (approx. 10cm for the male and 8cm for the female of ideal height).
- The **nostrils** are large and widely spaced, with the septum (vertical line) of the nose perpendicular to the lower jaw.
- The **jaws** are strong, deep and wide, and taper slightly to the front.
- The **teeth** are white, strong, correctly spaced with complete dentition and a scissors bite (limited undershot discriminated against; overshot unacceptable)
- The **upper lip** is loose and fleshy. It just covers the lower lip and teeth in the front but should not hide the underline of the lower jaw on the sides.
- The **lower lip** is moderately tight without excessive jowls.
- The **eyes** are medium sized, round, forward facing and widely spaced, with an intelligent expression. It is well protected against the environment by firm and black-pigmented eyelids, showing no structural weaknesses. The colour of the eye is preferably dark brown but all shades of brown (preferably darker than the pelt) are acceptable.
- The **ears** are set wide and high and are carried close to the head. They are V-shaped with a broad base tapering to a rounded point that reaches almost down to a line extending from the mouth. When the dog is attentive the top of the ears and the skull, in between, should form a straight line.
- The **facial expression** should be intelligent, attentive and confident (**not** evasive, shy or threatening).

4. THE NECK

- The neck is powerful, of medium length, strong muscled and with a pronounced crest. (In the female the muscles are less accentuated but should remain in balance with the head and body)
- It is set medium high, flows smoothly into the sloping withers and forms a unit with the head and shoulders.
- The dewlap is noticeable but disappears towards the sternum

5. THE BODY

- The body is approximately 15% longer than the height and is measured horizontally, from the point of the shoulder to a vertical line at the rear of the rump. (The length of the chest, loin and rump is approximately proportioned 2:1:1)
- It is blocky, muscular, solid and has good depth and width
- The back is broad and straight, with pronounced muscles that form an imperceptible arch in the top line over the lumber region.

- The brisket reaches down to the point of the elbow, which is approximately half the total height at the withers.
- The transitions between the chest, loin and rump are well filled and flowing.

6. CHEST

- The chest is long, broad and deep, with well-sprung ribs and strong developed pectoral muscles. It is filled behind the shoulder blades.
- The point of the sternum is level with the point of the shoulder
- The shoulder blades should be well-attached (not loose)

7. THE LUMBER REGION, LOIN

- It is short, straight and muscular, and slightly narrower than the chest and rump
- The flanks are well filled, only moderately tucked up and the depth is slightly less than the length of the loin.

8. THE RUMP, CROUP

- The rump is broad, strong, muscular and in proportion to the rest of the dog.
- Its height should not exceed the height at the withers. The top line drops slightly towards the tail.
- The croup is broad and flat to provide a fulcrum (axel) towards powerful reach of the hind legs
- The **tail** is thick and set fairly high. It should be well covered with hair and without kink. Tails are traditionally docked but undocked tails are acceptable. Docking takes place at the 3rd or 4th caudal vertebrae. The natural tail should reach approximately to the hocks when the dog is standing.
[*refer note below]

9. LEGS AND FEET

- Weak and malformed limbs jeopardise the physical functionality that is required of the Boerboel and should be discriminated against.

10. THE FORELIMBS

- Are strong boned, with well-defined muscles and sturdy joints.
- Should be correctly angulated from the well-sloped shoulder blade down to the metacarpus (pastern).
- Should form a vertical line from the point of the shoulder down to the paws, with the elbows held close and parallel to the chest when viewed from the front
- Seen from the side the forearm should be vertical from the elbow to the carpus. The metacarpus is short, thick and strong and angles very slightly forward
- The forepaws point straight forward, are large, round, strongly boned and compact. The toes are well arched, with curved black toenails and protected by hair in between. The pads are thick, tough and black.

11. THE HINDLIMBS

- Are strong boned, sturdy and muscular
- The joints should be sound, strong and correctly angulated to support the powerful propulsion from the hindquarters during movement
- The upper thighs are broad, deep and muscular as seen from the side and the rear
- The lower thighs have well defined muscles and show substance down to the hocks
- The metatarsus is broad, relatively short and perfectly upright. The front is in a vertical line with the rear of the rump.

- From the rear the profile of the hindquarters should form an inverted U, with the stifles pointing straight forward and the hocks straight backwards.
- The hind paws point straight forward, are slightly smaller than the forepaws but have the same quality.

12. MOVEMENT

- The movement is strong, purposeful, buoyant and fluent, with comfortable reach in front and rear
- The legs and body should move in line front to rear. The feet moves closer to a center line as speed increases, forming a V shape in the observers mind.
- Whilst converging towards the center line of travel, the legs should never cross.
- At all gaits the top line is firm and strong, without swaying, or dipping in the middle, and without excess body roll.
- Weak, unsound or plodding movement should not be tolerated.

13. THE SKIN

- The skin is thick and loose but fits smoothly
- A small dewlap is permissible and moderate wrinkles over the forehead when the dog shows interest.

14. PIGMENTATION

- The Boerboel is well pigmented, especially on the lips, palate, the skin and hair around the eyes, nose bulb, paw pads, toenails, the anus and the skin and hair around the genitals.
- Only dogs with black eumelanin pigmentation are acceptable.

15. THE COAT AND COLOUR

- The coat is short, dense, smooth and shiny
- The recognised colours / colour patterns are (with or without a mask):
All shades of red, brown, yellow (fawn)
Brindle:
Brindle is a colour pattern with irregular vertical lines of only black hair on red, brown or yellow base
Irish markings are permissible to breed with, but should be discriminated against in the show ring.
- All these colours and colour patterns should be accompanied by good pigmentation.
- **No other colours or colour patterns and tan markings are acceptable.**

16. SIZE

- Is determined by the ideal height at the withers and desirable ratios between the height and the measurements of the various parts of the external anatomy
The ideal height for a dog is 66cm (lower than 60 cm is unacceptable)
The ideal height of a bitch is 61cm (lower than 55 cm is unacceptable)

17. GENITALS

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

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 direct proportion to its degree.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. A dog that is too small (Smaller than the minimum heights stipulated in the Breed Standard).
2. A dog that is too big and out of balance.
3. An overly aggressive dog.
4. A too small and untypical head.
5. A lack of pigmentation.
6. Excessively undershot bite.
7. Excessively overshot bite.
8. Blue eyes.
9. Pricked ears.
10. A piebald or black dog.
11. Any dog clearly showing any physical or behavioural abnormalities.

***Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked, or natural. Under no circumstances are judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked, or natural tails and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.** (Fedco 12/2017 Amended DR/02/2018)



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