



Official Standard of the Briard

General Appearance: A dog of handsome form. Vigorous and alert, powerful without coarseness, strong in bone and muscle, exhibiting the strength and agility required of the herding dog. Dogs lacking these qualities, however concealed by the coat, are to be penalized.

Size, Proportions: *Size* - males 23 to 27 inches at the withers; bitches 22 to 25½ inches at the withers. Disqualification - all dogs or bitches under the minimum. *Proportions* - the Briard is not cobby in build. In males the length of the body, measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock, is equal to or slightly more than his height at the withers. The female may be a little longer.

Head: The *head* of a Briard always gives the impression of length, having sufficient width without being cumbersome. The correct length of a good head, measured from the occiput to the tip of the nose, is about forty percent (40%) of the height of the dog at the withers. There is no objection to a slightly longer head, especially if the animal tends to a longer body line. Viewed from above, from the front or in profile, the fully-coated silhouette gives the impression of two rectangular forms, equal in length but differing in height and width, blending together rather abruptly. The larger rectangle is the skull and the other forms the muzzle. The head joins the neck in a right angle and is held proudly alert. The head is sculptured in clean lines, without jowls or excess flesh on the sides, or under the eyes or temples. *Expression* - the gaze is frank, questioning and confident. *Eyes* - the eyes set well apart with the inner corners and outer corners on the same level. Large, well opened and calm, they must never be narrow or slanted. The color must be black or black-brown with very dark pigmentation of the rim of the eyelids, whatever the color of the coat. Disqualification - yellow eyes or spotted eyes. *Ears* - the ears should be attached high, have thick leather and be firm at the base. Low-set ears cause the head to appear to be too arched. The length of the natural ear should be equal to or slightly less than one-half the length of the head, always straight and covered with long hair. The natural ear must not lie flat against the head and, when alert, the ears are lifted slightly, giving a square look to the top of the skull. The ears when cropped should be carried upright and parallel, emphasizing the parallel lines of the head; when alert, they should face forward, well open with long hair falling over the opening. The cropped ear should be long, broad at the base, tapering gradually to a rounded tip. *Skull* - the width of the head, as measured across the skull, is slightly less than the length of the skull from the occiput to the stop. Although not clearly visible on the fully-coated head, the occiput is prominent and the forehead is very slightly rounded. *Muzzle* - the muzzle with mustache and beard is somewhat wide and terminates in a right angle. The muzzle must not be narrow or pointed. *Planes* - the topline of the muzzle is parallel to the topline of the skull, and the junction of the two forms a well-marked stop, which is midway between the occiput and the tip of the nose, and on a level with the eyes. *Nose* - square rather than round, always black with nostrils well opened. Disqualification - any color other than black. *Lips* - the lips are of medium thickness, firm of line and fitted neatly, without folds or flews at the corners. The lips are black. *Bite, Teeth* - strong, white and adapting perfectly in a scissors bite.

Neck, Topline and Body: *Neck* - strong and well constructed. The neck is in the shape of a truncated cone, clearing the shoulders well. It is strongly muscled and has good length. *Topline* - the Briard is constructed with a very slight incline, downward from the prominent withers to the back which is straight, to the broad loin and the croup which is slightly inclined. The croup is well muscled and slightly sloped to give a well-rounded finish. The topline is strong, never



swayed nor roached. **Body** - the chest is broad and deep with moderately curved ribs, egg-shaped in form, the ribs not too rounded. The breastbone is moderately advanced in front, descending smoothly to the level of the elbows and shaped to give good depth to the chest. The abdomen is moderately drawn up but still presents good volume. **Tail** - uncut, well feathered, forming a crook at the extremity, carried low and not deviating to the right or to the left. In repose, the bone of the tail descends to the point of the hock, terminating in the crook, similar in shape to the printed "J" when viewed from the dog's right side. In action, the tail is raised in a harmonious curve, never going above the level of the back, except for the terminal crook. Disqualification - tail non-existent or cut.

Forequarters: Shoulder blades are long and sloping forming a 45-degree angle with the horizontal, firmly attached by strong muscles and blending smoothly with the withers. Legs the legs are powerfully muscled with strong bone. The forelegs are vertical when viewed from the side except the pasterns are very slightly inclined. Viewed from the front or rear, the legs are straight and parallel to the median line of the body, never turned inward or outward. The distance between the front legs is equal to the distance between the rear legs. The construction of the legs is of utmost importance, determining the dog's ability to work and his resistance to fatigue. Dewclaws - dewclaws on the forelegs may or may not be removed. Feet - strong and rounded, being slightly oval in shape. The feet travel straight forward in the line of movement. The toes are strong, well arched and compact. The pads are well developed, compact and elastic, covered with strong tissue. The nails are always black and hard.

Hindquarters: The hindquarters are powerful, providing flexible, almost tireless movement. The pelvis slopes at a 30-degree angle from the horizontal and forms a right angle with the upper leg bone. Legs viewed from the side, the legs are well angulated with the metatarsus slightly inclined, the hock making an angle of 135 degrees. Dewclaws two dewclaws are required on each rear leg, placed low on the leg, giving a wide base to the foot. Occasionally the nail may break off completely. The dog shall not be penalized for the missing nail so long as the digit itself is present. Ideally the dewclaws form additional functioning toes. Disqualification - anything less than two dewclaws on each rear leg. Feet - if the rear toes turn out very slightly when the hocks and metatarsus are parallel, then the position of the feet is correct.

Coat: The outer coat is coarse, hard and dry (making a dry rasping sound between the fingers). It lies down flat, falling naturally in long, slightly waving locks, having the sheen of good health. On the shoulders the length of the hair is generally six inches or more. The undercoat is fine and tight on all the body. The head is well covered with hair which lies down, forming a natural part in the center. The eyebrows do not lie flat but, instead, arch up and out in a curve that lightly veils the eyes. The hair is never so abundant that it masks the form of the head or completely covers the eyes.

Color: All uniform colors are permitted except white. The colors are black, various shades of gray and various shades of tawny. The deeper shades of each color are preferred. Combinations of two of these colors are permitted, provided there are no marked spots and the transition from one color to another takes place gradually and symmetrically. The only permissible white: white hairs scattered throughout the coat and/or a white spot on the chest not to exceed one inch in diameter at the root of the hair. Disqualification - white coat, spotted coat, white spot on chest exceeding one inch in diameter.



Gait: The well-constructed Briard is a marvel of supple power. His movement has been described as "quicksilver", permitting him to make abrupt turns, springing starts and sudden stops required of the sheepherding dog. His gait is supple and light, almost like that of a large feline. The gait gives the impression that the dog glides along without touching the ground. Strong, flexible movement is essential to the sheepdog. He is above all a trotter, single-tracking, occasionally galloping and he frequently needs to change his speed to accomplish his work. His conformation is harmoniously balanced and strong to sustain him in the long day's work. Dogs with clumsy or inelegant gait must be penalized.

Temperament: He is a dog of heart, with spirit and initiative, wise and fearless with no trace of timidity. Intelligent, easily trained, faithful, gentle, and obedient, the Briard possesses an excellent memory and an ardent desire to please his master. He retains a high degree of his ancestral instinct to guard home and master. Although he is reserved with strangers, he is loving and loyal to those he knows. Some will display a certain independence.

Disqualifications: *All dogs or bitches under the minimum size limits. Yellow eyes or spotted eyes. Nose any color other than black. Tail non-existent or cut. Less than two dewclaws on each rear leg. White coat. Spotted coat. White spot on chest exceeding one inch in diameter.*

Approved February 8, 1975

Reformatted January 12, 1992