
Akita

Origin and Purpose

The Akita's history dates back nearly 400 years and derives its name from the prefecture of Akita in Northern Japan. In 1931 the breed was proclaimed a natural monument by the Japanese Ministry of Education. The government more recently took steps to preserve the breed which is now regarded as a National Treasure.

Primarily, the Akita is a working dog. It was used for hunting bear, wild boar and sled work; a companion and protector of children and home.

General Appearance

Large, powerful, alert and much substance and heavy bone. The broad head, forming a blunt triangle with deep muzzle. Small eyes and small erect ears carried forward in line with the neck are characteristic of the breed. The large curled tail, balancing the broad head, is also characteristic of the breed.

Temperament

Alert, responsive, dignified, reserved with strangers. An Akita's nature is to be intensely loyal to its master. The Akita barks infrequently and then only as a warning signal. Fearless when challenged, often dominant over other dogs. The Akita's demeanor suggests activity and agility.

Size

Height at shoulders: 26 to 28 inches (66-71 cm) for dogs; 24 inches to 26 inches (61-66 cm) for bitches. The male dogs length to height is approximately 10:9; females 11:9.

Coat and Colour

Double coated: undercoat is soft and dense - shorter than outer coat. Outer coat is straight, harsh, slightly standing off body. Hair on head, legs and ears is short. Length of hair at withers and rump, approximately two inches; except tail, where coat is longest and most profuse.

Any colour, white, brindle or pinto. Colours well defined. Markings well balanced. Whites have no mask. Pintos have white background with large evenly placed patches covering head and more than one-third of body. Brindles with or without mask. If the face has stripes rather than a black mask, they should be uniform. Undercoat may be different colour from outercoat.

Head(a) **Skull**

Massive but in balance with body, tending to be flat on top with the rest of the head forming a blunt triangle when viewed from top. Free from wrinkles when at ease. Median fissure clearly visible and stop well defined. Cheeks moderately developed.

(b) **Muzzle** - Broad, full. Distance from nose to stop is the distance from stop to occiput as two is to three.

(c) **Nose** - Broad and black. Liver nose permitted on white Akitas only, but black preferred.

(d) **Mouth** - Clean, powerful jaws. Tongue pink. Teeth strong with scissors bite - but level bite acceptable. No black spots on tongue. Lips black and heavy, but not pendulous.

(e) **Eyes** - Dark brown: Small, deep set and triangular in shape. Eye rims black and tight.

(f) **Ears** - of the Akita are characteristic of the breed. They are strongly erect and small in relation to the size of the head. Ears are triangular, slightly rounded at tip, wide at base, set wide on head, but not too low and carried slightly forward over eyes in line with back of neck.

Neck

The neck is thick and muscular; comparatively short, widening gradually towards shoulders. A pronounced crest blends in with base of skull.

Forequarters

(a) **Shoulders** - Strong and powerful with moderate layback.

(b) **Upper Arm** - Heavy-boned and straight as viewed from front. Elbows turning neither in nor out.

(c) **Lower Arm** - Heavy-boned and straight as viewed from front. Dewclaws optional.

(d) **Pasterns** - Angle of pastern 15 degrees from vertical.

(e) **Feet** - Thick, round and very tight with arched toes (cat feet) straight ahead, pads thick.

Body

- (a) **Topline** - Level back.
- (b) **Chest** - Is wide and deep. Depth of chest is one-half height of dog at shoulder. Ribs well-sprung, brisket well-developed.
- (c) **Loin** - Firmly muscled and moderate tuck up.
- (d) **Abdomen** - Is drawn up and tucked up.
- (e) **Croup** - Is slightly rounded.

Hindquarters

- (a) **Hip bone** - Width, muscular development and bone comparable to front.
- (b) **Upper thigh** - Well developed and powerful, stifle moderately angled.
- (c) **Lower thigh** Should be comparable to forequarters, dewclaws optional.
- (d) **Hocks** - Strong hocks, less angular than many breeds (145-160 degrees) turning neither in nor out.
- (e) **Feet** - Same as front.

Tail

Large and full, set high and carried over back or against flank in a three quarter, full or double curl, always dipping to or below level of back. On a three-quarter curl, tip drops well down flank. Root thick and strong. Tail reaches hock when let down. Hair coarse, straight and full, with no appearance of a plume.

Gait

Brisk and powerful. Vigorous. Back remains firm and level. Rear legs move in line with front legs.

Faults

1. Over-refinement in males;
2. coarseness in bitches;
3. lack of chest;
4. elbows in or out;
5. light bone, rangy body;

6. straight hocks;
7. excessive dewlap;
8. indication of ruff or feathering;
9. round or light eye.

The foregoing description is that of the ideal Akita. Any deviation from the above-described dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation, keeping in mind the original purpose of the breed.

Note:

A male animal must have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Disqualifications

1. Monorchids or cryptorchids;
2. Viciousness, instability;
3. Excessively over/undershot;
4. Uncurled or sickle tail;
5. Albinos;
6. Butterfly nose;
7. Drop or broken ears;
8. Entropion or ectropion;
9. Long coats;
10. Males under twenty-five (25) inches (64 cm); bitches under twenty-three (23) inches (58 cm);
11. Altering of coat or general appearance by scissoring or clipping.