GROUP III: WORKING DOGS

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG

RECOGNIZED: 1977

Effective: January 2020

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

ORIGIN & PURPOSE

The Bernese Mountain Dog (Bouvier Bernois) takes its name from the Canton of Bern in Switzerland, its native land. It is one of the four Swiss tricolour breeds known by the collective name Sennenhunde, the only one of the four with a long coat. The Bernese Mountain Dog and its ancestors lived for many generations as all-purpose farm dogs, that protected homes/farms, and performed droving/herding and drafting tasks as required. From this background developed a hardy, natural, good-natured working breed that today is known principally as a faithful family companion.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Large, strong, well-balanced working dog with sturdy built limbs. Heavy coated with distinctive characteristic markings. Breed type encompasses more than markings, and focuses on structure, movement and temperament.

In comparison, dogs are larger than bitches with heavier bone, a broader skull, and greater depth and breadth of chest. Bitches, although more feminine, must maintain the sturdy breed type.

TEMPERAMENT

The Bernese temperament is one of the breed's strongest assets. Self-confident, attentive, vigilant, fearless in every-day situations; good-natured, never sharp or shy, devoted to its own people, self-assured and placid towards strangers; of medium temperament.

SIZE

Height at the withers:

Dogs, 62.25 to 69.75 cm (24.5 to 27.5 in); ideal size 66 to 68.5 cm (26 to 27 in)
Bitches, 58.5 to 66 cm (23 to 26 in); ideal size 59.75 to 63.5 cm (23.5 to 25 in)
The stocky, well-balanced appearance must be maintained.

Proportions: Height at withers to length of body (measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of buttock) is 9:10, rather compact than elongated. Ideal relation of height at withers to depth of chest is 2:1.

COAT

The adult coat is thick, moderately long. It has a bright natural shine, is straight or slightly wavy. In texture it is soft rather than harsh, is weather-resistant, easily kept and resists matting. There is a soft, seasonal undercoat.

COLOUR

Compulsory markings:

- Jet-black ground colour. Rich russet markings (dark reddish brown is most favoured) on the cheeks, over each eye, on all four legs between the black of the upper leg and the white (if present) of the feet, in two spots on the chest on either side of the white just below the point of shoulder, as well as on the buttocks under the tail.

- Clean white markings as follows: On chest extending uninterrupted to under chin; also, a slight to middle-sized blaze extending towards the nose to a muzzle band, which is not so wide as to obliterate the russet on the cheek. The blaze should not be so wide as to interfere with the russet markings above the eyes.

Desirable markings:

- White feet with white reaching no higher than the pasterns without running up the back of the legs
- White tip of tail
- The white muzzle band preferably does not extend past the corners of the mouth.
- It is preferable that the markings are symmetrical.
- Tolerated: Small white patch on the nape of the neck, small white anal patch (maximum 6.25 cm [2.5 in]).

Note: Too little white is preferable to too much.

HEAD

Strong in size, balanced to general appearance, not too massive. ***Skull:*** Flat and broad with a slight furrow; defined, but not exaggerated stop. ***Muzzle:*** Strong and straight; roughly square proportions, tapering only very slightly. Muzzle is slightly shorter than length of skull. Lips are tight-fitting, black in colour. ***Teeth:*** Jaw is strong with good teeth meeting in a scissors bite. Level bite acceptable. Dentition should be complete. ***Nostrils:*** Well open and black in colour. ***Eyes:*** Dark brown in colour, almond-shaped, neither deep set or prominent and well set apart; tight eyelids. Expression is intelligent, animated and gentle. ***Ears:*** Middle-sized, triangular in shape with rounded tip. Set above eye level high on side of head; hanging close to the head in repose, brought forward at the base when alert.

NECK

Strong, muscular of medium length, well set on. Dewlaps are very slightly developed.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders: Well muscled, flat lying and well laid back. ***Forelegs:*** Straight with strong bone, parallel stance. ***Elbows:*** Well under shoulders. ***Pasterns:*** Slightly sloping, but not weak. ***Feet:*** Proportionate in size, round and compact with well-arched toes. ***Front dewclaw:*** Removal not required. Presence or lack thereof must not influence the judgment of the dog.

BODY

Sturdy, slightly longer than tall. ***Chest:*** Broad, forechest distinctly developed, with good depth of brisket reaching at least to the elbows; ribs are well sprung extending as far back as possible. ***Back:*** Firm and level. ***Loins:*** Broad, strong and muscular. ***Croup:*** Broad, well muscled. ***Underline/belly:*** Slightly rising from chest to hindquarters.

HINDQUARTERS

Powerful, with broad, well-muscled thighs and strong bone. ***Stifles:*** Well angulated. ***Hocks:*** Well let down, turning neither in nor out. ***Pasterns:*** Wide and straight, standing parallel. ***Feet:*** Proportionate in size, round and compact. ***Rear dewclaws****:* Removal not required, presence or lack thereof must not influence the judgement of the dog .

TAIL

Bushy, hanging straight, with bone reaching to the hock joint or slightly below. Hanging straight down when at rest; carried level with back or slightly above when moving.

GAIT

The natural travelling gait of the breed is a slow to medium trot, but it is capable of speed and agility. Sound, balanced movement in all gaits, covering a lot of ground. Good reach in front. Strong drive from the rear, flexing well at the stifles. The level backline is maintained; there is no wasted action. Front and rear feet of each side

travel in lines parallel to direction of motion, converging towards a centre line without single tracking at increased speeds.

FAULTS

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed's traditional purpose.

Minor Faults (subject to the degree of fault):

- Overly long or thin body
- Too light russet markings or impure colour; grey colouring in black coat
- Non-symmetrical markings, especially facial
- White neck patch (over 6.25 cm [2.5 in] in diameter), white anal patch (over 6.25 cm [2.5 in] in diameter)
- Curly coat in adult dog
- White markings on forelegs reaching distinctly beyond halfway of pasterns ("boots")
- Black ticks and stripes within the white on the chest
- Too massive or too light head
- Too narrow or too tapered muzzle (snipey)
- Incomplete dentition
- Light or round eyes
- Splayed feet
- Kink in tail

Major Faults:

- Deficiency of type (as described above)
- Aggressive, anxious or distinctly shy
- Fine bone
- Ectropion or entropion
- Loose over-developed flews
- Undershot or overshot bite
- Tail rolled over back

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Cryptorchid or monorchid dogs
- Split nose
- Absent markings as described in compulsory markings
- White neck ring
- Blue eye
- Ground colour other than black