



*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:** Shepherd dog used mainly for the protection of flocks and guarding of properties.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY:** This ancient breed of dogs who guard flocks comes from shepherd dogs actually still used in the Abruzzes where the breeding of sheep is still thriving even in these days, and sheepdogs which existed yesteryear in the region of the Tuscan Maremma and in that of Latium. Especially since 1860, the seasonal moving of livestock from one region to another has favoured the developing of a natural crossing of those two primitive breeds.

**GENERAL APPEARANCE:** The Maremma and Abruzzes shepherd dog is a big dog, strongly built of a rustic appearance, at the same time majestic is really typical. On the whole his shape, of average proportions, is that of a heavy dog, whose body is longer than the height at the withers; is balanced as much in size (heterometry = normal proportions between the size and different parts of the body) as to the profiles (alloidism = concordance between the profiles of the head and the body).

**IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:** The length of the head reaches 4/10 of the height at the withers; muzzle slightly shorter than the length of the skull; the body length is more, by 1/18th, than the height at the withers. Depth of thorax is slightly less than half the height at the withers.

**BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT:** The principal function as a guard and defence dog of flocks and property in general, asserts the manner in accomplishing these tasks, with perception and also with devotions to his master and all his entourage. **HEAD:** On the whole the head is large and flat, of conical shape, reminiscing of that of a polar bear.

**CRANIAL REGION:** Skull: Of great width with lateral sides slightly bulging. In profile also convex. The upper longitudinal axes of the skull and muzzle are slightly divergent, which makes the profile of the head slightly convex. The superciliary arches are moderately marked. The mediofrontal furrow line is slightly marked. The occipital crest is only just visible. Stop: The fronto-nasal depression only just accentuated and the fronto-nasal angle is always very open.

**FACIAL REGION:** Nose: Rather big, in line of the muzzle, with large well-opened nostrils, moist and cool, coloured black. In profile must not protrude beyond the front marginal of the lips. Muzzle: The length is little less than that of the skull, depth is half of the length, lateral sides are slightly converging, decreases towards the front but still keeping a blunt surface seen from the front. The region under the eyes is slightly chiselled. Lips: Seen from the front, the upper lips, at their junction point, determined by their lower edge a semicircle of very short radius. Slightly developed, they barely cover the teeth of the jaw, and, therefore, the corner of the lip is only lightly accentuated.

Consequently the lower lateral profile is only defined by the lips in its fore part, in its rear part it is defined by the lower jaw and the corner of the lip. The rims of the lips are black. Jaws/ Teeth: Strong jaws, normally developed,

with incisors set straight, well aligned of good size and complete in number. Teeth white and strong, scissor bite.

**Checks:** Moderately visible.

**Eyes:** Not large in relation to the size of the dog; the iris is of an ochre colour or chestnut brown. The eye, in lateral position, is neither deep set nor protruding. Lively and attentive expression. Eyelid opening is almond shaped, with black eye rims.

**Ears:** Set very high over the zygomatic arches, they are natural, hanging but very mobile. Triangular shape (in V), their extremities forming a narrow point never rounded; they are small in relation to the size of the dog. For a medium size dog their length must not go beyond 12 cm. The ear attachment is of medium width.

**NECK:** Upper profile moderately arched. The neck is always shorter than the head. Neck is thick and very strongly muscled and always without dewlap; covered with long and dense hair forming a collar particularly obvious in males.

**BODY:** Solidly constructed. Top line: Straight from withers to rump where it becomes somewhat sloping. Withers: Slightly above the topline; wide because of the distance separating the shoulder blades. Back: Straight in profile, length reaches about 32% of the height at the withers. Loin: Merging perfectly with the topline and has a slightly curved profile with well-developed muscles and width. Croup: Broad, strong and well muscled. The inclination from the hip to the tail set is of 20° increasing to 30° and more, hence the rump is sloping. Chest: Ample, descending to level of elbows, deep and well rounded at mid-height.

Decreases progressively downwards while retaining a good width in the sternal region. Its depth must reach half the height at the withers. The ribs are well sprung and oblique with ample lung space and good width; the last false ribs are long, oblique and well opened. Underline and belly: The sternum is long and the sternal line is rising slightly towards the belly. TAIL: Low set due to the sloping rump, in normal stand reaching below the level of the hock. Hanging when dog stationary; carried level with back line with a rather strongly hooked extremity when the dog is in action. Well furnished with dense hairs without fringes.

**LIMBS FOREQUARTERS:** Straight limbs seen from the front and in profile; forequarters well balanced in relation to the body, and the various parts of the forequarters are well proportioned between them. Shoulder: Long, oblique with powerful muscles. Must be really free in movement. In length measures about 1/4 of the height at the withers. Its obliqueness below the horizontal is 50°–60°.

**Upper arm:** Set close to the body in its upper two thirds, with powerful muscles. The obliqueness below the horizontal varies between 55° and 60°; its length measures about the 30% of the height at the withers. Its position is more or less parallel with the median plane of the body. The scapulo-humeral angle varies between 105° and 120°.

**Elbow:** Normally close to the chest, covered with soft loose skin. Parallel to the median plane of the body. Point of elbow must be on an imaginary vertical line from the rear angle of the shoulder blade. The humero-radial angle varies between 145° and 150°. Forearm: Straight and vertical, heavily boned. The length slightly supersedes the length of the upper arm. Carpus (Wrist): In extension of the vertical line of the forearm. Strong, clean, smooth and of good thickness; the pisiform bone is clearly protruding.

**Metacarpus (Pastern):** The length neither too short nor too high. Lean with a minimum of sub-cutaneous tissue. Seen in profile is slightly oblique towards the front.

**Forefeet:** Large, of roundish shape, well closed toes, covered with short thick hair, nails preferably black, but brownish tolerated.

**HINDQUARTERS:** Seen as a whole: limbs are straight when seen from behind and in profile. In proportion to the body and with the various parts harmoniously connected.

**Thigh:** Long, slightly oblique, broad with protruding muscles and the rear edge slightly convex. The coxo-femoral (hip bone) angle is about 100°.

**Stifle (Knee):** Firm, well placed in the vertical axis. The femoro-tibial angle not excessively angulated. Lower thigh: The length is a little less than the thigh. Obliqueness below the horizontal is about 60°. Strong bone, **muscles lean and the groove in the leg well marked.**

**Hock joint:** Quite thick and broad. The angle varies between 140° and 150°.

**Metatarsus (Rear pastern):** Strong, lean and broad, neither too long nor too short. No dewclaws. Hind feet: Large, not as roundish in shape as forefeet, well closed toes, covered with short thick hair, nails preferably black, but brown is tolerated.

**GAIT/MOVEMENT:** Walk and extended trot. **SKIN:** Tight in all parts of the body; rather thick. Black pigmentation of the third eyelids as well as the pads.

**COAT:** Hair: Very well furnished. Hair long, rather harsh to the touch, close to straight horsehair. Flat lying on the body, slight wave is tolerated. The hair forms an important collar around the neck and fringes of limited length on the edge of the hindquarters. But the hair is short on the muzzle, on the skull, the ears and front of the limbs. On the body the length of the hair reaches 8 cm. The undercoat is only abundant in the winter.

**Colour:** Solid white. Shades of ivory, pale orange or lemon is tolerated but only in certain limits. **SIZE AND**

**WEIGHT:**

**Height at the withers:**

Males: 65 – 73 cm. Females: 60 – 68cm. Weight: Males: 35 – 45kg. Females: 30 – 40kg.

**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 and its ability to perform its traditional work. • Repeated pacing.

**SEVERE FAULTS:**

- Convergent cranio-facial axes.
- Tail rolled over the back.
- Constant pacing.
- Size over or under the standard limits.

**DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:**

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- Nose completely non-pigmented.
- Muzzle definitely convex or concave.
- Eyelids moderate or bilateral non-pigmented. Wall eye. Cross-eyed.
- Undershot mouth.
- Tailless or short tail, whether congenital or docked.
- Curly coat.
- Colour that is a solid isabella or ivory or have well defined patches of isabella or ivory colour. Black shadings.

**N.B:**

- 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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