

## LEONBERGER

*A Breed Standard is the guideline that 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 that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.*

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2017

### ORIGIN

Germany.

### UTILISATION

Watchdog, companion, and family dog.

### BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 159]

At the end of the 1830s, beginning of the 1840s, Heinrich Essig, Town Councillor in Leonberg near Stuttgart, crossed a black and white Newfoundland bitch with a so-called "Barry" male from the monastery hospice Grand St. Bernhard. Later, a Pyrenean Mountain Dog was added. This resulted in very large dogs with predominantly long, white coats. Essig's aim was for a lion-like dog. The lion is the heraldic animal of the city of Leonberg. The first dogs really called "Leonbergers" were born in 1846. They combined the excellent qualities of the breeds from which they stemmed. Only a short time later, many of these dogs from Leonberg were sold all over the world as status symbols. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Leonberger was kept in Baden-Württemberg as the preferred farm dog. His watch and draft abilities were much praised. In both World Wars, and the needy post-war times, the numbers of breeding stock declined dramatically. Today, the Leonberger is an excellent family dog that fulfills all the demands of modern life.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

Large, strong, muscular, yet elegant. Confident, calm, and lively. Males, in particular, should be powerful and strong.

### CHARACTERISTICS

Amenable, intelligent, and fearless companion; distinguished by his friendliness.

### TEMPERAMENT

Self-assured and playful. Neither timid nor aggressive.

### HEAD

Head in balance with body and limbs. Strong, but not heavy; elongated, rather than stocky. Proportion of muzzle to skull equal. No wrinkles. Skull in profile and seen from the front, slightly arched. The back part of the skull not substantially broader than at the eyes. Medium stop. Nose black. Cheeks only moderately developed, muzzle moderately tapered but never snipey. Nasal bridge of even breadth and slightly arched (Roman nose).

#### Eyes:

Neither deep-set nor protruding, of medium size. Oval in shape with kind expression. Medium to dark brown in colour. Eyelids close-fitting, showing no haw.

#### Ears:

Set on high and not too far back, pendant, medium-sized, hanging close to the side of the head, fleshy with rounded tips, well-feathered.

#### Mouth:

Strong jaws with perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, level bite tolerated. Teeth evenly placed and vertical in the jaw, with complete dentition. No constriction of the canines in the lower jaw. Lips close-fitting, black, corner of lips closed.

### NECK

Strong, flowing into the withers in a slight arch, without throatiness. Moderately long, no dewlap.

## FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders well-laid, elbows close-fitting. Forelegs straight, well-boned and not too close. Shoulder and upper arm long, sloping and well-muscled. Pasterns strong, firm, and straight when seen from front, almost vertical seen from side.

## BODY

Height at the withers to length of body in ratio of 9 : 10 (measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock). Depth of chest approximately 50% of height at withers, which should be pronounced, especially in males. Moderate forechest. Chest broad, deep, reaching at least to the elbows. Oval, not barrel-chested. Back firm and straight, with broad loins, strong, and well-muscled. Moderately sloping croup with relatively long, broad rump, gently rounded. Rump never higher than withers. Slight tuck-up.

## HINDQUARTERS

Legs set not too close together and parallel when seen from rear. Well-muscled, long, slanting upper thigh. Moderate bend of stifle. Hocks strong, angle between lower thigh and rear pastern well-defined, turned neither in nor out.

## FEET

Tight and rounded with well-arched toes. Front feet pointing directly forwards. Pads black.

## TAIL

Well-furnished, straight, reaching at least to hock. On the move, tail slightly curved, not carried above level of back. Never forming a ring.

## GAIT / MOVEMENT

Ground-covering, even movement in all gaits, maintaining a level topline. Extending well in front with good drive from hindquarters. Seen from front and behind, legs move in a straight line when walking or trotting.

## COAT

Double-coated, medium, soft to harsh, fairly long, close-fitting. Never with a parting and not obscuring the outline despite the thick undercoat. Straight or slight wave permitted. Mane on neck and chest, especially in the males. Distinct feathering on front legs and ample breeches on hind legs.

## COLOUR

- Lion gold, red, reddish brown, sandy (fawn or cream) and all combinations in between, always with a black mask.
- \* Black hair tips are permitted. Black must not dominate basic colour.  
\* Lighter colour on underside of tail, mane, feathering on front legs and breeches, on hind legs normal, but must not be pronounced.  
\* A small white patch or stripe on the chest and white hair on the toes tolerated.

## SIZE

### Height at withers:

**Males:** 72cm – 80cm (approx. 28" – 31½").

**Females:** 65cm – 75cm (approx. 25½" – 29½").

## 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 on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

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**When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:**

**FCI Standard No. 145: LEONBERGER**

**FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schanuzer, Molossoid, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs.**

Section 2.2. Molossian breeds, Mountain type..  
Without working trial.