



Official Standard of the Belgian Malinois

General Appearance: The Belgian Malinois is a well balanced, square dog, elegant in appearance with an exceedingly proud carriage of the head and neck. The dog is strong, agile, well muscled, alert, and full of life. He stands squarely on all fours and viewed from the side, the topline, forelegs, and hind legs closely approximate a square. The whole conformation gives the impression of depth and solidity without bulkiness. The male is usually somewhat more impressive and grand than his female counterpart, which has a distinctly feminine look.

Size, Proportion, Substance: Males are 24 to 26 inches in height; females are 22 to 24 inches; measurement to be taken at the withers. Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches and females under 21 inches or over 25 inches are to be disqualified. The length, measured from the point of the breastbone to the point of the rump, should equal the height, but bitches may be slightly longer. A square dog is preferred. Bone structure is moderately heavy in proportion to height so that the dog is well balanced throughout and neither spindly or leggy nor cumbersome and bulky.

Head: The *head* is clean-cut and strong without heaviness; overall size is in proportion to the body. The *expression* should indicate alertness, attention and readiness for activity, and the gaze is intelligent and questioning. The *eyes* are brown, preferably dark brown, medium size, slightly almond shaped, not protruding. Eye rims are black. The *ears* approach the shape of an equilateral triangle and are stiff, erect, and in proportion to the head in size. The outer corner of the ear should not come below the center of the eye. Ears hanging as on a hound, or semi-prick ears are disqualifications. The top of the *skull* is flattened rather than rounded with the width approximately the same as the length but no wider. The stop is moderate. The *muzzle* is moderately pointed, avoiding any tendency to snipiness, and approximately equal in length to the top skull. The planes of the muzzle and top skull are parallel. The jaws are strong and powerful. The nose is black without discolored areas. The lips are tight and black with no pink showing on the outside. The Belgian Malinois has a full complement of strong, white teeth, that are evenly set and meet in a scissors or level *bite*. Overshot and undershot bites are a fault. An undershot bite in which two or more of the upper incisors lose contact with two or more of the lower incisors is a disqualification. One or more missing teeth is a serious fault.

Neck, Topline, Body: The *neck* is round and of sufficient length to permit the proud carriage of the head. It should taper from the body to the head. The *topline* is generally level. The withers are slightly higher and slope into the back which must be level, straight and firm from withers to hip joint. The croup is medium long, sloping gradually. The *body* should give the impression of power without bulkiness. The chest is not broad but is deep with the lowest point reaching the elbow. The underline forms a smooth ascendant curve from the lowest point of the chest to the abdomen. The abdomen is moderately developed, neither tucked up nor paunchy. The loin section, viewed from above, is relatively short, broad and strong, and blends smoothly into the back. The *tail* is strong at the base, the bone reaching to the hock. In action it is raised with a curve, which is strongest towards the tip, without forming a hook. A cropped or stumped tail is a disqualification.

Forequarters: The forequarters are muscular without excessive bulkiness. The shoulder is long and oblique, laid flat against the body, forming a sharp angle with the upper arm. The legs are straight, strong, and parallel to each other. The bone is oval rather than round. Length and substance are well in proportion to the size of the dog. The pastern is of medium length, strong, and very slightly sloped. Dewclaws may be removed. The feet are round (cat footed) and well



padded with the toes curved close together. The nails are strong and black except that they may be white to match white toe tips.

Hindquarters: Angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with the forequarters; the angle at the hock is relatively sharp, although the Belgian Malinois should not have extreme angulation. The upper and lower thigh bones should approximately parallel the shoulder blade and upper arm respectively. The legs are in proportion to the size of the dog; oval bone rather than round. Legs are parallel to each other. The thighs should be well muscled. Dewclaws, if any, should be removed. Metatarsi are of medium length, strong, and slightly sloped. The hind feet may be slightly elongated, with toes curved close together and well padded. Nails are strong and black except that they may be white to match white toe tips.

Coat: The coat should be comparatively short, straight, hard enough to be weather resistant, with dense undercoat. It should be very short on the head, ears, and lower legs. The hair is somewhat longer around the neck where it forms a collarette, and on the tail and backs of the thighs. The coat should conform to the body without standing out or hanging down.

Color: The basic coloring is a rich fawn to mahogany, with black tips on the hairs giving an overlay appearance. The mask and ears are black. The underparts of the body, tail and breeches are lighter fawn, but washed-out fawn color on the body is a fault. Color should be considered a finishing point, not to take precedence over structure or temperament. The tips of the toes may be white, and a small white spot on the breastbone/prosternum is permitted, not to extend to the neck. White markings, except as noted, are faulted.

Gait: The movement is smooth, free and easy, seemingly never tiring, exhibiting facility of movement rather than a hard driving action. The Belgian Malinois single tracks at a fast gait, the legs, both front and rear, converging toward the center line of gravity, while the topline remains firm and level, parallel to the line of motion with no crabbing. The breed shows a marked tendency to move in a circle rather than a straight line.

Temperament: Correct temperament is essential to the working character of the Belgian Malinois. The breed is confident, exhibiting neither shyness nor aggressiveness in new situations. The dog may be reserved with strangers but is affectionate with his own people. He is naturally protective of his owner's person and property without being overly aggressive. The Belgian Malinois possesses a strong desire to work and is quick and responsive to commands from his owner. Faulty temperament is strongly penalized.

Faults: The degree to which a dog is penalized should depend upon the extent to which the dog deviates from the standard and the extent to which the particular fault would actually affect the working ability of the dog.

Disqualifications: *Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches and females under 21 inches or over 25 inches. Ears hanging as on a hound, or semi-prick ears. An undershot bite in which two or more of the upper incisors lose contact with two or more of the lower incisors. A cropped or stumped tail.*

Approved July 10, 1990
Effective August 29, 1990