



GROUP III: WORKING DOGS

LEONBERGER

RECOGNIZED: 1992

Effective: January 2015

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

The first dogs to be called “Leonbergers” were born in 1846. The breed takes its name from the town of Leonberg in Germany. The breed was developed primarily as a family, farm, watch and draft dog, and as such, today’s Leonbergers are especially well-suited as a multi-purpose working dog and excellent family companion.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Leonberger is a large, friendly, muscular, yet elegant working dog. He is well proportioned with a balanced build, and is distinguished by his black mask, self-confident tranquility combined with a lively temperament. Adult dogs, in particular, are powerful and strong and carry a lion-like mane on the neck and chest. A dog or bitch is easily discernable, with the dog being masculine, and the bitch feminine, without loss of type. For its size, the Leonberger is light on its feet and graceful in motion. Because natural appearance is essential to breed type, the Leonberger is to be shown with no trimming or other alterations of the coat or whiskers. However, neatening of the hair on the feet is acceptable.

TEMPERAMENT

The good-natured character and even temperament of the Leonberger is of utmost importance for fulfilling his role as a family companion. The Leonberger is watchful, self-assured with a steady, lively and playful demeanour. He is willing to be compliant and possesses a good capacity for learning. The Leonberger exhibits a marked friendliness towards children and is at ease in all situations, never showing fear, shyness or aggression. Leonbergers with a temperament not in keeping with the standard should be penalized.

SIZE

The mature dog, when measured at the withers, is 72 to 80 cm (28.25 to 31.5 in) in height; 76 cm (30 in) preferred. The mature bitch is 65 to 75 cm (25.5 to 29.5 in); 70 cm (27.5 in) preferred. Weight is in proportion to the overall size and structure.

Proportion: Desired proportion of height at withers to length of body (from point of shoulder to point of buttocks) is 9:10. Ideally, the depth of chest is approximately 50% of the height at withers, where the brisket reaches at least to the elbow. The angulations of front and rear quarters are in balance. Overall balance and proportions are as important as size. *Substance:* Bone is medium to heavy and in proportion to size of body with sufficient muscle to support the frame.

COAT

Leonbergers have a medium to long, water-resistant, double coat on the body and short fine hair on the muzzle and front of limbs. Outercoat is medium soft to coarse and is close-fitting. It is straight, with some wave permitted. Mature dogs carry a mane, which extends over the neck and chest. The undercoat is soft and dense, although it may be less so in summer months. In spite of the double coat, the outline of the body is always recognizable.

Leonbergers have distinct feathering on backside of forelegs, ample feathering on britches and some ear feathering. Bitches are less likely to carry a coat as long as dogs.

COLOUR

Coat colours are lion yellow, golden to red, red brown, sand coloured or any combination thereof, always with a black mask. All colours may have black tips of various lengths on the outercoat. All coats are accompanied by a lighter undercoat and feathering that blends well with the dominant body colour. A small stripe or patch of white on the chest and some white on the toes is allowed.

HEAD

The head is deeper than it is broad, and cheeks are only slightly developed. Males have a strong, masculine head while bitch heads express distinct femininity. **Expression/mask:** A good-natured, soft and intelligent expression is essential. Face is covered with a full black mask that extends from the nose up to and over the eyes. A lesser mask is acceptable, but not desirable. **Eyes:** Dark brown is preferred over light brown. Eyes are medium size, oval to almond-shaped, neither deep set nor protruding, exhibiting a pleasing expression. Eyelids are close-fitting, not showing any haw. **Ears:** When alert, ears are level with top of skull and set slightly forward. They are of medium size, triangular, fleshy, hanging flat and close to the head. Tips of ears are level with corners of the mouth. **Skull:** In balance with body and limbs, the skull is strong but not heavy. As seen from the front and in profile, back skull is slightly arched. It is slightly longer than wide, and the width of the back skull is only slightly broader than the front. **Stop:** Clearly recognizable and moderately defined. **Muzzle:** Never running to a point, nasal bridge of even breadth but can be slightly arched (Roman nose) or level but never dipped. Length of muzzle is equal to length of skull. The jaw remains broad and strong between the canines. **Planes:** As seen from the side, the planes of muzzle and skull are parallel. **Nose:** Large with clearly outlined nostrils, always black. **Lips:** Tight, outer lips are black in colour, with corners of lips closed and dry. Some depigmentation due to aging is acceptable. **Teeth/bite:** Complete dentition, strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite. A level bite is acceptable but not desired. Missing M3s are permissible. Dropped lower incisors in an otherwise normal bite, are not indicative of a skeletal malocclusion and are considered only a minor deviation.

NECK

Muscular, well set on shoulders, of sufficient length to allow for proud head carriage; blends smoothly into withers. No dewlap.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulder angulation: Well laid back and well muscled, the shoulder meets the upper arm at approximately a right angle allowing for excellent reach. Shoulder and upper arm is rather long and about equal in length. **Elbows:** Fitting close to the body, neither in nor out when standing or gaiting. **Forelegs:** Well-boned, muscular, straight and parallel. **Pasterns:** Strong, firm and straight when viewed from front, slightly sloping when viewed from side. Dewclaws: Usually present. **Feet:** Turn neither in nor out, rounded, tight, toes well arched (cat-foot), pads are always black.

BODY

Chest is broad, roomy, and deep but not too barrel-shaped, rather more oval-shaped. It should reach to at least the elbows, with pronounced prosternum. Fore and rear quarters are well muscled. **Back:** Firm, level and broad. **Topline:** Withers set above a firm level back that flows smoothly into a gently sloping croup. At maturity withers are never lower than the rump. **Ribs:** Well sprung, oval. **Underline:** Only slightly tucked up. **Loin:** Broad, compact, well muscled. **Croup:** Broad, relatively long, gently sloped, flowing smoothly into root of tail.

HINDQUARTERS

The rear angulations are in balance with the forequarters, ideally well angulated. The rear assembly is powerful, muscular and well-boned. **Legs:** Viewed from the rear, the legs are straight and parallel, with stifles and paws

turned neither in nor out. **Thighs:** Upper and lower of equal length, slanting and strongly muscled. **Stifles:** Clearly bent and taper smoothly into the hock. The stifle angle bend is well defined but not over-angulated. **Hocks:** They are strong of bone, distinctly angled between lower thigh and rear pastern; well let down. Dewclaws: Rear dewclaws may be present. **Feet:** Turned neither in nor out, but may be slightly elongated compared to forefeet. Toes arched. Pads are always black.

TAIL

Very well furnished. While standing relaxed, tail hangs straight down with the last vertebra reaching to or below the hock. In movement, tail is ideally carried no higher than the level of the back, with a curve up at the end permitted. Tail should not be carried curled up over the back.

GAIT

The Leonberger has a ground-covering, even and balanced gait. The stride is powerful, easy and elastic, with good reach and strong drive giving the impression of effortless power. In motion, the Leonberger maintains a level topline. Viewed from the front and from behind, forelegs and hind legs travel straight. As the dog's speed increases, the legs tend to converge toward the centre line. Essential to sound movement is the balance of correct front and rear assemblies, and anatomically correct overall structure.

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.

Definition of faults: Any deviation from the standard is a fault. In determining whether a fault is minor or major, these two factors should be used as a guide:

Deviation: The extent to which it deviates from the standard; and

Impact: The extent to which such deviation would affect the Leonberger's ability to fulfill its role as a working dog and family companion.

- Ectropion or entropion of the eyelids
- Undershot or overshot mouth, or wry bite
- Any missing teeth, other than M3s
- Drooling or wet mouth
- High tail carriage with tail curled over back
- Complete deficiency of breed type
- Excessive amount of white hair on chest that exceeds 12.5 cm (5 in) in width; white on feet extending beyond the toes to the pasterns
- Parted or excessively curly coat
- Poor temperament
- Sculpting of coat with scissors or trimming of whiskers

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Any coat colour other than those listed; this includes solid brown with brown nose and brown pads, grey, silver, solid black, and black and tan colouring
- Complete lack of mask
- Overshot more than 5 mm (0.2 in) and undershot more than 3.25 mm (0.125 in)
- Two or more missing teeth, other than M3s
- Severe anatomical faults
- Males without two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum

