

KANGAL DOG

Official U.K.C. Breed Standard

History

The Kangal Dog is an ancient flock-guarding breed, thought to be related to the early mastiff-type dogs depicted in Assyrian art. The breed is named for the Kangal District of Sivas Province in Central Turkey where it probably originated. Although the breed has long been associated with the family of the Aga of Kangal, large landholders and chieftains, the majority are bred by villagers who take great pride in the dogs' ability to guard their flocks of sheep and goats from such traditional predators as the wolf, bear, and jackal. The relative isolation of the Sivas-Kangal region has kept the Kangal Dog free of cross-breeding and has resulted in a natural breed of remarkable uniformity in appearance, disposition, and behavior. Despite its regional origin, many Turks consider the Kangal Dog as their national dog. Turkish government and academic institutions operate breeding kennels where Kangal Dogs are bred and pedigrees are carefully maintained. The Kangal Dog has even appeared on a Turkish postage stamp.

The Kangal Dog was first reported in European and North American canine literature by David and Judith Nelson, Americans who studied the dogs while resident in Turkey. The Nelsons imported their first Kangal Dog to the United States in 1985. This dog, and subsequent imports, provided the foundation for the Kangal Dog in the United States.

The Kangal Dog was recognized by the United Kennel Club in 1998.

General Appearance

The Kangal Dog is a large, powerful, heavy-boned dog, whose size and proportions have developed naturally as a result of its continued use in Turkey as a guardian against predators. The head is large and moderately wide with drop ears. A properly proportioned Kangal Dog is slightly longer (measured from prosternum to point of buttocks) than tall (measured from the withers to the ground), and length of the front leg (measured from point of elbow to the ground) should equal slightly more than one-half of the dog's height. The tail, which is typically curled, completes the distinctive silhouette. The Kangal Dog has a double coat that is moderately short and quite dense. The Kangal Dog has a black mask and black velvety ears that contrast with a whole body color which may range from light dun to gray. Honorable scars or other evidences of injury resulting from working in the field are not to be penalized.

Characteristics

The typical Kangal Dog is first and foremost a stock guardian dog and possesses a temperament typical of such dogs—alert, territorial, and defensive of the domestic animals or the human family to which it has bonded. The Kangal Dog has the strength, speed, and courage to intercept and confront threats to the flocks of sheep and goats that it guards both in Turkey and the New World. Kangal Dogs prefer to intimidate predators but will take a physical stand and even attack if necessary. Kangal Dogs have an instinctive wariness of strange dogs but are not typically belligerent toward people. They are somewhat reserved with strangers but loyal and affectionate with family.

Head

The head is large but in proportion to the size of the dog without appearing heavy or coarse. The female's head is somewhat more refined than the male's head. Viewed from above, the broad skull tapers very slightly toward the place where the muzzle joins it and then tapers slightly from the base of the muzzle toward the nose. When viewed from the side, the length of the muzzle, measured from stop to the end of the nose, is slightly shorter than the length of the skull, measured from occiput to stop, in an approximate ratio of 2:3.

Faults: Narrow head.

SKULL -- The skull is broad between the ears and slightly domed. The ratio of skull width in relation to total head length is approximately 3:5. There is a slight central furrow which runs from the middle of the skull through the stop and gradually broadens into the wide base of the muzzle. The cheeks are moderately well developed. The stop is well-defined but not abrupt.

Faults: Skull too flat; skull too narrow

MUZZLE -- The muzzle is deep and moderately blunt due, in part, to the development of the upper lips which are somewhat padded, especially in mature males. When viewed from the side, the jaws are of equal length. The muzzle is blockier and stronger in the male. The lips are fairly tight and always black.

Faults: Snipey muzzle; over-developed flews.

TEETH -- The Kangal Dog has a complete set of large, evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors or level bite. Broken teeth resulting from field work are not to be penalized.

Serious faults: Over or undershot bite; more than two teeth missing; wry mouth.

NOSE -- The nose is large and solid black.

Disqualification: Liver or chocolate-colored nose

EYES -- The eyes are medium sized, somewhat round, set well apart and show no haw. Eye color ranges from deep brown to amber. Eye rims are black.

Serious faults: Pale yellow eyes; lack of solid black pigment on the eye rims; loose eye rims.

EARS -- The ears are pendant, medium sized, triangular in shape and rounded at the tips. The ears are set even with the outside corners of the skull. When alert, the ears may be carried slightly higher. The front edge of the ear is carried close to the cheek and, when pulled forward, the ears should amply cover the dog's eyes. In puppies, the ears may appear disproportionately large. In Turkey, the majority of Kangal Dogs have their ears cropped as puppies. Cropped ears on a dog imported from Turkey should not be penalized, but cropped ears on a domestic-bred dog are a disqualification.

Faults: Any ear carriage other than pendant; ears set too high or too low; ears too large or too small.

Disqualification: Cropped ears on a domestic-bred dog.

Neck

The neck is powerful and muscular, moderate in length, slightly arched, and rather thick. Some dewlap is present.

Faults: Short, heavy neck; overly long neck; exaggerated dewlap.

Forequarters

The shoulders are well muscled and moderately angulated. The forelegs are long, well boned, and set well apart, with strong, slightly sloping pasterns. The elbows move freely and close to the sides. The front quarters are slightly heavier in proportion to the hindquarters.

Faults: Loose shoulders or elbows in mature dogs; bowed front legs; feet that turn in or out; chest too wide or too narrow.

Body

The body is powerful and muscular. The line of the back inclines very slightly downward from the withers, levels, and then rises with a slight arch over the short, muscular loin which blends into a moderately short and slightly sloping croup. The ribs are well sprung. The moderately wide chest is deep with the brisket extending down to the elbow. Tuck-up is moderate. The Kangal Dog is a working dog and should always be presented in well-muscled condition.

Faults: Narrow or poorly muscled chest; narrow rib cage; barrel chest; long back or long loin; steep croup; overweight or lack of muscle.

Hindquarters

The hindquarters are powerful and well-muscled although somewhat less substantial than the forequarters. The rear legs are well-boned and moderately angulated at the stifle and hock joints. The hind legs are parallel when viewed from the rear. The rear pasterns are moderate in length and slope slightly forward from the hock joint when the dog is standing in a natural position.

Faults: Poorly muscled thighs; insufficient or over-angulation at stifle or hock; rear feet turning in or out.

Feet

The feet are large with the front feet somewhat larger than the rear feet. They are either rounded or oval in shape with well-cushioned pads and toes that may be webbed. Nails, which may be black, white, or mixed in color, should be kept blunt. Rear dewclaws may be absent, present, single, or double. Dewclaws may be removed.

Faults: Splayed feet.

Tail

The tail, which is set at the end of the croup is uncut, thick at the base, and tapering to the tip. The hair is slightly fuller on the tail than on the body. When the dog is in repose, the rather long tail reaches at least to the hock. When the dog is alert, the tail is carried in a curl over the back. The curl may be tight or loose but when the tail is curled tightly, the tip of the tail may fall off to one side of the back.

Faults: Extensive tail feathering or plumed tail; tail too short or too long; tail carried off-center (to the side of one hip) when curled; kinked tail.

Coat

The Kangal Dog has a short double coat, neither wavy nor fluffy. In cold weather, the coat is very dense, nearly uniform in length. In warm weather, much of the undercoat is shed, leaving a short, flatter outer coat. The outer coat is harsh and the undercoat is very soft, dense, and sometimes gray in color. The hair on the neck, shoulders and tail is only slightly longer than the hair on the body. The hair on the tail is never plumed or feathered. Most Kangal Dogs have a strip of flatter hair along the topline. The hair on the face, head, and ears is quite short.

Faults: Feathering anywhere on the body or on the legs or tail; lack of undercoat; medium, long or shaggy coat.

Color

Color is an important characteristic of the Kangal Dog. In Turkey, non-standard colors or patterns are indicators that the dog is not a purebred Kangal Dog. The true Kangal Dog color is always solid and ranges from a light dun or pale, dull gold to a steel gray, depending on the amount of black or gray in the outer guard hairs and in the soft, cashmere-like undercoat. This basic color is set off by a black mask which may completely cover the muzzle and even extend over the top of the head. Ears are always black. White is only permitted on the feet, chest and chin. The white on the feet may extend half way up the forearm. The white on the chest may range from a small spot to a blaze which may extend in a narrow stripe under the chest. Such blazes are frequently outlined with dark hair. Only a small white spot is allowed on the chin. The tip of the tail is usually black and a black spot in the middle of the tail is often present.

Disqualifications: Solid black, white, or chocolate colored dogs; dogs with piebald, brindle or other parti-colored patterns; white markings on the face other than the small white spot on the chin; albinism.

Faults: Poorly defined black mask.

Height and Weight

Desirable height at maturity (minimum two years), measured at the withers, ranges from 30 to 32 inches for males and 28 to 30 inches for females. A male Kangal Dog in good condition should weigh between 110 and 145 pounds. A female should weigh between 90 and 120 pounds. Height and weight in both sexes may exceed the foregoing and should not be penalized as long as overall balance is maintained.

Fault: Obese, soft condition.

Gait

The Kangal Dog's movement reflects the breed's combination of strength and agility. Its natural gait is relaxed and efficient with strides of moderate length. The back remains level, and the front and rear legs on each side move in a parallel fashion. As speed increases, however, the width between the legs decreases and the tendency to single track increases. Pacing at a slow gait is acceptable.

Disqualifications

Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid. Viciousness, marked shyness or cowardliness. Piebald, brindle, or parti-colored coat color patterns. White, black, chocolate, or liver whole body color. Liver or chocolate color nose. Albinism. Cropped ears on a domestic-bred dog.