

LEONBERGER CLUB OF AMERICA

AKC BREED STANDARD FOR THE LEONBERGER

Submitted July, 2007

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Leonberger is a large, muscular, and elegant dog with a balanced rectangular build and is distinguished by a black mask and double coat. Mature males carry a lion-like mane on the neck and chest. For its size, the Leonberger is light on its feet and graceful in action. A dog or a bitch should be easily distinguishable as such. The Leonberger must always be shown naturally, with no alterations of coat, except for neatening of feet.

According to its original purpose as a family and working farm dog, the Leonberger was valued for his watch and draft capabilities. In the present day the Leonberger is an agreeable companion for modern living conditions. The Leonberger is vigilant, obedient, and confident in all situations. As a multi-purpose working dog the Leonberger is comfortable performing a wide variety of jobs.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

Size: Measured at the withers, the male is 28 to 31.5 inches in height (preferred height is 30 inches), and the female is 25.5 inches to 29.5 inches (preferred height is 27.5 inches). Weight is in proportion to the overall size and structure. If proportion, substance, and balance are present, a slight deviation above standard is tolerated. Under height is a **severe fault**. The minimum height does not apply to any Leonberger under 12 months of age.

Proportion: The Leonberger has a rectangular and balanced build. Desired proportion of height at withers to length of body is 9 to 10. Height is measured at the withers; body length is measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks. The angulation of front and rear quarters are in balance. Overall balance and proportion are equally as important as size.

Substance: The depth of chest is ideally 50 percent of the height at withers. Bone is substantial and in proportion to size of body; medium to heavy, never light or coarse. Lack of bone or substance, or the opposite, overly heavy and massive, are faults.

HEAD

The head is deeper than it is broad. The ratio of length of muzzle to length of skull is about 1 to 1. Skin is close fitting with no wrinkles. Cheeks are only slightly developed. Males have a strong masculine head without being blocky, whereas female heads express femininity. **Expression/Mask:** A good-natured expression is required. Face is covered with a black mask that extends up and over the eyes. A lesser mask is acceptable, but not desirable. **Disqualification:** Complete lack of mask. **Eyes:** Dark brown is preferred over light. Eyes are medium size, almond shaped, neither deep set nor protruding, neither too close together nor too wide apart. Eyelids close-fitting, not showing any haw. The white of the eye not reddened. **Disqualification:** Eyes without any brown pigment (yellow); entropion or ectropion lids. **Ears:** When alert, ears are level with top of skull and set slightly forward. Ears are of medium size, fleshy, hanging close to the head, triangular and pendant. **Skull:** As seen from the front and in profile, skull is slightly arched. Back skull is slightly longer than wide. Width of back skull is only slightly broader than it is at the eyes. **Stop:** Clearly recognizable and moderately defined. **Muzzle:** Rather long, never running to a point; nasal bridge of even breadth, slightly arched (Roman nose), never dipped. The jaw should remain 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:** Flews should be close fitting, corners of lips closed, dry, black in color. Some de-pigmentation due to aging is acceptable. Drooling or wet mouth are a **severe fault**. **Teeth/Bite:** Teeth 42 in number (20 upper, 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite, lower incisors touching inside of upper incisors. A pincer bite is also accepted. Dropped lower incisors, in an otherwise normal bite, are not indicative of a skeletal malocclusion and should be considered only a minor deviation. One missing tooth other than the lower M3s is a **severe fault**. **Disqualification:** Overshot, undershot (when incisors do not touch or mesh); wry mouth; two or more missing teeth (with the exception of M3s).

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck: Muscular, well set on shoulders, long enough for a proud head carriage, blends smoothly into withers. No dewlap. **Topline:** Withers set above a firm level back. Rump not overbuilt. **Body:** Chest, broad, roomy, and deep, reaching at least to the level of the elbows, pro-sternum easily felt. Fore and rear quarters well-muscled. **Ribs:** Well-sprung, oval. **Underline:** Only slightly tucked up. **Loin:** Broad, strong and well-muscled. **Croup:** Broad, relatively long, gently sloped, flowing smoothly into root of tail. A short, level croup is a **fault**. **Tail:** While standing relaxed, tail hangs straight down with the last vertebrae 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. An exuberant tail carriage, though higher than ideal, should not be confused with an incorrectly placed tail. **Disqualification:** Tail consistently curled over the back, making a wheel.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulder Angulation: Well laid-back, well-muscled and lying close to the body. The shoulder meets the upper arm at approximately a right angle (90-degrees) allowing for excellent reach. Shoulder and upper arm are rather long and about equal in length. **Elbows:** Close to body. In or out at the elbows is a **fault**. **Forelegs:** Well-boned, muscular, straight and parallel to each other. **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), with black pads.

HINDQUARTERS

Angulation: In balance with forequarters. 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, placed widely enough apart to match a properly-built body. **Thighs:** Upper and lower of equal length, slanting and strongly muscled. **Stifles:** Angle clearly defined. **Hocks:** Strong, moderately-angled and well-bent. **Feet:** Turned neither in nor out, may be slightly elongated compared to forefeet. Toes arched, pads always black. **Dewclaws:** Rear dewclaws may be present.

COAT

Leonbergers have a water resistant, double coat on the body and short fine hair on the muzzle and front of limbs. The long, outer coat is medium-soft to coarse, lies flat and is never parted. It is straight, but some wave is permitted. Mature males carry a mane, which extends over neck and chest. The undercoat is soft and dense, although it may be less so in summer months or warmer climates. In spite of the double coat, the outline of the body should always be recognizable.

Leonbergers have distinct feathering on back of forelegs, and ample feathering on breeches but feathering shall not dominate overall impression. Tail is very well furnished. Females are less likely to carry a coat as long as males. This disparity must not be a consideration when the female is judged against the male.

Leonbergers are presented naturally and untrimmed. No scissoring is allowed with the exception of trimming excess hair on toes for neatness. Any other trimming or shaping of the coat is penalized to the extent that it is effectively eliminated from competition. **Disqualification:** Curly or corded coat.

COLOR

Coat colors are lion-yellow, golden to red-brown and all combinations thereof, each with a black mask. Sand colored (cream, pale yellow) is acceptable. All colors may have black tips on the outer coat but black must never determine the dog's basic color. A small stripe or white patch on the chest, and some white on toes is acceptable. **Disqualification:** Any coat color other than those listed; white extending above the toes to pasterns; or, white on chest exceeding 4" in width.

GAIT

The Leonberger has a ground-covering, even and balanced gait. The stride is powerful, easy, free 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 centerline. Essential to sound movement is the balance of correct front and rear assemblies and anatomically correct structure.

TEMPERAMENT

The temperament of the Leonberger is a distinguishing characteristic. Self-assured and calm with a steady, playful demeanor; willing to please, and possessing a good capacity for learning, the Leonberger has a marked friendliness towards children. He does not show fear, shyness, or aggression towards people or other dogs.

FAULTS

Any deviation from these specifications is a fault. In determining whether a fault is minor, serious, 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 actually affect the Leonberger's ability to fulfill its role as a family companion or multi-purpose working dog.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Complete lack of mask
- Eyes without any brown pigment, (yellow), entropic or ectropic
- Bite that is undershot, overshot or wry mouth
- 2 or more missing teeth other than lower M3s
- Tail consistently curled over the back, making a wheel
- Curly or corded coat
- Coat colors other than those listed
- White extending above the toes (to pasterns) or on chest, a stripe that exceeds 4 inches in width