



BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

Group 1: Shepherds and herding breeds
With working trial



ORIGIN: Belgium-France

UTILIZATION: Originally the Bouvier des Flandres was used as a herding dog, as a draught dog and as churning dog. The modernisation of farm equipment has affected these first tasks and nowadays the Bouvier des Flandres is above all used as a guard dog for the estate and the farm, as a defence and police dog. Its physical and behavioural aptitudes, its great qualities of scent, initiative and intelligence warrant its use as a tracking dog, a messenger dog and a gamekeeper's dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

As its name indicates, the Bouvier des Flandres (Flanders Cattle Dog) is native to Flanders, to both Belgian and French regions of that name, since they are not divided by any natural frontiers. The cowmen and drovers of stock in Flanders needing good dogs to drive their herds, only selected from the local dogs available those specimens which possessed the required physical and behavioural qualities. The present day Bouvier des Flandres has inherited these qualities.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Sub-brachymorphic. Short and compact body, strong and well-muscled limbs. The Bouvier des Flandres gives the impression of power, but without clumsiness. The Bouvier des Flandres is to be judged in its natural stance, without physical contact with the handler.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Length of body from point of shoulder to point of buttock should be approximately equal to height at withers.
- Proportions of length of skull to length of muzzle are 3 to 2.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

The Bouvier des Flandres has the calm, thoughtful character of a sensible, but fearless dog. Its lively look indicates intelligence, energy and audacity. It is essential that the Bouvier des Flandres should retain its aptitude for work. Any change which could harm this must be penalised.

HEAD

The head has a massive appearance, still more accentuated by the beard and moustache. It is in proportion to the body and stature. Its clean cut lines are obvious to the touch.

CRANIAL REGION:

Well-developed and flat, slightly less broad than long. Toplines of skull and muzzle are parallel. Frontal groove hardly denoted.

Stop: Only slightly pronounced; more apparent than real, due to upstanding eyebrows.

FACIAL REGION:

Nose: Nose continues the muzzle in a line which is slightly convex towards its end. It must be well-developed, rounded at the sides and always black in colour. Wide-open nostrils.

Muzzle: Broad, powerful, well-boned, straight in its upper line, narrowing towards the nose, but never becoming pointed. Its length should be shorter than the skull by 2 : 3. Circumference measured just below the eyes should be approximately equal to length of head.

Lips: Well-fitting and strongly pigmented.

Jaws/Teeth: Jaws must be powerful and of equal length. Teeth are strong, healthy, white and evenly set. Scissor or pincer bite. Dentition must be complete.

Cheeks: Flat and clean, zygomatic arches are not very protruding.

EYES: Frank and energetic expression, neither protruding nor sunken. They should be slightly oval in shape, set horizontally. Colour should be as dark as possible in relation to coat. Light and wild-looking eyes should be strongly penalised. Lids black, without the slightest indication of unpigmented areas. Haw should never be visible.

EARS: Cropped in triangle, carried upright, set high, very mobile; a crop proportioned to the head size is recommended.

Un-cropped ears: Position: Set high, above eye level, flaps falling vertically. The fold must not stand higher than the top of the skull.

Shape and carriage: Half-long, forming an equilateral triangle, slightly rounded at tip, lying flat against cheeks, except the slight lift up at top of ear set; neither folded nor curled, in proportion with head size; covered with very short hair.

NECK: Should spring cleanly from the shoulders and is carried sufficiently upright. Strong, well muscled, widening gradually towards the shoulders. Length slightly shorter than length of head. Nape powerful and slightly arched. No dewlap.

BODY

Powerful, close-coupled and short.

Topline: Upper line of back and loins horizontal, tight and firm.

Withers: Slightly raised.

Back: Short, broad, muscled and well-supported, with no sign of weakness, yet remaining flexible.

Loins: Short, broad, well muscled; must be flexible, with no sign of weakness.

Croup: Must follow as closely as possible the horizontal line of the back and blend imperceptibly into the curve of the buttocks. Broad but not excessively so in males, more developed in bitches. A croup which falls away or a goose rump is a serious fault.

Chest: Broad and well let down as far as level of elbows, but not cylindrical. The first ribs are slightly arched, the others rounded and well-sloped to the rear, giving the desired length of chest. Flat ribs to be severely penalised. The distance from the point of the breast-bone (manubrium) to the last rib must be considerable, about 7/10 of the height at the withers. Underline and belly: The underside of the chest rises very slightly towards the belly, which is only slightly tucked up. Flanks must be short, especially in males.

TAIL: Set relatively high, the tail must continue the line of the backbone. Some dogs are born tailless and must not be penalised for this. The tail should be docked in the first week of birth leaving 2 or 3 vertebrae. In countries where docking is banned, the whole tail is admitted.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS:

General appearance: Front legs have strong bone and are well muscled. Perfectly straight and parallel seen from the front.

Shoulder: Relatively long, muscled, without being heavy, moderately oblique. Shoulder blade and humerus are approximately of the same length.

Upper arm: Moderately oblique.

Elbow: Close to body and parallel. Elbows turning in or out, in a natural stance or on the move, are considered a fault.

Forearm: Whether seen in profile or from the front, they must be perfectly straight, parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground. They must be well-muscled and with good bone.

Wrist (carpus): Exactly in line with forearm. Only the pisiform bone juts out at the back of the wrist. Strong bone.

Front pasterns (metacarpus): Strong bone, quite short, sloping forward very slightly.

Forefeet: Short, round, compact, neither toeing in nor toeing out. Toes should be tight and arched, with strong and dark nails. Thick and hard pads.

HINDQUARTERS:

General appearance: Strong, with pronounced muscle, upright and perfectly parallel seen from the rear. Must move in the same planes as the front legs.

Upper thighs: Broad, well-muscled, parallel in direction to the median plane of the body. Femur must be neither too straight nor too sloping. Buttocks well let down, trousered and firm.

Stifle (Knee): Set approximately on an imaginary straight line from the highest point of the hip (iliac crest) perpendicular to the ground.

Lower thighs: Moderately long, well-muscled, neither too straight nor too sloping. Hock joint: Rather close to the ground, broad, tight. Seen from behind they should be straight and perfectly parallel when standing. On the move they should turn neither in nor out.

Rear pasterns (metatarsus): Strong and lean, rather cylindrical, perpendicular to the ground when the dog is in a natural standing position. No dewclaws.

Hind feet: Round, solid, toes tight and arched, with strong black nails. Thick hard pads.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

The whole of the Bouvier des Flandres must be harmoniously proportioned to ensure free, true and proud movement. Walking and trotting are the normal gaits, although one does also encounter amblers. At a normal trot the Bouvier des Flandres covers its traces i.e. covers the front pad marks with the rear.

SKIN: Tight fitting; no excessive slackness; the edges of the eyelids and lips are always very dark.

COAT

Hair: The coat is very abundant, the outercoat forming with the dense undercoat a protective layer perfectly adapted to the sudden climatic changes in this breed's native land. The hair must be coarse to the touch, dry and matt, neither too long nor too short (about 6 cm.), slightly tousled but never woolly or curly. Shorter on the head and very short on the outside of the ears. The inner part of the ear flap is protected by medium long hair. The upper lip carries a moustache and the chin a full beard, giving the forbidding expression so typical of this breed. The eyebrows consist of raised hairs, accentuating the shape of the superciliary ridges without ever veiling the eyes. The coat is particularly harsh and rasping on the upper part of the back. It shortens very slightly on the limbs but remains harsh. A flat coat should be avoided because it denotes a lack of undercoat. The undercoat is a padding made up of fine dense hair which grows beneath the outer coat and together with the topcoat it forms a waterproof covering.

Colour: The Bouvier des Flandres' coat is usually grey, brindle or overlaid with black. A completely uniform black is also accepted, without being favoured. Light-coloured, so-called washed-out coats are not acceptable. A white star on the chest is tolerated.

SIZE AND WEIGHT

Height at withers: 62-68 cm for males, 59-65 cm for females, with a tolerance of plus or minus 1 cm. For both sexes the ideal size is the middle range, i.e. 65 cm for males, 62 cm for females.

Weight: approximately 35 - 40 kg for males 27 – 35 kg for females.

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.

SERIOUS FAULTS:

- Timid dog.
- Molossoid appearance, too heavy a dog.
- Body obviously too long (slight tolerance for females) or too light.
- Too massive a head, marked stop, pronounced frontal groove, very prominent zygomatic arches.
- Domed skull, narrow skull, very prominent occipital crest, important lack of parallelism between the topline of skull and muzzle.
- Muzzle too long, pinched nose.

- Loose, thick or overlapping lips.
- Wry jaw; malocclusion.
- Small, unhealthy or poorly set teeth.
- Light eyes, bulging eyes, untypical expression.
- Uncropped ears which are curled or folded.
- Cylindrical neck, dewlap.
- Back very sagging, very arched.
- Very faulty stance, obviously camped stance, sickle hocks.
- Silky coat, lack of undercoat, puffed up coat, shiny, over groomed.
- Lack of head furnishings.
- Simultaneous faults in pigmentation (nose, lips, eyelids).

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Obvious lack of type.
- Unpigmented nose or of any colour other than black.
- Pointed muzzle.
- Pronounced over- or undershot bite.
- Any missing teeth other than one P1.
- Wall eyes or wild expression.
- Entropion, ectropion, unpigmented eyelids.
- Coat chocolate brown, white, pepper and salt, washed-out colour and any other pale fawn going from light to red, even with black overlay.
- Height at withers outside the range of the standard.

N.B:

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation, should be used for breeding.