

REGISTRATION OF BELGIAN SHEPHERD DOGS

General information

Four varieties are recognised around the world today: the Malinois, Tervueren, Groenendael and Laekenois, each of which varies in coat colour, texture and/or length. As the recognised varieties have changed constantly, there inevitably has been much interbreeding between them.

In the Belgian Stud Book (LOSH) Belgian Shepherd Dogs are registered as ONE breed, with four varieties and the four varieties are listed separately.

The coats and colour differentiate the varieties, but, morphologically, there is only one type of Belgian Shepherd. A single breed type has been preserved and the breed did not diverge into four different types

Policy towards registering puppies of a variety other than that of their parents

A puppy of a variety other than its parents will also be registered in the Belgian Studbook (LOSH), and the variety of this puppy will be mentioned.

Example: a puppy Tervueren born from two Groenendael parents is registered as a Tervueren (not as a 'red' or 'fawn Groenendael') and is delivered a 'first class' pedigree LOSH, just like a puppy Tervueren out of two Tervueren parents. On the LOSH pedigree of this puppy Tervueren it is only denoted by (G) that the parents are Groenendael. Later on, this puppy Tervueren will only be allowed of mating with a partner of the same variety.

A Belgian LOSH pedigree of a Tervueren born from Groenendael parents is completely identical to a pedigree of a Tervueren born from Tervueren parents, or to a pedigree of a Tervueren out of parents, one of them a Tervueren born from two Groenendael and the other a Tervueren born from two Tervueren. This last example of a pedigree proves that the two Tervueren parents are considered completely 'identical in value' and that they are undepreciated Tervueren.

In this connection we can quote Dr. M. Willis who writes: 'it is feasible for black Groenendaels to give rise to red animals which look to be Tervueren and indeed are Tervueren'.

As a consequence, there seems to be absolutely no reason why in other countries a Belgian Shepherd Dog would be denied registration, unless on the Belgian pedigree they are three generations pure to their variety!

It is important to widen the gene pool rather than restrict it.

It should always be possible, when examining the pedigrees of Belgian Shepherd dogs, to verify to which coat type or variety the ancestors belong. A knowledge of the variety of the parents, the grand-parents and the further ancestors of a Belgian Shepherd Dog, is for the breeders, absolutely necessary information.

Important conclusion: in Belgium, a puppy of a variety other than his parents will be registered according to the variety it resembles and will be included in the Belgian Studbook. *The FCI-countries have adopted this concept, as Belgium is the country of origin.*

The policy in Belgium towards the registration of Belgian Shepherd Dogs

In 1999 'The Kennel Club', in order to ascertain the policy in Belgium, posed five questions to which I have given the following answers.

1. Are Belgian Shepherd Dogs registered as one breed or four?

In our national Stud Book (LOSH) they are registered as ONE breed, with four varieties. According to the varieties to which they belong they are separately listed in the following order: Groenendael, Laekenois, Malinois, Tervueren.

2. At Shows, are they classified as one or four breeds?

They are classified as ONE breed.

The four varieties are judged separately and Challenge certificates (CAC's and CACIB's) are awarded to each separate variety.

In this way, we avoid a dominance of one variety and we maintain the independent status of each variety, which is beneficial especially for the rarest variety, the Laekenois (unknown, unloved!), which has always suffered from isolation and does not attract enough attention.

The possibility of awarding CC's to each variety can also be seen as a stimulation for the further development of the breed in general.

3. Is interbreeding permitted between the varieties?

Normally, inter-variety breeding is forbidden. However, by way of exception, a permission can be given for certain variety combinations and in special cases, when the request of the breeder is supported by serious and strong arguments. 'An improvement of a variety' or 'an indispensable broadening of the breeding material' should appear necessary.

In Belgium, the request has to be introduced by the breeder six months in advance and has to comprise:

- a colour photo of each of the breeding partners;
- a copy of the pedigrees;
- certificates from 'breed surveys' (in Belgium called 'selections') that the dogs are suitable or recommended for breeding;
- the results, gradings ('qualifications') and titles obtained on shows by the breeding partners;
- a clear formulation/wording of the purpose of the intended inter-variety breeding, as part of a breeding programme.

Only for the following three variety combinations a permission can be given:

Groenendael x Tervueren

Tervueren x Malinois

Laekenois x Malinois

The progeny of the inter-variety mating is registered in the Stud Book (LOSH), each puppy according to its variety. Matings later on of such a descendent are only allowed with a breeding partner of the same variety. The progeny of the inter-variety breeding has to stay in Belgium, because these dogs have to be examined or followed up by the 'Belgian Shepherd Dog Selection Commission'.

We think that, from time to time, not as a regular practice, inter-variety breeding can be beneficial, because this way, a wider range of bloodlines becomes possible in a variety.

4. If so, how many such matings have been recorded in the last 5 years?

No such matings have been recorded in the last 5 years in Belgium! This proves that permissions for inter-variety breeding are really very exceptional.

A permission for an inter-variety mating is only possible when the mating can be considered as 'a vital necessity for a variety'. In the future we expect very few permissions for inter-variety matings, always and only on special conditions and in special circumstances.

However, in every FCI-country, it should always be possible to obtain, from the competent national breeding commission or Kennel Club, a permission for an inter-variety mating.

5. What is the policy towards registering puppies of a variety other than that of their parents?

A puppy of a variety other than his parents will also be registered in our Studbook (LOSH), and the variety of this puppy will be mentioned. Later on, this puppy will only be allowed of mating with a partner of the same variety.

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