

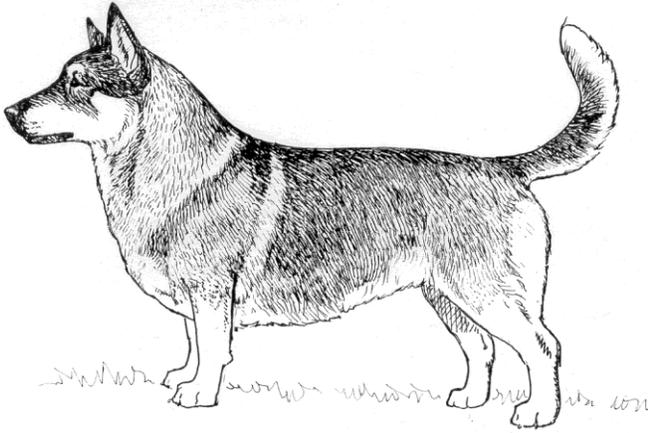
# SWEDISH VALLHUND

## Official UKC Breed Standard

Revised January 1, 1998

Herding Dog Group

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The goals and purposes of this breed standard include: to furnish guidelines for breeders who wish to maintain the quality of their breed and to improve it; to advance this breed to a state of similarity throughout the world; and to act as a guide for judges.

Breeders and judges have the responsibility to avoid any conditions or exaggerations that are detrimental to the health, welfare, essence and soundness of this breed, and must take the responsibility to see that these are not perpetuated.

Any departure from the following 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 and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

### HISTORY

The history of the Swedish Vallhund dates back to eighth century Sweden where the breed worked as farm dogs, primarily herding cattle. The breed was nearly extinct in 1942 when Count Bjorn Von Rosen and K. G. Zettersten made a concerted effort to revive the breed. They tracked down the best remaining specimens in the country and carefully bred them to a standard written by Count Von Rosen. The breed was recognized by the Swedish Kennel Club in 1943. In 1964, the name in Sweden was changed to "Vasgotaspets," after the province of Vastergotland where the breed continues to flourish. In Sweden, it is believed that the Vallhund traveled to Wales with Viking raiders and became the ancestor of the Corgi breeds.

The Swedish Vallhund was recognized by the United Kennel Club January 1, 1996.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Swedish Vallhund is a small, sturdily-built, Spitz-type dog, with a wedge-shaped head, prick ears, and close-fitting, hard coat of short-to-medium length. The correct relationship of height to length of body is 2:3. The tail may be natural or bobbed. The appearance of the Swedish Vallhund conveys intelligence, alertness and energy.

*Disqualifications:* Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid.

### CHARACTERISTICS

The Swedish breed standard says that in type, the Vallhund is a wolf-like animal in everything except size. His short legs, intelligence and energy made him suitable as a herding dog. Those same characteristics today make him successful in obedience, agility, tracking, and any other activity in which he is free to take an active part. He requires plenty of exercise and mental stimulation. The correct double coat with the characteristic "harness markings" are essential features of this breed.

Balance, outline, intelligence, temperament, and movement are of overriding importance. The Swedish Vallhund is a thoroughly sound animal willing and able to do its work. Working dogs are not to be penalized under any conditions for scars or blemishes that are due to occupational injuries.

This breed matures slowly and individual dogs may not reach their prime until as late as four years of age.

*Disqualifications:* Viciousness or extreme shyness.

### HEAD

The head is clean, dry, and fairly long, with a distinct stop. When viewed from the top or side, the skull and muzzle taper evenly toward the nose to form a blunt wedge shape.

*Faults:* Short head; insufficient stop.

**SKULL** - The skull is broad and nearly flat.

*Faults:* A too short skull; a too round skull.

**MUZZLE** - When viewed from the side, the blunt muzzle looks rather square and is just slightly shorter than the skull. It should be well filled-in under the eyes. The lower jaw is strong and blunt but not protruding. Lips are black and tightly closed.

*Faults:* Loosely hanging lips; a shallow or receding lower jaw; a pinched or snipy muzzle; a short muzzle.

**TEETH** - The Swedish Vallhund has a complete set of good-size, evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite.

*Serious Faults:* Over or undershot bite; more than two missing teeth.

**NOSE** - The nose is always solid black. In profile, the nose is on the same line as the top of the muzzle and does not extend beyond the forepart of the muzzle.

*Faults:* Nose any color other than solid black.

**EYES** - The eyes are of medium size, oval in shape, and dark brown with black eye rims.

**EARS** - The ears are of medium size, prick, and set at the outer edge of the skull, but not too low. The tips of the ears are pointed but never cropped, and point upward. The leather is hard from base to tip and covered with smooth hair. The ears are mobile and react sensitively to sounds.

*Faults:* Ears set too low; ears too large; hanging or drop ears.

### **NECK**

The neck is long, strongly muscled and with good reach, blending smoothly into well laid back shoulders.

*Faults:* Neck too short.

### **FOREQUARTERS**

The forequarters are well angulated. The shoulder blades are long and well laid back. The upper arm is only slightly shorter than the shoulder blade. The upper arm lies close to the ribs but is still very mobile, with the elbow moving parallel to the body. The elbow is set far enough back to allow a line perpendicular to the ground to be drawn from the tip of the shoulder blade through to the elbow.

**FORELEGS** - The foreleg is short and straight when viewed from the side. When viewed from front, the foreleg is slightly curved to allow the front legs to move freely around the deep chest. The forelegs are well boned. The pasterns are strong and flexible. The feet point straight forward.

*Faults:* Short upper arm; out at elbows; steep or upright shoulder; pasterns too upright; lack of curve in foreleg; fine bone; "terrier" front.

### **BODY**

The ratio of height (measured from withers to the ground) to length of body (measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks) is 2:3. The topline of the back is level and well-muscled with a short, strong loin. The ribs are well sprung out from the spine, forming a strong back, then curving down and inward to form a body that would be nearly oval if viewed in cross-section. The chest is moderately broad and let down about two-fifths the length of the foreleg. When viewed from the side, the lowest point of the chest is immediately behind the foreleg. The forechest should extend in a shallow oval shape well in front of the forelegs but the sternum should not be excessively

pointed. The croup is broad and very slightly sloping. The belly is only slightly tucked up.

*Faults:* Chest too deep; croup too sloping.

### **HINDQUARTERS**

The thighs are very muscular and powerful for the size of the dog.

**HIND LEGS** - The rear legs have good bone and are moderately well angulated at stifle and hock joints. The rear pasterns should be marginally shorter than the lower leg and perpendicular to the ground when viewed from any angle. Viewed from the rear, the rear pasterns should be parallel to each other.

*Faults:* Over angulation; cow hocks; open hocks; thin or weak thighs; fine bone.

### **FEET**

The feet are of medium size, oval in shape, well-knuckled up, with thick strong pads. Dewclaws may be removed.

*Faults:* Splay feet; poorly cushioned pads.

### **TAIL**

The Swedish Vallhund may be born with a tail or a natural bob. In the past, virtually all Swedish Vallhund standards required a short tail so most tails were docked. Now that England and many European nations have banned tail docking, the following described tails are acceptable:

The Spitz Tail, which curls over the back;

The Long Tail, which is over 4 inches long and of any shape and carriage;

The Stub Tail, which may be up to 4 inches long and is ideally carried no higher than the line of the back to preserve the historically desired outline of the body;

The Natural Bob, which consists of no discernable tail; and,

The Kup, or docked tail.

The Swedish Vallhund may be shown with a natural or docked tail.

### **COAT**

The Swedish Vallhund has a water-repellent double coat. The outer coat is harsh and lies close to the body. The undercoat is thick, soft and dense. The coat is short on the front of the legs, slightly longer on the neck, chest and back part of the hind legs. A long outer coat with feathering on the ears and back of the legs may be seen from time to time but it is not desirable. The Vallhund should be shown in its natural condition, but the feet may be tidied if desired.

*Faults:* Coat too soft; coat too long; open coat; absence of undercoat.

*Serious Faults:* "Fluffy" coat (i.e., a very full, woolly coat with almost no coarse topcoat hair, coupled with extensive feathering on ears and back of legs).

## **COLOR**

Color may be any shade of gray, red or yellow/brown sable or any combination of these colors as long as they are sabled. Hair in lighter shades of these colors is desirable on the muzzle, throat, chest, belly, buttocks, feet, and hocks. White in place of these lighter shades is also acceptable as long as the amount of white never exceeds one-third of the dog's total color. A black sable coat with the aforementioned lighter shading is permissible. A "blue" coat may occasionally be seen but it is very undesirable. A well-defined mask, with lighter hair around eyes, on muzzle, and under the throat, giving a distinct contrast to the upper mask is highly desirable. A dark muzzle is acceptable. A band of lighter hair, running from near the withers to behind the elbow is known as "harness markings." These are strongly preferred.

*Faults:* Absence of harness markings.

*Serious Faults:* White markings extending over more than 30% of the dog; blue coat.

*Disqualification:* Albinism.

## **HEIGHT & WEIGHT**

Desirable height ranges from 12 to 14 inches, measured at the withers. Desirable weight ranges from 23 to 35 pounds. Dogs are generally larger than bitches.

## **GAIT**

The Swedish Vallhund is a herding dog which requires an easy, almost floating movement, agility, and endurance. The correct shoulder assembly and well-fitted elbows allow a long, free stride in front. The forelegs should reach well forward without too much lift. Viewed from the front, the legs do not move in exact parallel planes, but incline slightly inward to compensate for shortness of leg and width of chest. Hind legs should drive well under the body and move on a line with forelegs, with hocks turning neither in nor out. Feet should travel parallel to the line of motion with no tendency to swing out, cross over, or interfere with each other. Short, choppy movement; rolling or high-stepping gait; or close or overly wide movement are incorrect.

## **DISQUALIFICATIONS**

*(A dog with a Disqualification must not be considered for placement in a conformation event, and must be reported to UKC.)*

Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid.

Viciousness or extreme shyness.

Albinism.

*The docking of tails and cropping of ears in America is legal and remains a personal choice. However, as an international registry, the United Kennel Club, Inc. is aware that the practices of cropping and docking have*

*been forbidden in some countries. In light of these developments, the United Kennel Club, Inc. feels that no dog in any UKC event, including conformation, shall be penalized for a full tail or natural ears.*