

# Brief History of the Standard and Varieties of the Belgian Shepherd Dog (S.R.S.H. - U.R.C.S.H.)

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**The 1892 first standard** (published in the magazine *Chasse et Pêche* of March 24, 1892)

At their General Meeting on 3 April 1892, the *Club du Chien de Berger Belge* (founded on 29 September 1891) approved the standard developed by Professor Adolphe Reul (°1849 -+1907). Since the length, appearance and direction of the coat is different, this point has been adopted as the criterion for distinguishing the breed's three varieties: long hair, short hair and rough hair.

**The 1899 revised standard** (published in the magazine *Chasse et Pêche* of 24 September 1899)

In 1898, the *Club du Chien de Berger Belge* chose the path of homogeneity by selecting a specific colour for each of the three types of hair:

- long hair: uniform black
- short hair: fawn with black overlay (with black mask "cap de Maure" as far as possible)
- rough hair: dark ash-grey

The following text appeared in bold in the standard: "*The dogs without "pricked-up" ears are not to be taken into account.*" and "*The dogs without tail or with a simple stump, at birth or by docking, as well as those with tails that are curled or ringed, cannot claim any prize in shows.*"

In September 1905, the *Club du Chien de Berger Belge* renounced the patronage of the *Société Royale Saint-Hubert*. Early 1907, it was replaced by the *Berger Belge Club* (founded on 18 July 1898). This resulted in the recognition of the **fawn long hair** and the **fawn rough hair**. From that moment on the breed had **five** varieties. The procedure for adopting the standard of 1914 was interrupted by the War of 1914-1918.

## Recognition of old colours in 1920

At the General Consultative Meeting of 8 February 1920 of the *Société Royale Saint-Hubert*, the members vote unanimously to maintain the **five** existing varieties. The qualification of Belgian Shepherd is recognized for dogs with all coat colours belonging to the breed. The following matings were allowed:

- dogs of all colours with the same coat texture
- short hair with rough hair

The other matings, i.e. short hair x long hair and long hair x rough hair were banned.

In the absence of an official publication, the standard published in a booklet by the *Royal Berger Belge Club* in 1923, is taken as reference.

According to show rules and registration in the studbook (L.O.S.H.), the varieties were divided into eight different classes (eight C.A.C. per sex):

The 5 existing varieties:

1. Malinois Shepherd dog
2. Groenendael Shepherd dog
3. Belgian Shepherd dog with fawn long hair
4. Belgian Shepherd dog with fawn rough hair
5. Belgian Shepherd dog with dark ash-grey rough hair

The other varieties:

6. Belgian Shepherd dog with short hair, other than Malinois
7. Belgian Shepherd dog with long hair, other than black or fawn
8. Belgian Shepherd dog with rough hair, other than fawn or dark ash-grey.

Charles Hüge said:

The fawn and black with traces of white on the chest and sometimes on the extremities are the limits of the breed, in our opinion, but the fawn is very variable and widespread as a range, and there, we should not be exclusive because we must admit it entirely; she covers everything from deep red, sometimes with much black overlay, like foxes, to light cream, and this occurs frequently, even today, in the same litter.

As of 1 January 1934, the number of C.A.C. is reduced from eight to four according to the following divisions:

1. short hair, without distinction of colour (all colours are judged together)
2. rough hair, without distinction of colour (all colours are judged together)
3. long hair black Groenendael
4. long hair without distinction of colour (except black) (all colours are judged together)

For shows, the division of the varieties in eight classes by coat type and colour is maintained. (Chasse et Pêche of 14 January 1934)

During the meeting of the Breeding Section on 21 October 1945, the following matings were allowed:

- a) long hair x short hair; b) short hair x rough hair; c) all colours short hair; d) all colours long hair

### **The 1956 standard**

This standard was published in Chasse et Pêche on 1 December 1956, and maintains the colours historically belonging to the breed as confirmed by the Consultative Meeting of 1920, these are fawn, black, brindle, the whole scale of fawn and from grey to black. A new section about measurements was inserted.

F.E. Verbanck wrote:

Although Belgian Shepherds, other than Malinois, Groenendael, Tervueren and Laekenois, are not longer bred in a methodical way, we remember the splendid dogs with all the characteristics of a Belgian Shepherd. That is why it has been decided not to exclude them from our heritage. We will be probably happy to find specimens for breeding among them in the future.

From 1 January 1974 onwards, matings between varieties were forbidden, unless there were exceptional circumstances and the appropriate national breed councils gave their approval.

### **The 1978 standard**

The mask became obligatory for the Malinois and the Tervueren. For short hair, only the fawn with black overlay, i.e. Malinois, is still recognized. For the Tervueren, the standard states that "the colour fawn with black overlay being the most natural, is still preferred". With this formula, the standard of 1978 expands the Tervueren variety – until now reserved only to the rich fawn-coloured – to the sable with black overlay, called grey. There are no changes for the rough hair.

### **The 1989 standard**

Unlike the two previous standards, this standard is losing the paragraph describing the colours among the general characteristics of the breed. As a consequence, despite an unchanged text about the distinctive characteristics of the varieties of the rough hair, the variety is reduced to the Laekenois only, the fawn rough hair. The sable with black overlay, called grey, can no longer claim the qualification "excellent" or receive a CAC, CACIB or reserves.

### **The 2001 standard** (FCI Standard No. 15 of 13 March 2001)

Following the guidelines of the FCI, the new format is more comprehensive than the previous editions. The descriptions are more accurate and detailed. This standard confirms the "minimalist" colour conception around the four varieties: Malinois, Groenendael, Tervueren and Laekenois. The Tervueren whose colour is other than fawn with black overlay or who does not meet the required fawn intensity cannot be regarded as an elite specimen. There are also significant changes about the faults of dentition.

This is a summary of a more extensive article about the Varieties (history, coat colour and texture inheritance, inter-variety matings). Full text on: [www.belgiandogs.info](http://www.belgiandogs.info)