

Belgian History

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Before 1914.

In 1891 there was a meeting in Brussels which lead to the foundation of the **Club du Chien de Berger Belge** on 29 Sep 1891. On 15 Nov 1891 a first selection was held. 117 dogs were present which were of different type and color, with 3 different types of coat, with or without tail but the average height is between 50 and 55 cm.

On 03 Apr 1892, a first breed standard was made without distinguishing between coat colors but only on coat type. As of 1897 only dogs with a complete tail are accepted. The first distinguishing between coat colors was seen during an exposition. There was a separate class for the long haired black dogs which drew a lot of attention since these dogs were of high quality. Prof. Ad. Reul (who is the godfather of the Belgian Shepherd) claimed that the split between black long hair and long hair other colors was only just since the latter group was as bad as it was large.

Between 1898 and 1900, Prof. Ad. Reul is the only judge for the Belgian Shepherd to allow him to set the type. Prof. Ad. Reul was always in favour of inbreeding since this is the quickest way since this is the only way to get a fixed type very quickly.

In 1898, the discussion on preferring only 1 color per coat type was started. According to Mr. Du Pré, a black color is the sign of intelligence and a pale color is a sign of degeneration. That same year, the preferred color for the rough coat was set. Although it was more an exception than common, the preferred color for the rough coat was fixed on dark ash grey. In 1899, the 2 other coat types followed, for long hair it was set on black and for short hair it became fauve with a black mask. This decision had a lot of consequences, since dogs that up until then were considered to be one of the best dogs suddenly no longer meet the breed standard.

In 1898, the **Berger Belge Club** was founded. Members were all the people who's dogs were no longer accepted by the **Club du Chien de Berger Belge** (member of the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus**) based on their coat color. Out of protest, members of the **Berger Belge Club** entered their dogs at an exposition under the category "Not mentioned dog breeds".

On 21 May 1905 the **Club du Chien de Berger Belge** decides to leave the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** and becomes member of the **Fédération des Sociétés Canines de Belgique** but the department from Malines stays loyal to the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** and continues under the name of **Société du Chien de Berger Belge**.

In 1906, the **Berger Belge Club** joined the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** resulting in the acceptance of all the varieties which were previously excluded. On 05 May 1907, the **Berger Belge Club** organises their first exposition. At this exposition, there are 5 categories:

- Short Hair with Black Mask
- Rough Hair Ash Grey
- Rough Hair Fauve
- Long Hair Black
- Long Hair Fauve

This results in 2 breed standards which co-exist.

Due to problems with the **Fédération des Sociétés Canines de Belgique** the **Club du Chien de Berger Belge** decides to go independent in 1909

and become member of the **Kennel Club Belge**. In 1910, they also decide to accept the Long Hair Fauve dogs.

In order to protect the Long Haired Black, the **Groenendael Club** was founded on 11 Mar 1910. This club had its own studbook to prevent breeding between the Groenendael and the Tervueren.

Between the 2 world wars.

On 20 Nov 1919, the **Berger Belge Club** advise the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** to make a distinction between the varieties solely based on their coat structure. On 08 Feb 1920 the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** decided the following:

- Preservation of the 5 varieties.
- Qualification Belgian Shepherd only for dogs who met the standard, color should be in the range of black to fauve or a mix of this. Type was more important than color.
- Only dogs with the same coat structure could be mated. Mating between short and rough hair were accepted.

Jan Long Hair Brindle 24 Apr 1911	Gamin	Dick	Milsart
			Miss
	Moll	Mira	
		Picard	
		Diane	

Dogs which were previously excluded suddenly re-appear. A good example is Jan (LOSH 10177)

Judge A. Peffer said: "Jan has remained the good dog we knew from before the war. He makes nice jumps, has a good pace and his attack is enormously fierce".

In 1923 a new breed standard was published by the **Berger Belge Club** resulting in 8 categories at expositions:

- Malinois
- Short Haired other color
- Groenendael
- Long Haired Fauve
- Long Haired other color

- Rough Haired Fauve
- Rough Haired Dark Ash Grey
- Rough Haired other color

In 1929, **Club du Chien de Berger Belge** and the **Kennel Club Belge** accept the Short Haired Black dogs and therefore accepts 5 varieties. These varieties are still accepted by these clubs up until today:

- Malinois
- Short Haired Black
- Groenendael
- Tervueren
- Rough Haired all colors

On 01 Aug 1937, a judging took place in Binche. This was an informal judging judged by judges from the **Kennel Club Belge** and this were some results.

In cm	Malinois Male				Groenendael Male			Tervueren Male	
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	A	B
Height at Withers	58	60	61	62	60	66	64	61	63
Chest circumference	68	69	74	74	76	78	74	67	79
Chest Depth	30	29	32	29.5	31	35	29	31	31

The general perception is that the Malinois is the smallest of the varieties.

On 16 Jan 1938, a congres took place and this lead to a change in ideal height of our Belgian Shepherds. The minimum height for males is 58 cm and ideally 60 cm. For females the ideal height is 58 cm but with a minimum height of 56 cm.

That same year, Mr. F. Verbanck said that 8 varieties is too much. He proposed that there would be only 5 varieties:

- Groenendael
- Long Haired Other Colors
- Malinois
- Short Haired Other Colors
- Rough Haired All Colors

Although the last 4 varieties are in decay according to Mr. F. Verbanck although several dogs belonging to the last 4 categories obtained CAC and championship titles.

After 1945

After World War II, a lot of Belgian Shepherds disappeared, therefore it was decided on 21 Oct 1945 to allow the following matings:

- Long Hair - Short Hair
- Short Hair - Rough Hair
- All colors Short Hair
- All colors Long Hair

On 16 Jun 1963, the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** decides to limit the varieties to 5 instead of 8:

- Tervueren

- Groenendael
- Malinois
- Other colors Short Haired
- All colors Rough Haired

Intervariety breeding in any form are no longer permitted, unless the breeding advice commission gives permission. The breeding advice commission is entrusted to the **Royal Groenendael Club**. Since 1964, the fauve Tervueren and the Tervueren other color were awarded their own CAC. In 1967, these 2 were re-united once more.

On 01 Jan 1974, the **Koninklijke Maatschappij Sint-Hubertus** decided the following:

- Intervariety breeding is no longer accepted
- In case such a breeding has been allowed, only the offspring of the 3rd generation can obtain a full pedigree.
- Only 4 varieties are accepted:
 - Groenendael: black long hair
 - Tervueren: fauve charbonné long hair with black mask
 - Malinois: fauve charbonné short hair with black mask
 - Laekenois: fauve charbonné rough hair

All other coat structures and colors are no longer accepted. The fauve and grey long haired dogs are judged in different classes but only one CAC and CACIB will be awarded for both groups together.

On 03 Mar 1978, a new breed standard was accepted. For the rough and long haired dogs all the colors are accepted again. A little bit of white is accepted on the chest and toes. For the Malinois only the fauve charbonné is accepted.

In 1984, a commission gathered to discuss a new change in breed standard with regards to the color. A majority of 2/3 was needed to forbid the grey long haired and all other colors except the fauve charbonné for the rough haired.

9 judges were in favor of this:

- Mr. Chastel
- Mr. Van Ceulebroeck
- Mr. Dambrain
- Mr. Pollet
- Mr. Declercq
- Mr. Viane
- Mr. Dumont
- Mr. Thienpont
- Mrs; Desmet

4 judges were against this:

- Mr. Desschans
- Mr. Hellin
- Mr. Baudoux
- Mrs. Collin

The 2/3 majority was just met and the procedure to change the breed standard was initiated resulting in a new breed standard in 1989:

- Groenendael: Black
- Tervueren: Fauve charbonné. The fauve should be warm, not pale or diluted. Any dog with a color which has not the desired intensity cannot be rated as excellent and obtain a (R)CAC or (R)CACIB.
- Malinois: fauve charbonné with black mask
- Laekenois: Fauve with traces of charbonné, mainly on muzzle and tail

- A bit of white is accepted on chest and toes

Brindle is no longer accepted in any of the coat varieties.

On 01 January 1991 the **Royal Groenendael Club** and the **Royal Berger Belge Club** merged to the current club:

L' Union Royale des Clubs de Bergers Belges

Full information can be obtained from [Belgian Dogs and Malinois Worldwide](#) (in Dutch and French)