

Aimee M Llewellyn
Health information Manager.
The Kennel Club.

Meadow Cottage.
Maythorne
Southwell. Notts.
NG25 0RR.

Mike Lewis. Potterdale Bearded Collies.
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Reply to the Kennel club's new judges recommendations for the
Bearded Collie

Reference points for discussion

- (1) Excessively long coats.
- (2) Legs too short in proportion to length of body.

Item (1) excessively long coats.

I would like to understand the logic behind changing the perceived standard for coat length; it makes no sense to me that a panel of judges deem the coat length is getting to long. Who are these so called experts to tell me and my fellow breeders and fanciers that this element is no longer acceptable? The Bearded collie already has a standard for coat length it states plenty of daylight under the body, that is the best guide a judge can have and all a competent judge should need. I think one of the problems here is these so called fast tract judges do not appreciate the intricacies of the standard therefore interpreting it wrongly. If we go down the route of penalising coat length it will drive exhibitors to start trimming, magically all dogs will have the right coat lengths, our standard states "must not be trimmed in any", we strive to produce a natural breed. "I think this ruling is called shooting yourself in the foot." Ironically one of the things the longer coated dogs normally have is a better quality coat which is much more important than the length. You often find when judging the dogs with the very fine black coats they are typically shorter as the hair breaks off more easily, and they do not have the density of undercoat or the harsh qualities of the top coat that is essential for a working dog.

Item (2) Legs too short in proportion to length of body.

This item is much more complex and significantly more important than the coat length. I don't disagree with the

observation that some dogs are starting to look to short in the leg for their height, but once again the standard states with no ambiguity that dogs should be in the ratio of 5/4 with a maximum and minimum height at the withers, but quality and proportions are more important than size. Surly and once again competent judges can penalise dogs not complying with the standard. The most significant feature of the Bearded collie is it's movement which comes about because of the height to length ratio, any deviation from this will detract from the smooth long reaching gait the Bearded collie is synonymous with. My concern with making interpretations about leg length could affect the height to length ratio as some inexperienced or less competent judges may err on the shorter in back dogs with longer legs which would change the whole standard as they could start to look more like Briards or even OES sheep dogs and that is not the type of Beardies I want to be involved in or breed.

Mike Lewis Potterdale Bearded Collies

After nearly 40 years in the breed, our dogs winning over 400 cc,s having bred over 40 uk champions, Crufts BIS winner, Top Dog all breeds 2000, Breed cc record holder, Breeds top sire of all time, brood bitch top Champion producer, top bitch cc winner, I do know what I am taking about. I have judged all over the world and given breed standard seminars to many breed clubs.

Please do not start meddling with our breed unless you have absolute evidence and a strong conviction that these changes will benefit and not hinder or affect our standard.