



FCI Standard No. 201
Maremma Abbruzze
Maremma Sheepdog
Standard Provided by ABIDS

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Translated by - Mrs Peggy Davis.

Country of Origin - Italy.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY - This ancient breed of dogs which guards flocks comes from shepherd dogs actually still used in Abruzzes, where the breeding of sheep is still thriving, even in these days, and of sheepdogs which existed years ago in the region of the Tuscan Marrema, and in that of Latium. The seasonal movement of livestock from one region to another, especially since 1860, has favored the development of a natural crossing of those two primitive breeds.

GENERAL APPEARANCE - The Maremma and Abruzzes shepherd dog is a large dog, strongly built of a rustic (hardy) appearance, at the same time majestic and really typical. On the whole, his shape, of average proportions, is that of a heavy dog, whose body is longer than the height at the withers; it is harmonious as to form (heterometric) and relatively harmonious in outline (halloidism)

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS: The length of the head is four tenths of the height at the withers; the body length is greater than the height at the withers by one eighteenth. Depth of the body is slightly less than half the height at the withers. (For instance: for a dog of 68 cm, the depth is about 32 cm.)

CHARACTERISTICS - It is a shepherd dog used mainly for the protection of flocks and guarding property. (See also under General Appearance and Temperament.)

TEMPERAMENT - His principal function as a guard and defense dog of flocks and property in general, shows itself in the manner in which he accomplishes these tasks, with perception, courage and decision. Although proud and not inclined to submission, he is also devoted to his master and all his entourage.

HEAD AND SKULL - On the whole, the head is large and flat, of conical shape, reminiscent of that of a polar bear.

Skull: Is of great width with the sides of the skull slightly rounded; in profile it is also convex. The upper longitudinal axes of the skull and muzzle are slightly divergent from each other, which makes the profile of the head slightly convex. The eyebrows are moderately arched. The medial furrow is slight. The occipital crest is not accentuated.

Stop: Should not be pronounced. The depression is only slight and the angle is always very open.

Nose: Rather large, in line with the muzzle, with large, well-opened, moist and cool nostrils, and colored black. In profile must not protrude beyond the front margin of the lips.

Muzzle: Its length is one tenth less than that of the skull. Its depth, measured at the level of the corners of the lips, must equal half its length. Its width decreases progressively with the convergence of the sides of the muzzle towards the front. It is slightly chiseled beneath the eyes.

Lips: Seen from the front, the upper lips are shaped like a semi-circle of very small radius at the lower edge of their junction point. The lips, being only slightly developed, barely cover the teeth, and therefore the corner of the lips is only lightly accentuated. Consequently, the lower side profile is defined by the lips only at the front part; in its rear part it is defined by the lower jaw and the corner of the lips. The rims of the lips are black.

Jaws: Look strong and are normally developed.

Cheeks: Moderately visible.

EYES - Not large in relation to the size of the dog; the iris is of an ochre color, or chestnut brown. The eye, in lateral position, is neither deep set nor protruding. Lively and attentive expression. Eyelid opening is almond shaped, with black eyelid rims.

EARS - Set very high over the zygomatic arches, they hang down but are very mobile. Triangular shape (in a V), their extremities form a narrow point, never rounded; they are small in relation to the size of the dog. For a medium size dog their length must not go beyond 12 cm (4¾ins) The ear leather is of medium width. Cropped ears are tolerated only in dogs really used as herd dogs (Not legal in Australia).

MOUTH - Teeth: White, strong. Scissor bite. Incisors set straight, well aligned, of good size and complete in number.

NECK - Upper profile moderately arched. Its length is not more than eight tenths of the length of the head, which means that the neck is always shorter than the head. It is thick, very strong, muscular and always without dewlap; covered with long and dense hair forming a collar, particularly obvious in males.

FOREQUARTERS - Straight limbs when viewed from the front and side; forequarters well balanced in relation to the body, and the various parts of the forequarters are well proportioned with each other.

Shoulder: Long, sloping with powerful muscles. Must be really free in movement. In length measures about one quarter of the height at the withers. Its angulation below the horizontal is from 50° to 60°.

Upperarm: Set close to the body in its upper two thirds, with powerful muscles. Its angulation below the horizontal varies between 55° and 60°; its length measures about 30% of the height at the withers. Its position is more or less parallel with the median plane of the body. The angle where the scapula and humerus meet varies between 105° and 120°.

Elbows: Normally close to the chest, they are covered with a soft, loose skin. Their position must be parallel to the median plane of the body; the point of the elbow must be on an imaginary vertical line from the shoulder blade. The angle formed by the junction of the humerus and the radius varies between 145° and 150°.

Forearm: Straight and vertical, heavily boned. Its length is slightly more than the length of the upperarm, whilst being a little less than a third of the height at the withers. The front leg from ground to elbow measures 53% of the height at the withers.

Pastern joint or wrist (carpus): Extends the vertical line of the forearm. Strong, clean, smooth and of good thickness; the pisiform bone at its back edge is clearly visible.

Pastern (metacarpus): Its length must never be less than one sixth of the foreleg measured from ground to elbow. It is lean with a minimum of sub-cutaneous tissue. Seen from the side, slopes slightly towards the front.

BODY - Solidly constructed, its length (measured from point of shoulder to buttock) is one eighteenth greater than the height at the withers.

Topline: Straight from behind the withers to the rump where it becomes somewhat sloping.

Withers: Slightly above the topline; wide because of the distance separating the shoulder blades.

Back: Straight in profile, length is about 32% of the height at the withers. The loin which merges perfectly with the topline has a slightly curved profile with well developed muscles. The length of the loin is one fifth of the height at the withers, and its width is nearly equal to its length.

Rump/Croup: Wide, strong and well muscled. Its slope from the hip to the tail set is 20°, increasing to 30° and more if we refer to the ileum-ischium line; that is why the rump of the Maremma and Abruzzes shepherd dog must be qualified as sloping.

Chest: Ample, descending to the level of the elbows, deep and well rounded at mid-height. Its circumference must be one quarter greater than the height at the withers; its maximum width at mid-height must be at least 32% of the height at the withers, then decreases progressively downwards, whilst retaining a good width in the sternal region.

Underline: Its lower line, from the sternum forward, rises very slightly toward the flanks, in such a way that the belly is slightly drawn up.

HINDQUARTERS - Seen as a whole: Limbs are straight when seen from behind and the side. The general aspect is in proportion with the body, and the various parts of the hindquarters are in harmony with each other.

Upper Thigh: Long, wide with prominent muscles and the rear edge slightly convex. Its width, measured from edge to edge, is three quarters of its length. It is slightly angulated from top to bottom and rear to front; the angle of the femur with the hipbone is about 100 degrees.

Lower Thigh: Its length which is a little shorter than the upper thigh, is 32.5% of the height at the withers. Its angulation below the horizontal is about 60°. Strong bone, muscles lean and the groove in the leg well marked.

Stifle: Set perfectly in the vertical line of the hind leg, turns neither in nor out. The angle of the femur and tibia is rather open and varies between 135° and 140°.

Hock Joint: Quite thick, with broad lateral faces. The angle varies between 140° and 150°.

Rear Pastern (metatarsal): Strong, lean and broad. Its length is 31% of the height at the withers. Dewclaws must be removed.

FEET - Front: Large of roundish shape, well closed toes, covered with short, thick hair; nails preferably black; chestnut color is tolerated.

Hind: Like the front feet but more oval.

TAIL - Low set due to the sloping rump, in normal stance reaching below the level of the hock. Hanging down when the dog is stationary; carried level with back line with a rather strongly hooked tip when the dog is moving. Well furnished with dense hair without fringes.

GAIT/MOVEMENT - Walk and extended trot.

COAT - Skin: Tight on all parts of the body; rather thick. Black pigmentation of the mucous membranes, eyelids and the central and toe pads.

Nature of Coat: Very well furnished. Hair long, rather harsh to the touch, closer to straight horse hair; flat to the body; slight wave is tolerated. The coat forms a rich collar around the neck and feathering of limited length on the edge of the hindquarters. It

is short on the muzzle, skull, ears and front edge of the limbs. On the body it reaches 8 cm (3 ins). The undercoat is only abundant in winter.

COLOR - Solid white. Shades of ivory, pale orange or lemon are tolerated but only if not excessive.

SIZE - Height at withers: Dogs 65-73 cm (25½ - 28¾ ins) Bitches 60-68 cm (23½ - 26¾ins)

Weight: Dogs 35-45 kg (77-99 lbs) Bitches 30-40 kg (66-88 lbs)

FAULTS - Any departure from the foregoing constitutes a fault which when judging must be penalized according to its seriousness and its extent. The same conditions apply to dogs which pace very often and dogs whose dewclaws have not been removed.

ELIMINATING FAULTS:

Head: The axes of the skull and foreface are convergent

Mouth: Serious and disfiguring prognathism (undershot if it harms the general appearance of the muzzle; overshot if the result of bad direction of the teeth).

Tail: Rolled over the back.

Gait: Continual pacing.

Size: Above or below the limits fixed by the Standard.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

Nose: Completely depigmented.

Muzzle: Definitely convex or concave.

Eyes: Moderate or bilateral depigmentation of the eyelids. Wall-eyed. Cross-eyed.

Mouth: Overshot (when caused by lack of length of the under jaw).

Tail: Tailless or short tail, whether congenital or docked.

Coat: Curly.

Color: Isabella coat; well defined patches of Isabella or ivory color. Black shadings.

NOTE: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.