

An Illustrated Guide  
to the  
**Keeshond**



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The KEESHOND CLUB of AMERICA

## **PREFACE**

This booklet has been prepared by the Keeshond Club of America's Illustrated Standard Committee for the purpose of promoting a better appreciation of and understanding for the Standard of the Keeshond breed.

We have tried to do this through illustrations and text that expand on the written Standard. Our goal is to make it easier to interpret the Standard for judges, breeders, exhibitors and beginners. By doing so, our breed can only benefit.

We would like to express our appreciation to the following people for their aid in compiling this work.

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Our thanks are also extended to the KCA members who submitted their comments.

THIS BOOKLET IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF SANDY KRUEGER WHO BEGAN THIS PROJECT.

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# **HISTORY of the BREED**

The Keeshond, pronounced “kayz-hawnd,” is a very old breed of Arctic or Sub-Arctic origin and is believed to be from the Spitz family of dogs along with the Alaskan Malamute, Akita, Chow Chow, Finnish Spitz, Norwegian Elkhound, Pomeranian, Samoyed, Schipperke, Shiba Inu, and Siberian Husky, to name a few. Keeshonden (“en” for the Dutch plural) appeared in the works of Jan Steen, Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds and other great artists. Several members of English royalty owned them, including George I, George IV, and Victoria I.

The Keeshond was a favorite in Holland where he served as a barge dog, as well as family companion and watchdog. The leader of the Dutch Patriot Party, Cornelius “Kees” de Gyselaar, had one as his constant companion and as a result, the breed became the symbol of the Patriot Party. After the defeat of the Patriots in the 1770s, it became dangerous to own a Keeshond because of the political significance and so the breed became a victim of its own fame. Only the most dedicated Patriots, a few farmers and barge captains kept their dogs. It was more than a century before the Keeshond once again came to public attention.

When the breed was revived, it became known as the Dutch Keeshond because of the political importance and great popularity in Holland. In 1910, several Keeshonden were imported to England and, with few exceptions, the Keeshonden in the United States and Canada are descendants from this English stock.

The Keeshond is one of the few breeds that has always been bred as a family companion, having a sense of humor, as well as being an intelligent, alarm-giving watchdog. He is affectionate and demonstrative with his own family, but may be somewhat reserved with strangers. While being great watchdogs, the breed should never be aggressive. These dogs possess a keen memory and the Spitz tendency to weigh commands before acting on them. Therefore, there is not always an instantaneous response. These characteristics should be respected while training a puppy and care should be taken not to be unduly harsh or impatient.

The first four Keeshonden on record with the American Kennel Club were Wolfspitz imported from Germany in 1926, by Carl Hinderer. A short while later, fanciers imported many Keeshonden directly from England. In the U.S., the breed has always been shown in Group 6, the Non-Sporting Group.



# STANDARD for the KEESHOND

Approved November 14, 1989—Effective January 1, 1990

## GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Keeshond (pronounced *kayz-hawnd*) is a natural, handsome dog of well-balanced, short-coupled body, attracting attention not only by his coloration, alert carriage, and intelligent expression, but also by his stand-off coat, his richly plumed tail well curled over his back, his foxlike expression, and his small pointed ears. His coat is very thick around the neck, forepart of the shoulders and chest, forming a lion-like ruff—more profuse in the male. His rump and hind legs, down to the hocks, are also thickly coated, forming the characteristic “trousers.” His head, ears and lower legs are covered with thick, short hair.

## SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

The Keeshond is a medium-sized, square-appearing, sturdy dog, neither coarse nor lightly made. The ideal height of fully matured dogs when measured from top of withers to the ground is 18 inches for males and 17 inches for bitches—a one inch variance either way is acceptable. While correct size is very important, it should not outweigh that of type.

## HEAD

**Expression**—Expression is largely dependent on the distinctive characteristic called “spectacles”—a combination of markings and shadings in the orbital area which must include a delicate, dark line slanting from the outer corner of each eye toward the lower corner of each ear coupled with expressive eyebrows. Markings (or shadings) on face and head must present a pleasing appearance, imparting to the dog an alert and intelligent expression. **Very Serious Fault:** Absence of dark lines, which form the “spectacles.”

**Eyes**—Eyes should be dark brown in color, of medium size, almond shaped, set obliquely and neither too wide apart nor too close together. Eye rims are black. **Faults:** Round and/or protruding eyes or eyes light of color.

**Ears**—Ears should be small, triangular in shape, mounted high on head and carried erect. Size should be proportionate to the head—length approximating the distance from the outer corner of the eye to the nearest edge of the ear. **Fault:** Ears not carried erect when at attention.

**Skull**—The head should be well-proportioned to the body and wedge-shaped when viewed from above—not only the muzzle, but the whole head should give this impression when the ears are drawn back by covering the nape of the neck and the ears with one hand. Head in profile should exhibit a definite stop. **Faults:** Apple head or absence of stop.

**Muzzle**—Of medium length, neither coarse nor snipey, and well proportioned to the skull.

**Mouth**—The mouth should be neither overshot nor undershot. Lips should be black and closely meeting—not thick, coarse or sagging—and with no wrinkle at the corner of the mouth.

**Faults:** Overshot, undershot or wry mouth.

**Teeth**—The teeth should be white, sound and strong meeting in a scissors bite. **Fault:** Misaligned teeth.

## NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

**Neck**—The neck should be moderately long, well shaped and well set on shoulders. The body should be compact with a short, straight back sloping slightly downward toward the hindquarters; well-ribbed, barrel well rounded, short in loin, belly moderately tucked up, deep and strong of chest.

**Tail**—The tail should be moderately long and well feathered, set on high and tightly curled over the back. It should lie flat and close to the body. The tail must form a part of the “silhouette” of the dog’s body, rather than give the appearance of an appendage. **Fault:** Tail not lying close to the back.

**Forequarters**—Forelegs should be straight seen from any angle. Pasterns are strong with a slight slope. Legs must be of good bone in proportion to the overall dog. Shoulder to upper arm angulation is between slight to moderate.

**Hindquarters**—Angulation in rear should be between slight to moderate to complement the forequarters, creating balance and typical gait. Hindquarters are well muscled with hocks perpendicular to the ground.

**Feet**—The feet should be compact, well rounded, catlike. Toes are nicely arched, with black nails.

## COAT

The body should be abundantly covered with long, straight, harsh hair standing well out from a thick, downy undercoat. Head, including muzzle, skull and ears, should be covered with smooth, soft, short hair—velvety in texture on the ears. The neck is covered with a mane—more profuse in the male—sweeping from under the jaw and covering the whole of the front part of the shoulders and chest, as well as the top part of the shoulders. The hair on the legs should be smooth and short, except for feathering on the front legs and “trousers” on the hind legs. Hind legs should be profusely feathered down to the hocks—not below. The hair on the tail should form a rich plume. Coat must not part down the back. The Keeshond is to be shown in a natural state with trimming permissible only on the feet, pasterns, hocks and—if desired—whiskers. **TRIMMING OTHER THAN AS DESCRIBED TO BE SEVERELY PENALIZED.** **Faults:** Silky, wavy or curly coats. Part in coat down the back.

## COLOR AND MARKINGS

A dramatically marked dog, the Keeshond is a mixture of gray, black and cream. This coloration may vary from light to dark. The hair of the outer coat is black tipped, the length of the black tips producing the characteristic shading of color. Puppies are often less intensely marked. The undercoat is very pale gray or cream, never tawny.

**Head**—The muzzle should be dark in color. “Spectacles” and shading, as previously described, are characteristic of the breed and must be present to some degree. Ears should be very dark—almost black.

**Ruff, Shoulders and “Trousers”**—The color of the ruff and “trousers” is lighter than that of the body. The shoulder line markings of light gray must be well defined.

**Tail**—The plume of the tail is very light in color when curled on the back, and the tip of the tail should be black.

**Legs and Feet**—Legs and feet are cream.

**Faults:** Pronounced white markings. Black markings more than halfway down the foreleg, penciling excepted. White foot or feet.

**Very Serious Faults:** Entirely black or white or any solid color: any pronounced deviation from the color as described.

## GAIT

The distinctive gait of the Keeshond is unique to the breed. Dogs should move boldly and keep tails curled over the back. They should move cleanly and briskly; the movement should be straight and sharp with reach and drive between slight to moderate.

## TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is of primary importance. The Keeshond is neither timid nor aggressive but, instead, is outgoing and friendly with both people and other dogs. The Keeshond is a lively, intelligent, alert and affectionate companion.

# VISUAL STANDARD at a GLANCE

**SKULL:** Well proportioned to body; wedge-shaped when viewed from above.

**SPECTACLES:** Combination of markings and shadings, includes: dark line from outer corner of eye to lower corner of ear; expressive eyebrows; spectacles must be present.

**EYES:** Dark brown; medium size; almond shaped; set obliquely. Eye rims black—not too wide or too close.

**STOP:** Definite.

**MUZZLE:** Dark color; medium length; neither coarse nor snipey; well proportioned to skull.

**MOUTH:** Lips black, closely meeting; without corner wrinkles. Teeth must be white, sound, strong; meeting in a scissors bite.

**CHEST:** Deep and strong.

**FOREQUARTERS:** Slight to moderate angulation, straight forelegs; pasterns are strong with slight slope.

**GAIT:** Bold, brisk, sharp, straight, slight to moderate reach and drive.

**LEGS:** Cream in color; good bone.

**FEET:** Compact, well rounded, cat-like, cream colored, arched toes, black nails.

**COAT:** Long, straight, harsh outer coat; thick, downy undercoat. Long on body, neck, chest, tail, feathering on front legs and trousers of rear legs. Short on muzzle, skull, ears, lower legs. Shown in a natural state with trimming permissible only on the feet, pasterns and hocks, and if desired – whiskers.

**EARS:** Dark color—almost black; small; triangular; mounted high; carried erect; covered with thick, short, velvety hair. Length approximates the distance from the outer corner of the eye to nearest edge of ear.

**HEAD:** Foxlike expression. Covered with thick, smooth, soft, velvety, short hair.

**NECK:** Moderately long; well shaped; covered with profuse, lion-like ruff.

**TAIL:** Set high, moderately long, well feathered; tightly curled over back; lies flat, very light in color with black tip.

**BACK:** Short; straight; sloping slightly downward towards the hindquarters.

**HINDQUARTERS:** Slight to moderate angulation; in balance with forequarters; well muscled; hocks perpendicular to ground. Legs are profusely feathered down to hocks.

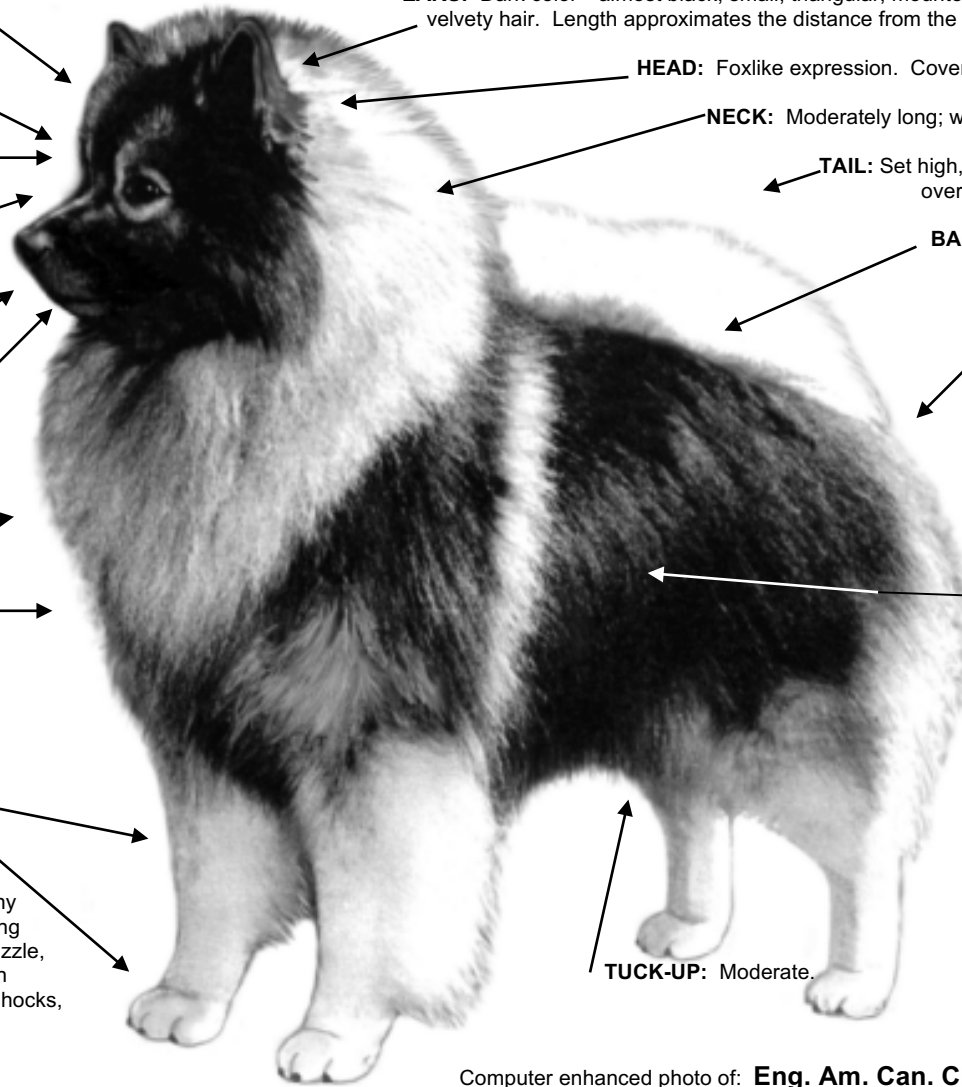
**SIZE:** Males—18" / females—17", measured from top of withers to the ground—with 1" variance acceptable. Size should not outweigh type.

**RIBS:** Well-ribbed, barrel well rounded.

**APPEARANCE:** Well balanced; short coupled; sturdy; square-appearing. Double, stand-off coat with profuse mane and trousers.

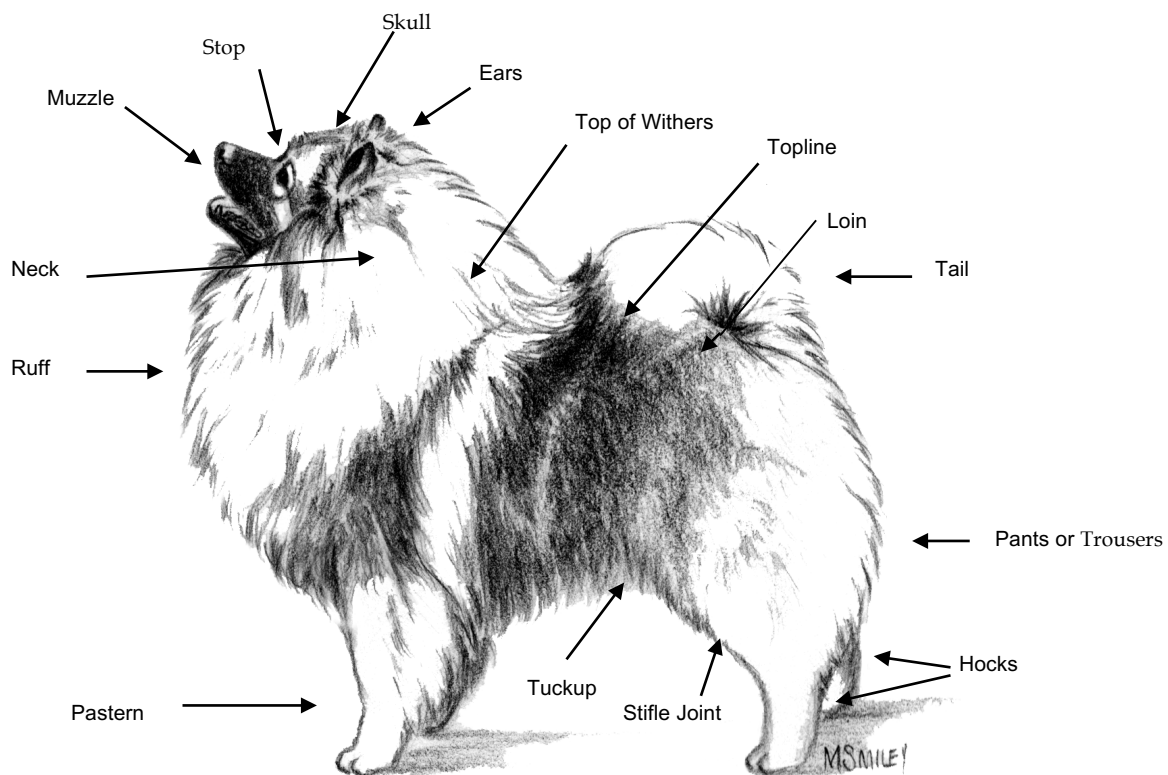
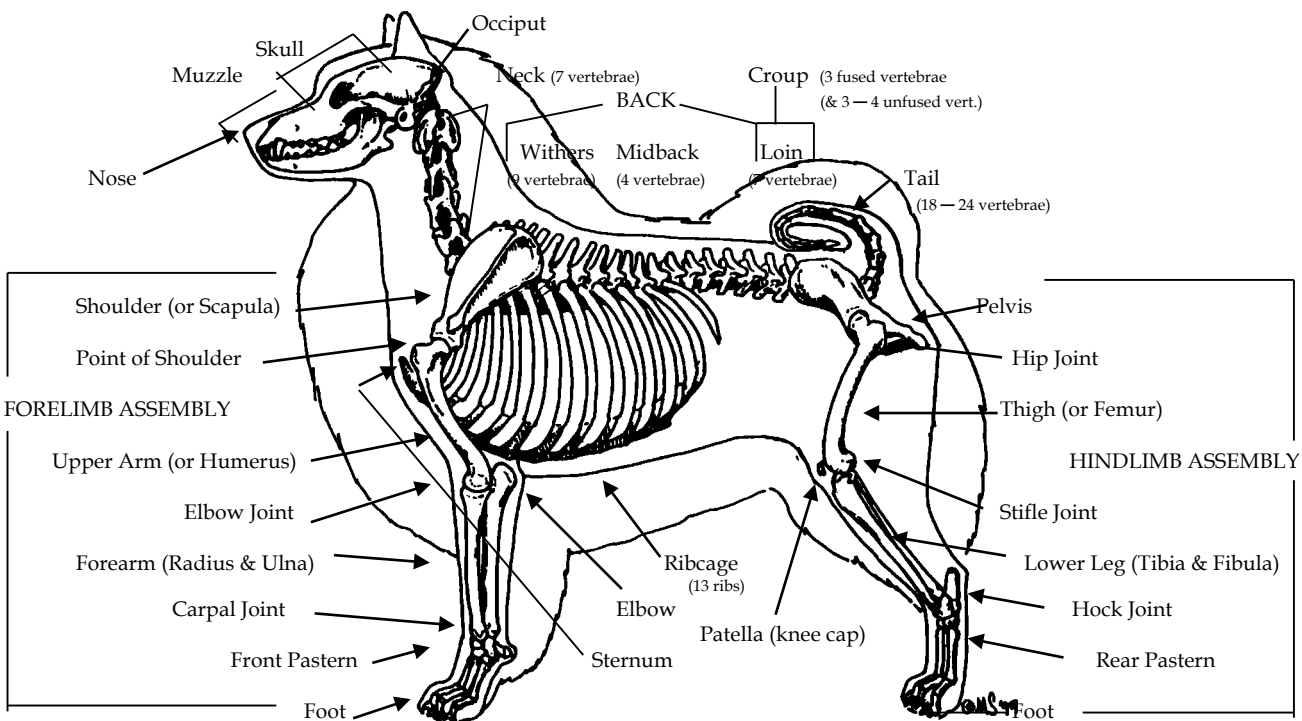
**COLOR:** Mixture of gray, black & cream; may vary from light to dark; black tipped outer coat, very pale gray or cream undercoat; no pronounced white markings; ruff and trousers are lighter than the body; well defined shoulder line.

**TUCK-UP:** Moderate.



Computer enhanced photo of: **Eng. Am. Can. Ch. Wrocky of Wistonia, ROM HOF©**

# ANATOMY of the KEESHOND



## GENERAL APPEARANCE

**The Keeshond (pronounced *kayz-hawnd*) is a natural, handsome dog of well-balanced, short-coupled body, attracting attention not only by his coloration, alert carriage, and intelligent expression, but also by his stand-off coat, his richly plumed tail well curled over his back, his fox-like expression, and his small pointed ears. His coat is very thick around the neck, forepart of the shoulders and chest, forming a lion-like ruff—more profuse in the male. His rump and hind legs, down to the hocks, are also thickly coated, forming the characteristic “trousers.” His head, ears and lower legs are covered with thick, short hair.**

The illustrations contained herein represent the range of acceptability as described in the Standard. Both dogs and bitches are shown throughout.

**The Keeshond standard is written in bold type face.**

Comments pertaining to the standard are within boxes.



The Keeshond is a member of the Spitz and/or Nordic family of dogs, with triangular, prick ears; double coat; tail curled over the back; and independent, intelligent attitude. These dogs are spirited, self-assured and should have a proud carriage.

The breed's "foxlike" expression is dependent upon a wedge-shaped head with a correct, almond shaped and obliquely set eye. The Keeshond has been compared to the English red fox for years, and is synonymous with the cleverness and cunning for which foxes have been noted

The double-coated Keeshond displays a lion-like ruff around the neck, shoulder and chest area with a considerable length of hair on the tail and on the trousers or breeches. The body and loin areas have medium length hair, which is closer fitting. The head, legs and feet are covered with shorter hair, except for the feathering on the back portion of the front legs.

There is a decided difference in the coat carried by a male as compared to that of a female. The male's coat is usually longer and thicker.

NATURAL means that a Kees should not be groomed beyond proper bathing, brushing and combing. Scissoring is allowed only on the feet and legs up to the first joint. Grooming excesses by altering the coat length, except on feet and legs, should be "SEVERELY PENALIZED." Cosmetic enhancement by chalking, dying, bleaching, etc. should be dealt with as per Chapter 11 of the AKC's Rules Applying to Dog Shows.

## SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

**The Keeshond is a medium-sized, square-appearing, sturdy dog, neither coarse nor lightly made. The ideal height of fully matured dogs when measured from top of withers to the ground is 18 inches for males and 17 inches for bitches—a one-inch variance either way is acceptable. While correct size is very important, it should not outweigh that of type.**



The medium-sized Keeshond should not be fine or coarse; large, nor small; but sturdy with good muscling and substance.

The dog's "square appearance" is highly dependent upon coat length, coloration, structure, neck carriage and tail set.

While there is no size disqualification for our breed, ideally the Keeshond should be within 1 inch of the preferred 18" for males and 17" for females, when measured from the withers to the ground. When determining height, please remember that coloration and coat length can trick the eye. It is necessary to ascertain size by compressing the hair on the withers and actually feeling where the hair ends and the dog begins. It is NOT enough to compare one class dog with another. A 17" bitch surrounded by 14"—15" bitches will look huge. An 18" dog will look very small if competitors are all pushing 19 1/2". Please remember that an overall correct dog that is true to type but otherwise 1" under or over the ideal size is to be preferred over a correctly sized dog that lacks quality, soundness or proper structure. It is important to maintain quality and breed type while keeping our breed in the medium sized range.

## EXPRESSION & HEAD SHAPE



**Expression is largely dependent on the distinctive characteristic called “spectacles.”** (Please refer to next page.) **Markings (or shadings) on face and head must present a pleasing appearance, imparting to the dog an alert and intelligent, fox-like expression.**

**Head, including muzzle, skull and ears, should be covered with thick, smooth, soft, short hair—velvety in texture on the ears. Muzzle—dark. Small pointed ears very dark—almost black. Whisker trimming is permissible, but not necessary.**

# EYES & SPECTACLES

**Eyes**—Eyes should be dark brown in color, of medium size, almond shaped, set obliquely and neither too wide apart nor too close together. Eye rims are black. **Faults:** Round and/or protruding eyes or eyes light of color.

**Spectacles**—Spectacles are a combination of markings and shadings in the orbital area, which must include a delicate dark line slanting from the outer corner of each eye towards the lower corner of each ear, coupled with expressive eyebrows.

**Very Serious Fault:** Absence of dark lines which form the spectacles.



*CORRECT*  
*Dark brown,  
almond shaped eye*



*This is an almond*



*INCORRECT*  
*Light, round  
eye*

Eyes that are obliquely set are the ideal. This means that the outer corner of the eye should be higher than the inner corner.

Eyes should be dark brown in color. Yellow or light brown is undesirable. Light eyes spoil the intelligent expression.

Spectacles are one of the hallmarks of our breed. They must be present to some degree. The actual spectacle is comprised of hair surrounding the eye coupled with light shadings, dark eyebrows, and the dark line, which continues from the outer corner of the eye through the coat, IDEALLY going upward. The spectacles are enhanced by the black eye rim pigmentation; not pink, grey or liver.

The word “ideally” is stressed because it is these markings which help give the breed part of its “intelligent expression.” Many dogs’ spectacles continue on a horizontal or downward slant. However, this is not ideal.

NATURAL spectacles are VERY important. Dogs, whose markings have been altered to improve their appearance, should be “severely penalized.” The dark pencil-like markings should not be enhanced artificially, nor should the color of the hair around the eyes be lightened by applying light powders and/or trimming off the black tips. Trimmed hair has a blunt feel to it.



# EARS

**Ears—Ears should be small, triangular in shape, mounted high on head and carried erect. Size should be proportionate to the head—length approximating the distance from the outer corner of the eye to the nearest edge of the ear. Fault: Ears not carried erect when at attention.**



The ear should be large enough to protrude through the ruff, yet not so large as to be the most prominent feature of the head. The longer the ruff hair surrounding the ear the more the size of the ear will appear to diminish. The tip of a correctly sized ear, when folded down, will just meet the outside corner of the eye.

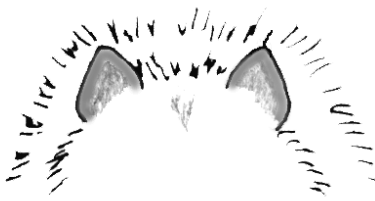
“Mounted high on head” implies that the tips of the ears are pointed upward but are NOT so closely set that they appear to be within an inch of each other. On the other hand, a low, wide ear set is most unattractive and undesirable. Ideally, the ears should finish off the face of the dog and present an attractive balance.

A Keeshond’s ears are highly mobile and are indicative of how the dog feels. If a Kees is distracted (worried, bored, anxious or even content) the ears might be folded back into the ruff. However, a judge must see the proper placement of a Keeshond’s ears at least ONCE for basic judging of head properties.

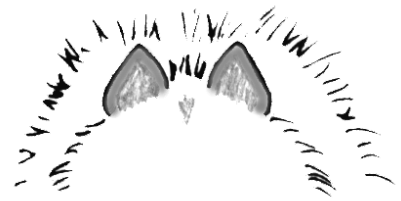


*INCORRECT*

*Ear set is too wide.*



*CORRECT*



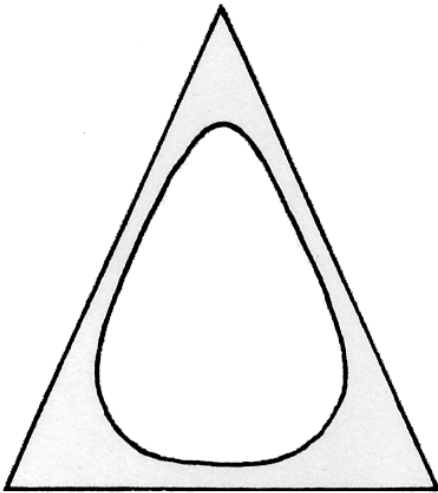
*INCORRECT*

*Ear set is too close together.*

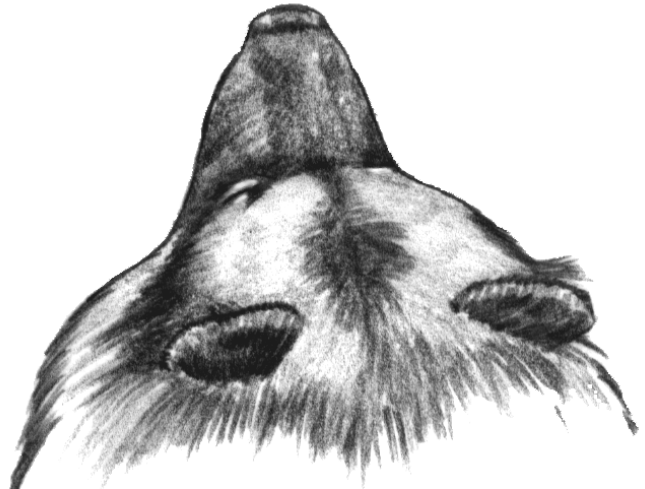


# SKULL

**Skull**—The head should be well-proportioned to the body and wedge-shaped when viewed from above—not only the muzzle, but the whole head should give this impression when the ears are drawn back by covering the nape of the neck and the ears with one hand. Head in profile should exhibit a definite stop. Faults: Apple head or absence of stop.



*Head should be wedge shaped.*



*Wedge shaped when viewed from above.*

A Keeshond's topskull should be somewhat flat and in parallel planes with the top of the muzzle. A dog with an "apple head" is one that has a bulging, rounded topskull combined with too deep a stop.

The Keeshond should have a definite stop. To determine if a dog actually has a good stop, it should be felt as a definite change in the planes of the muzzle and skull.



*Excellent Stop*

## MUZZLE & NOSE

**Muzzle—Of medium length, neither coarse nor snipey, and well proportioned to the skull.**

The muzzle, from tip of nose to stop, should be approximately the same length as from stop to occiput. It should taper out on the sides, cleanly and smoothly to form a wedge with a rounded end. It should not appear coarse.



## MOUTH, TEETH & BITE

**Mouth—The mouth should be neither overshot nor undershot. Lips should be black and closely meeting—not thick, coarse or sagging—and with no wrinkle at the corner of the mouth. Faults: Overshot, undershot or wry mouth.**

**Teeth—The teeth should be white, sound and strong meeting in a scissors bite. Fault: Misaligned teeth.**



*Scissors bite*



*6 incisors*

Most breeds, including the Keeshond, ideally should have 42 teeth that meet in a scissors bite—all in alignment with one another and following the proper curve of the jaw. The Keeshond should have black lips and gums. Pink or liver lips show lack of pigment, which is incorrect. Inadequate underjaw and a “wry mouth” are also incorrect.

## NECK, TOPLINE & BODY

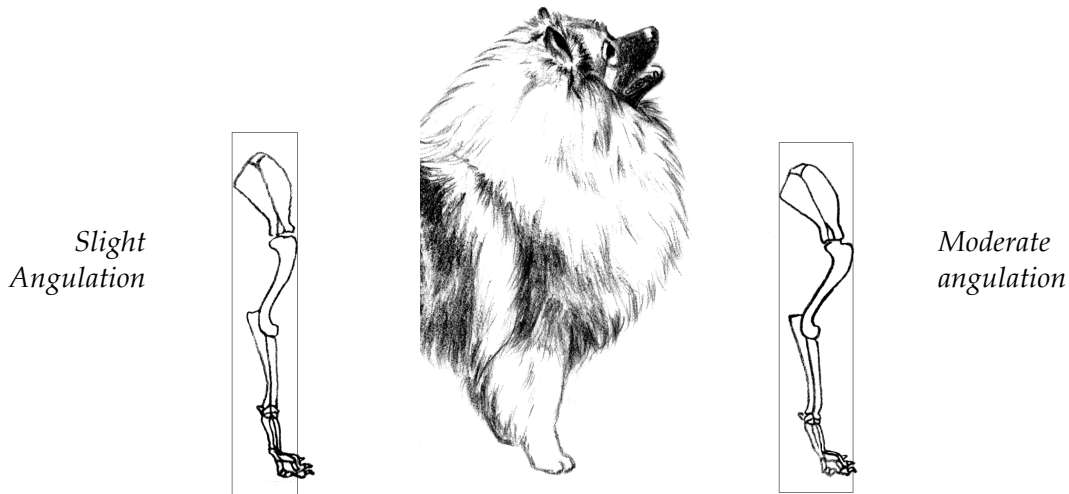
**Neck**—The neck should be moderately long, well shaped and well set on shoulders. The body should be compact with a short, straight back sloping slightly downward toward the hindquarters; well-ribbed, barrel well rounded, short in loin, belly moderately tucked up, deep and strong of chest.



When fully alert, the Keeshond's head is carried well above the height of the back and tail on a neck that is set on correctly placed shoulders. The back should be straight and firm, sloping slightly downwards from the withers to a short, relatively flat croup. The longer ruff hair gives the illusion of an even greater slope to the topline. The Keeshond should have a short loin.

# FOREQUARTERS

**Forequarters—Forelegs should be straight seen from any angle. Pasterns are strong with a slight slope. Legs must be of good bone in proportion to the overall dog. Shoulder to upper arm angulation is between slight to moderate.**



The neck needs to be “well set on shoulders,” and in order for that to happen the shoulders need to be laid back well behind the neck!

The forelegs should come straight down from the elbows to slightly sloping pasterns, which allow for spring and flexibility. Neither upright nor broken-down pasterns are desirable. Weak pasterns are easily seen in side gait. The shoulder, upper arm and forearm should all be the same length, with the highest point of the withers being in line with the elbows.

A “sturdy” dog should be well muscled with substantial bone.

Let’s simplify the confusion over shoulder angulation in the Keeshond. Arguably, there are very few breeds that can (or should) achieve a 90° angle between the shoulder blade and the upper arm, but the Keeshond is not one of these. The Keeshond Standard calls for “slight to moderate” angulation in the front, which should ideally be in balance with the hindquarters.

*INCORRECT*  
 - Narrow  
 - Pinched front  
 - Toeing out



*CORRECT*

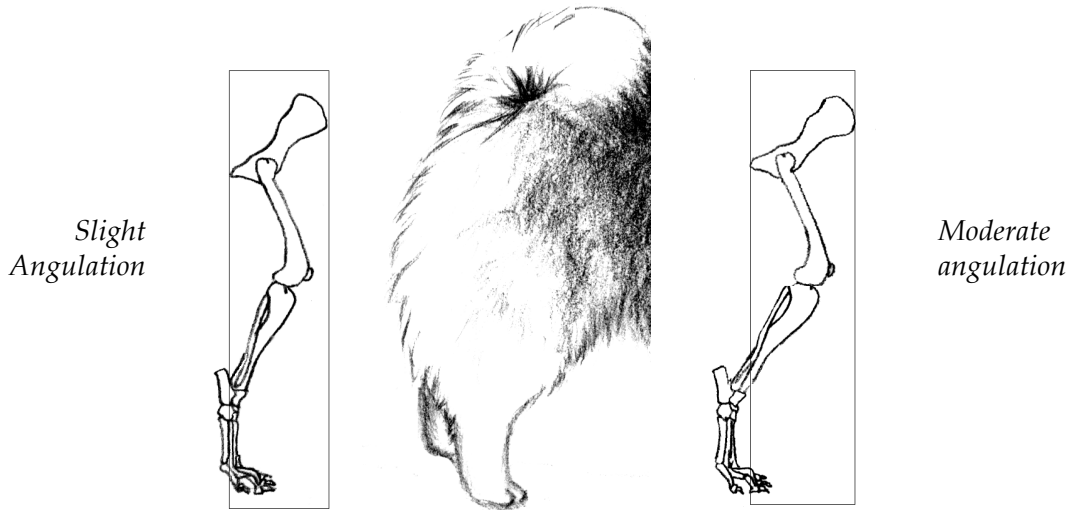


*INCORRECT*  
 - Wide front  
 - Elbows out  
 - Toeing in



# HINDQUARTERS

**Hindquarters—Angulation in rear should be between slight to moderate to complement the forequarters, creating balance and typical gait. Hindquarters are well muscled with hocks perpendicular to the ground.**



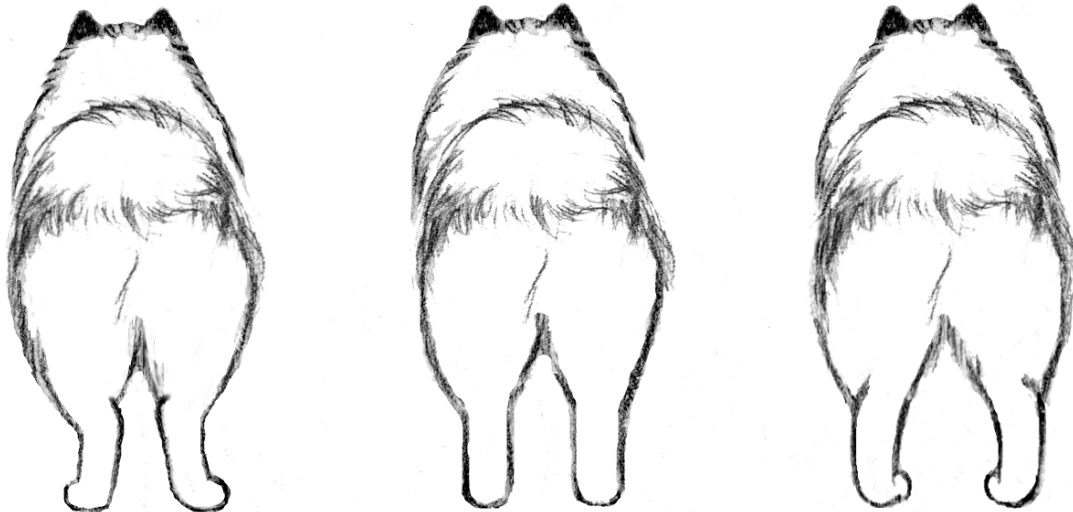
The best description of angulation is “slight to moderate” in comparison with other breeds. The rear angulation should be in balance with the front. The pelvis, thigh and lower leg should all be the same length and similar in length to the shoulder, upper arm and forearm.

The hocks on a correct Keeshond should never be “under” the dog, or protruding way behind the croup. If a plumb line is dropped from the rear most part of the pelvis it should fall in front of the hock joint. Hocks and stifles must be in balance with the rest of the dog.

*INCORRECT*  
*- Cowhocked*  
*and/or Toeing out*

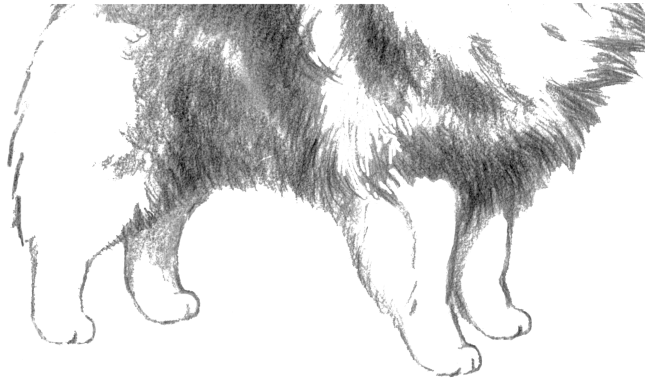
*CORRECT*

*INCORRECT*  
*- Too wide*  
*and/or Toeing in*

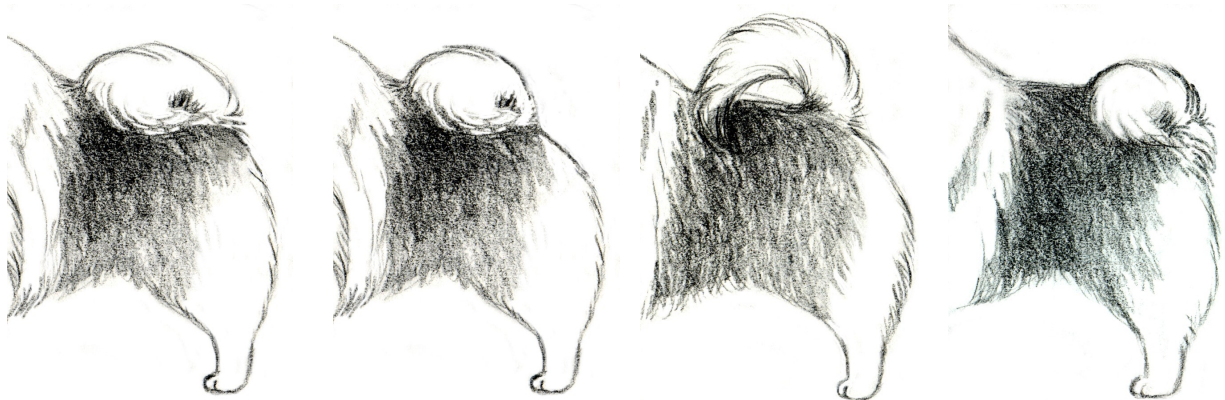


## FEET & TAIL

**Feet –**  
The feet should be compact, well rounded, cat like. Toes are nicely arched, with black nails.



**Tail—**The tail should be moderately long and well feathered, set on high and tightly curled over the back. It should lie flat and close to the body. The tail must form a part of the “silhouette” of the dog’s body, rather than give the appearance of an appendage. **Fault: Tail not lying close to the back.**



*CORRECT*  
- high set and close to back

*SEVERE PENALTY*  
- well set, but trimmed

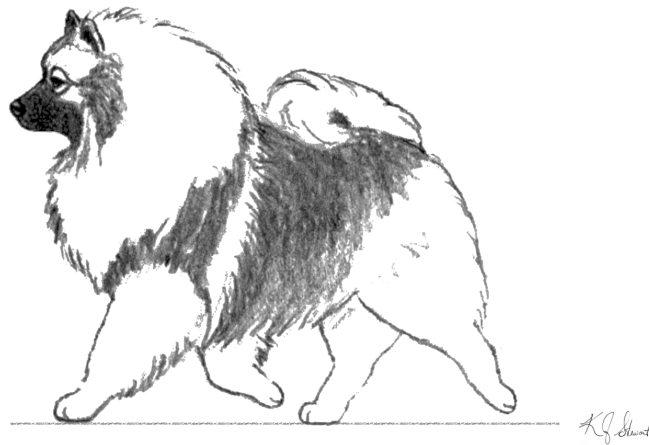
*INCORRECT*  
- loose curl, not close to back

*INCORRECT*  
- set too low

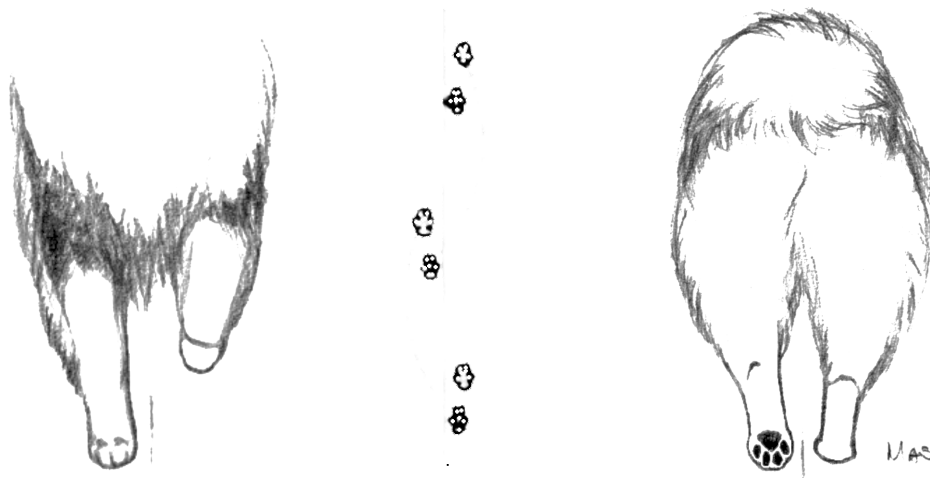
The tail should be profusely covered with hair. It should be set high, lie close to and be flatly curled on the back. If properly set and coated, it should not look like an appendage, but rather like part of the dog’s back. The bones of the tail may have one or more curls, as long as the tail lies close to the back.

# GAIT

**The distinctive gait of the Keeshond is unique to the breed. Dogs should move boldly and keep tails curled over the back. They should move cleanly and briskly; the movement should be straight and sharp with reach and drive between slight to moderate.**



*Lateral Movement:* The Keeshond (with slight to moderate angulation) when seen from the side should never cover ground with extended reach and drive. The breed should exhibit a shorter, “brisker” stride—one in which the front legs extend just enough to clear the rear legs. The pasterns should show only enough bend to break the fall of the leg. The front should be in balance with the rear.



*Front Movement:* Coming at you, the legs of the perfect-moving Keeshond should converge slightly toward a centerline of gravity. *Rear Movement:* Going away from you, the legs should appear straight from hip to foot and converge toward the center line of gravity, with just enough drive to display the back pads.

The Keeshond is a double (or parallel) tracking breed. As speed increases, the legs converge toward a center point. When moved at a brisk trot, a Keeshond should NEVER pound, bounce, or sway back and forth. Please remember that a mature dog with a “barrel well rounded” should move with the front foot and leg placement slightly wider than that of the rear.



# COAT

**The body should be abundantly covered with long, straight, harsh hair standing well out from a thick, downy undercoat. Head, including muzzle, skull and ears, should be covered with smooth, soft, short hair—velvety in texture on the ears. The neck is covered with a mane—more profuse in the male—sweeping from under the jaw and covering the whole of the front part of the shoulders and chest, as well as the top part of the shoulders. The hair on the legs should be smooth and short, except for feathering on the front legs and “trousers” on the hind legs. Hind legs should be profusely feathered down to the hocks—not below. The hair on the tail should form a rich plume. Coat must not part down the back.**



This is a double-coated breed. The undercoat is short, soft, and downy; and sufficiently thick to hold up the harsh, strong, standoffish guard hairs. Coat texture is of paramount importance. “Silky” coats will feel extremely soft to the touch and will not stand out from the body. “Wavy” and “curly” coats are very incorrect. A “harsh” outer coat should be luxurious, straight and hard feeling.

If the coat parts down the middle of the back it can mean one of three things: (a) The dog lacks the proper density of undercoat to support the outer coat; (b) the dog has a coat that is too long and/or lacks proper harsh texture; (c) the dog is out of coat.

The dog illustrated has a correct coat—abundant with long, straight, harsh hair standing well out from a thick, downy undercoat. This is a male, as can be seen by his profuse mane. Notice that this dog is “dramatically marked” with the correct color definition.



## COAT continued

**The Keeshond is to be shown in a natural state with trimming permissible only on the feet, pasterns, hocks and—if desired—whiskers. TRIMMING OTHER THAN AS DESCRIBED TO BE SEVERELY PENALIZED. Faults: Silky, wavy or curly coats. Part in coat down the back.**



*Correct coat for a female.*



*Correct coat for a male.*

Bitches' coats need special mention. It is unusual for bitches to carry as full and long a coat as males and they should never be penalized for their shorter coats. There are bitches that carry as much coat as their male counterparts and they, too, should not be penalized. However, it must be easy to distinguish one sex from another.

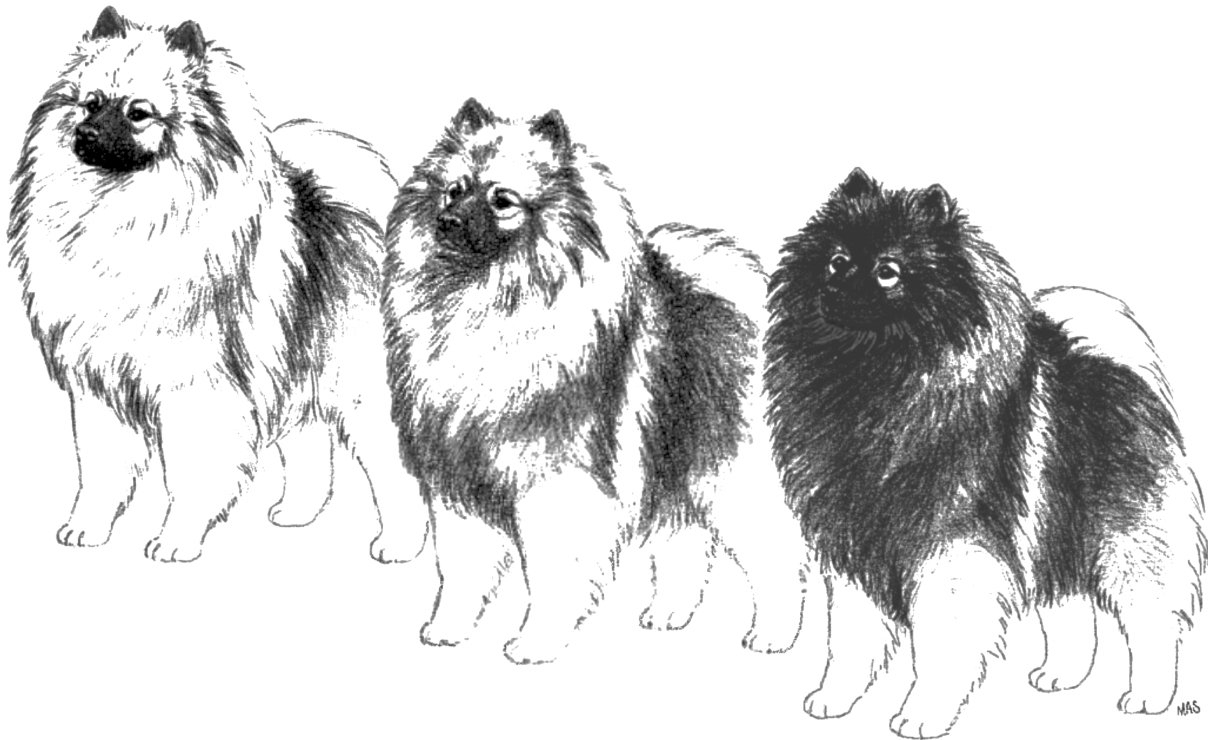
Puppies' coats need special mention. Up to the age of 15 months, Keeshond puppies will usually carry coats that are fuller, softer, and woollier than their adult counterparts. (Please refer to page 25.)

Trimming is NOT allowed on our "natural" breed EXCEPT "feet, pasterns, hocks and—if desired—whiskers." This means that doing anything to ears, tailset, spectacles, belly hair, anus; "tidying up" wispy hairs, shaping, thinning, razoring or plucking is to be "SEVERELY PENALIZED." Trimmed hair has a blunt feeling to the end, while untrimmed hair is much like an artist's brush – pointed and of varying lengths. This section of the Keeshond Standard was voted in virtually unanimously by the Keeshond Club of America membership in 1989. Judges are ignoring both our Standard and AKC Rules if they do NOT severely penalize by withholding awards, at all levels of competition, to Keeshonden that have been "artificially changed."

If in doubt, do NOT penalize a dog because a dog MAY be trimmed. It is highly possible you are looking at a dog whose breeding has produced a correctly fitted coat! "Natural" coats have hair of varying length that moves when the dog is in motion or when the tail wags.

## COLOR & MARKINGS

**A dramatically marked dog, the Keeshond is a mixture of gray, black and cream. This coloration may vary from light to dark. The hair of the outercoat is black tipped, the length of the black tips producing the characteristic shading of color. Puppies are often less intensely marked. The undercoat is very pale gray or cream, never tawny.**



*All three have acceptable color and markings.*

“Dramatically marked” means obvious markings with distinct contrast. Shoulder line markings should be well defined. The color of the ruff and trousers must be lighter than that of the body.

Hair on the Keeshond is generally black tipped. Darker looking dogs have more length of black tipping than do lighter colored dogs. The degree of light or dark is irrelevant as long as the required markings are present.

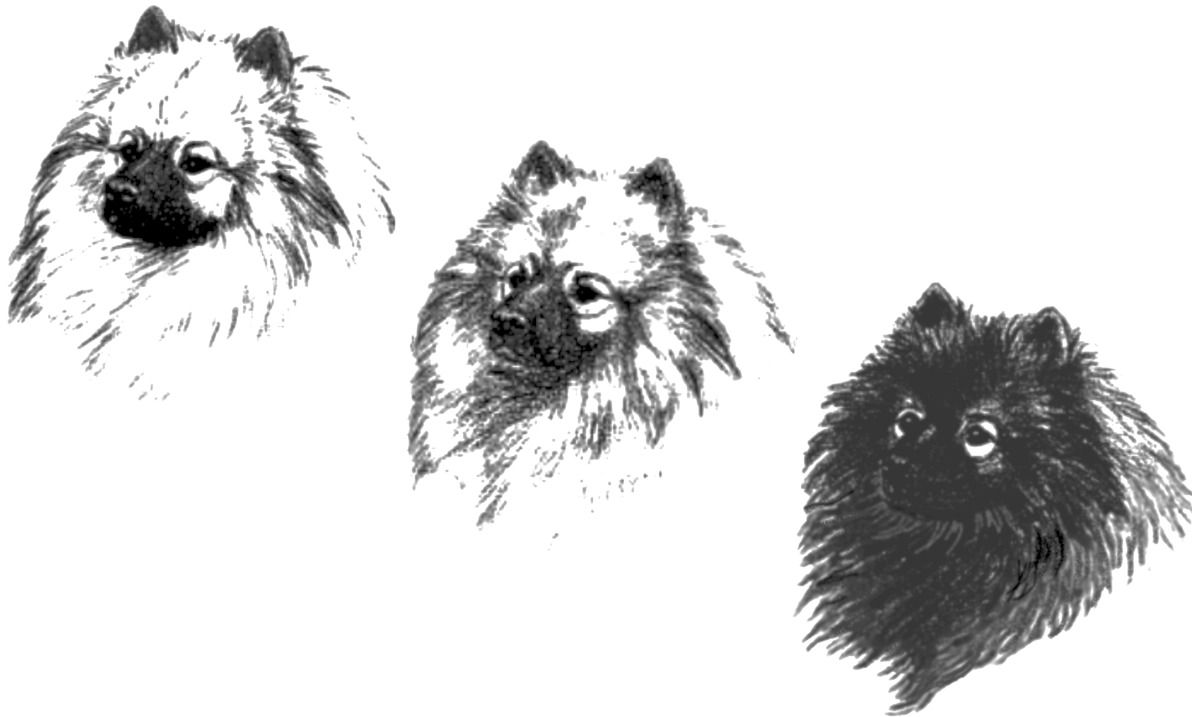
The undercoat is thick and downy. It may be very pale gray or the color of “fresh cream.” Light undercoats are preferred to get the “dramatic markings.” The color “cream” is acceptable in various pale tones and is not to be penalized unless the cream tones verge into the unacceptable tawny tones.

Puppy undercoats may also tend to have a darker cream color on the head and around the ears. This should not be faulted. Usually this coat is shed between 10 and 14 months of age. It should be noted that most Keeshonden darken with age.

An “entirely black or white or any solid color” in a Keeshond is considered a **SERIOUS FAULT**. Therefore, solid colored dogs should **NEVER** be awarded points toward their championships.

## COLOR: HEAD

**Head**—The muzzle should be dark in color. “Spectacles” and shadings, as previously described, are characteristic of the breed and must be present to some degree. Ears should be very dark—almost black.



*All three are correctly marked*

The overall muzzle color should be dark, usually darker in puppies than adults. It is rare that muzzles are solid black in color, except in puppies. Ears, like muzzles, are seldom solid black. The tips of the hair on the ears should be black and should give the overall ear a dark color. A “dull” black is usually indicative of chalking. A NATURAL untrimmed ear should be velvety to the touch. A trimmed ear has a coarser feel.

While a very dark-faced dog is also correct, there MUST be some NATURAL shading of light so that the “spectacles” of the breed are present. Conversely, a light-colored head is also correct if the spectacles have enough “dark” coloration visible.

## COLOR: RUFF, SHOULDERS & TROUSERS

**Ruff, Shoulders and “Trousers”—The color of the ruff and “trousers” is lighter than that of the body. The shoulder line markings of light gray must be well defined.**



In looking for “dramatic markings”, the more contrast the better. Steely gray, black or smutty markings do not lend themselves to adjectives meaning “dramatic” or “handsome” and should not be encouraged.

## COLOR: TAIL

**Tail**—The plume of the tail is very light in color when curled on the back, and the tip of the tail should be black.

The Keeshond's tail should be very light cream or pale silvery gray (almost white) with a black tip. It should lay flat and the hair should spread fan-like across the rump of the dog.



## COLOR: LEGS & FEET

**Legs and Feet**—Legs and feet are cream.

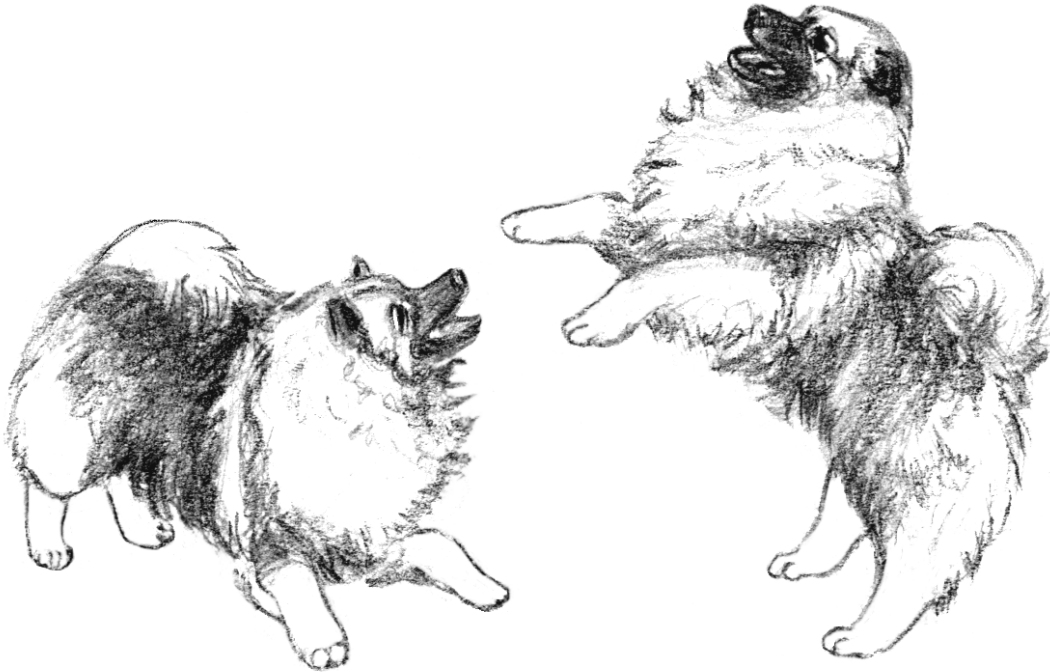


Either set of front legs is acceptable.

The ideal foot and leg coloration is cream from the elbows and hocks down to and including the toes. Legs and/or feet that are gray, smudgy or black are incorrect. Gray or black markings down to the midpoint of the foreleg is permitted, as is a small amount of penciling between the toes. Everything else is incorrect. White feet and visibly large white markings are also considered incorrect.

# TEMPERAMENT

**Temperament is of primary importance. The Keeshond is neither timid nor aggressive but, instead, is outgoing and friendly with both people and other dogs. The Keeshond is a lively, intelligent, alert and affectionate companion.**



For centuries Keeshonden have been maintained and perpetuated as alarm-giving watchdogs and companions to humans. At the present time, they don't hunt, herd or patrol.

Keeshonden have been bred simply to be the family companion and watchdog. They should alert the family to anything out of the ordinary. They are somewhat aloof with strangers, but at the same time, friendly and not at all aggressive. They are mischievous clowns that will do almost anything to get attention from the people they know.

The Keeshond's keen and uncanny intellect can provide the Obedience enthusiast with a major star if the human partner of the team knows how to "cleverly" train his/her dog so that the exercises are fun. Repetition is loathsome to a Keeshond. To get high scores the trainer must make the exercises challenging. Keeshonden will do things for the sole purpose of pleasing their people.

The same holds true in conformation competition. While Keeshonden may briefly greet the judge, they prefer to keep their attention focused on "their" person. If the dog is alert and baiting nicely for its handler, then it should not be necessary for any Judge to try to gain the dog's attention. A judge should allow the handler to present their dog's face to observe its expression. Generally, Keeshonden do not like to stand still for any length of time. They would much prefer to be jumping, playing and just being a bit silly.

This is why we love our breed. Without this ever young, always playful and slightly naughty temperament, you might have a beautiful animal but you would NOT have a genuine "Smiling Dutchman." You would not truly have a Keeshond.

# FAULTS

## Very Serious Faults

- **Absence of dark lines which form the “spectacles.”**
- **Entirely black or white, or any solid color.**
- **Any pronounced deviation from the color as described.**

## Other Faults

- **Round and/or protruding eyes**
- **Eyes light in color.**
- **Ears not carried erect when at attention.**
- **Apple head**
- **Absence of stop.**
- **Overshot, undershot or wry mouth.**
- **Misaligned teeth.**
- **Tail not lying close to the back.**
- **Silky, wavy or curly coats.**
- **Part in coat down back.**
- **Pronounced white markings.**
- **Black markings more than half way down the foreleg, penciling excepted.**
- **White foot or feet.**

## Severe Penalty

- **“TRIMMING OTHER THAN AS DESCRIBED (trimming is permissible only on the feet, pasterns, hocks and—if desired—whiskers) TO BE SEVERELY PENALIZED.”**



# PUPPIES

## DIFFERENCES to expect in COAT and COLOR

Keeshonden carry a much softer, thicker and more abundant coat as puppies than they usually will carry as adults. Puppies often have a soft and woolly undercoat, not desired in an adult. This is particularly noticeable in the mane behind the ears.

It is acceptable for the puppy coat to be a darker "cream" in color, as this will usually lighten with the growth of the first adult coat. This is particularly noticeable on the woolly hair right behind the ears and from the forehead along the topline toward the tail. "Cream" does not imply that the coat may be "tawny" in color. Tawny coloring is incorrect. *(Please refer to following Glossary for definitions.)*



11 months old (above)



6 months old (above)

The following is true in most bloodlines: As puppies, the overall coloring is light. Each time the puppy changes coats, the overall coloring will appear darker than that of the previous coat. While this is a general rule of thumb, it does not occur in all bloodlines, and dogs should not be penalized for carrying an overall darker or lighter coloration.



# GLOSSARY OF CANINE TERMS

**Almond shaped eyes**—The eyelids create an appearance that the eye is *almond* in shape, not round.

**Angulation**—The angles formed by a meeting of the bones, mainly the shoulder to upper arm and pelvis to upper thigh.

**Aloof**—Reserved, stand-offish.

**Apple head**—Domed, rounded skull.

**Back**—The vertebrae between the withers and the loin.

**Balanced**—A consistent whole; symmetrical, typically proportioned as a whole or collection of its separate parts (*i.e.*, balance of head; body; head to body; or front angulation to rear angulation).

**Barrel-well-rounded**—Thorax or rib section of the body is curved like barrel.

**Bite**—The relative position of the upper and lower teeth when the mouth is closed.

**Bone**—The relationship of thickness, quality and strength of bone as seen in the legs.

**Breastbone**—Bone in the forepart of the chest. Also called *prosternum* or *sternum*.

**Breeches**—Hair on the outside of thighs and on back of buttocks. Also called *pants* or *trousers*.

**Cat foot**—Compact, round foot, well knuckled up with deep pads, as seen in a cat.

**Close-coupled**—Comparatively short from withers to hipbones.

**Coarse**—Lacking refinement and beauty, too heavy in bone or overdone.

**Cobby**—Short bodied, close coupled, compact.

**Conformation**—The form, structure and arrangement of the parts of a dog.

**Cowhocked**—Hock joints turn in towards each other, causing feet to turn out.

**Crabbing**—Dog's body moves at an angle to the line of travel. Also known as *sidewinding*.

**Cream**—Color ranging from fresh cream to a very pale buff color.

**Crossing over**—Unsound gait which starts with twisting elbows and ends with feet toeing out and crossing over one another. Also known as *weaving* or *knitting and purling*.

**Croup**—Section from front of pelvis to root of tail.

**Cryptorchid**—An adult dog without both testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

**Dewclaw**—An extra digit on the inside of the leg; a rudimentary fifth toe; usually found on the front legs of Keeshonden. Dewclaws may be surgically removed.

**Double coat**—An outer coat (guard hairs) that is hard, straight and resistant to weather; coupled with a shorter, softer undercoat which provides warmth and is thick enough to make the outer coat stand well away from the body.

**Double tracking**—At a trot, feet move on either side of a centerline of travel. Footprints left are in parallel tracks. Also known as *parallel tracking*.



**Down on pasterns**—Weak or faulty pastern joint, seen by a pronounced diagonal slant from the vertical, and excess motion while gaiting.

**Drive**—The propelling motion of the stride of the rear legs.

**East/West**—The feet turn out - do not point straight ahead, but rather turn away from each other.

**Elbowing out**—Elbows not held close to the body - turned out elbows.

**Eyebrows**—The bone, skin and hair above the eye.

**Feathering**—Longer fringe of hair on the rear of forearm, and on the tail.

**Fiddle front**—Forelegs are out at the elbows, pasterns are close and feet turn out.

**Flat-sided**—Ribs are insufficiently rounded, also known as *slab-sided*.

**Forequarters**—Front assembly of dog (shoulders, upper arms, forearms, front pasterns and feet).

**Fox-like**—Having a sharp, alert expression; pointed foreface, wedge-shaped head, and upright ears.

**Gait**—The manner in which a dog walks, trots or runs.

**Guard hairs**—Longer, straighter, stiffer hairs that grow through and extend beyond the undercoat, normally concealing it.

**Harsh coat**—Stiff, hard feeling coat.

**Height**—A vertical measurement between the highest point of the withers and the ground.

**Hindquarters**—Rear assembly of a dog (pelvis, thighs, lower legs, rear pasterns and feet).

**Hock joint**—The joint of the hind leg between the second thigh and the rear pastern. Also known as *tarsus*.

**Hocking out**—Spread hocks.

**Hocks**—Slang term used for *rear pasterns*.

**Hond**—The Dutch word for “dog.”

**Incisors**—The six teeth between the canines on the upper and lower jaws.

**Knitting and purling**—Unsound front movement that includes twisting elbows, crossing pasterns and toeing out.

**Layback**—The angle of the shoulder blade as compared to the vertical.

**Level bite**—When the mouth is closed the upper and lower incisors meet exactly, edge to edge, with no overlap.

**Loaded shoulders**—When the shoulder blades are not smoothly integrated into the body due to over-development of the muscles.

**Loin**—Region of the body on either side of the vertebral column between the last ribs and the hindquarters, consisting of 7 vertebrae.

**Mane**—Profuse, long hair which surrounds the neck and forechest. Also known as *ruff*.

**Mismarks**—Incorrect coat markings which do not conform to the written description of the Standard.

**Monorchid**—A dog with only one testicle in the scrotum.

**Moving close**—Action when the hocks turn in and rear pasterns move parallel and “close” to one another. This action places severe strain on ligaments and muscles.

**Muzzle**—The part of the head forward of the eyes (nasal bone, nostrils, and jaws); also known as *foreface*.

**Nape of neck**—Top of neck adjacent to the base of the skull and below the occiput.

**Neck well set on**—Good neckline, merging gradually with strong withers, forming a pleasing transition into the topline.

**Obliquely set eyes**—Eyes where the outer corners are higher in the skull than the inner corners, angling slightly upwards.

**Occiput**—Upper, rearmost point of the skull.

**Out at the elbows**—Elbows turning out from the body, as opposed to being close—seen when the dog is standing or in motion.

**Overreaching**—A fault in motion where the rear feet are forced to step to one side of the forefeet to avoid interfering with them.

**Overshot**—The upper incisor teeth project beyond the lower incisor teeth to form a gap between them when the mouth is in a closed position.

**Pacing**—An incorrect gait, in which the left foreleg and left hind leg advance in unison; then the right foreleg and right hind leg. Pacing tends to produce a rolling motion of the body.

**Paddling**—Incorrect gait when a straight front is subjected to overdrive from the rear; the front feet flip upward and/or outward in a split-second delaying action to co-ordinate the stride of forelegs with a longer stride from behind.

**Parallel planes**—the top surfaces of the skull and foreface are parallel when seen in profile.

**Parallel tracking**—At a trot, feet move on either side of a centerline of travel. Footprints are left in parallel tracks. Also known as *Double tracking*.

**Pasterns (front)**—The part of the front leg located below the knee (forearm) and just above the foot. Also known as the *carpus*.

**Pasterns (rear)**—The part of the rear leg between the hock joint and the foot.

**Patella**—The cap bone in front of the stifle joint—equivalent to the human kneecap.

**Penciling**—The presence of black hairs on the toes and feet.

**Pigmentation**—Natural coloring of skin.

**Pounding**—A fault in gait where the forefeet strike the ground hard; caused by the dog's stride being shorter in the front than in the rear; forefeet strike the ground hard before the rear side is expended.

**Prick ear**—Ear that is carried erect.

**Reach**—Length of forward stride taken by forelegs and feet.

**Roach back**—A convex curvature of the top line of the back.

**Roman nose**—A convex shape to the bridge of the muzzle between stop and tip of nose.

**Ruff**—Thick, long hair that surrounds the neck and forechest. Also called *mane*.

**Saddle**—A distinct coat pattern in the back region of the dog, caused by the length and color of the coat.

**Scissors bite**—When the mouth is closed the inner side of the upper incisors just touch the outer side of the lower incisors.

**Shedding coat**—Moulting or losing coat. Also known as *blowing coat*. Usually done once or twice a year.

**Short-coupled**—Dog that is short in the loin area.

**Sickle hocked**—When standing, the hock joint is bent so that the rear pastern slopes forward from the hock joint to the foot when viewed from the side (curved like a sickle). In motion the dog has an inability to straighten or flex the hock joint on the backward reach of the hind leg.

**Sidewinding**—Dog's body moves at an angle to the line of travel; the hind feet do not follow the paths of the front feet, but rather move to one side. Also known as *crabbing*. Often exhibited by dogs whose angulation is not balanced or by dogs that are too short-coupled in body.

**Silhouette**—Profile of dog seen from the side.

**Single tracking**—Movement where all footprints fall on a single, central line of travel—(poor movement in a Keeshond).

**Slab-sided**—Flat ribs with too little spring from the spinal column.

**Smutty**—In the Keeshond, too much grey seen throughout, not allowing for proper definition of color.

**Snatching hocks**—A rear movement fault that causes the hock to snatch outward as it passes the supporting leg and twists the rear pastern far in beneath the body, causing a noticeable rocking motion in the rear.

**Snipey**—A narrow, pointed, weak muzzle.

**Soundness**—Both physical and mental properties are such that the dog may

perform the functions for which it was evolved—free from flaws or defects; movement that is firm and strong.

**Spectacles**—Light shadings and dark markings over and around the eyes, or from eyes to ears.

**Splay foot**—A foot that is flat with the toes spreading apart.

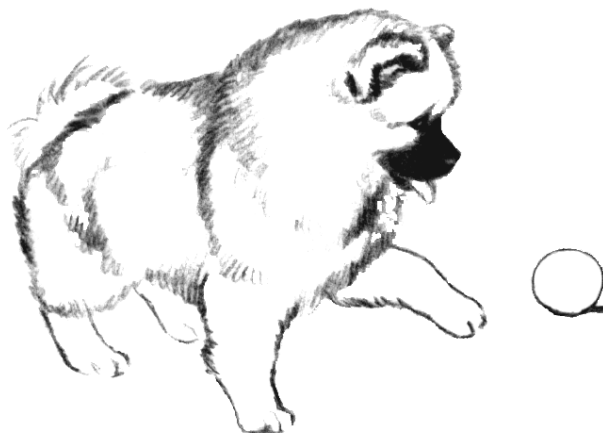
**Stacking**—Posing a dog so as to make the most of its appearance in the show ring.

**Standoff coat**—A long and dense coat that stands off and away from the body.

**Sternum**—Breastbone.

**Stifles**—The joint of the hind leg between the first and second thigh, equivalent to the knee.

**Stop**—An indentation between the eyes, where the muzzle steps up to the skull.



**Straight shoulders**—The shoulder blades are rather straight up and down, with insufficient layback of shoulder—the opposite to “well-laid back.”

**Sway back**—Concave curvature of the top line on the back between the withers and hipbones.

**Symmetry**—Pleasing balance among all the parts of the dogs.

**Tail set**—The location and manner in which the tails joins the croup.

**Tawny**—Not cream color—containing tan, brownish or orange tones.

**Temperament**—Mixture of natural qualities and traits which produce character.

**Tied at elbows**—An incorrect gait caused by elbows too close under the body, thus restricting the movement.

**Topline**—The line of the dog's back from just behind the withers to the tail set.

**Trot**—A rhythmic two-beat gait in which the feet at diagonally opposite ends of the body strike the ground together (i.e., right hind

with left front, and left hind with right front). Gait normally expected in the show ring.

**Trousers**—Thick hair covering the upper rear legs. Also called *breeches* or *pants*.

**Tuck-up**—Concave underline of body curving upwards from end of ribcage to waist.

**Twisting hocks**—Fault in motion where the hock joints twist both ways as they flex or bear weight.

**Type**—The combination of characteristics of a breed which give it its unique appearance.

**Undercoat**—The shorter, softer, dense hair appearing under the longer, harsher, outer coat.

**Undershot**—The lower incisor teeth projecting beyond the upper incisor teeth when the mouth is in a closed position.

**Unsound**—Anything relating to physical or mental properties or movement that is incorrect.

**Upper arm**—The *humerus*, bone located between the point of shoulder and elbow.

**Upright shoulder**—Shoulder blades without sufficient angulation.

**Weaving**—Dog moves with twisting elbows—feet toe out and cross over one another. Also known as *crossing over* or *knitting and purling*.

**Well-let-down hocks**—Hock joint close to the ground. Also known as *short hocks*.

**Whiskers**—Longer, thicker hairs on the side and underjaw of the muzzle.

**Withers**—The highest part of the dorsal vertebrae, just behind the neck and between the shoulders, consisting of 9 vertebrae.

**Wry mouth**—Lower and upper jaws are twisted with proper occlusion impossible.

## **NOTES**

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