

Designed by Nature

by Marieann Gladstone

Flowing across the ring, a typey and correctly assembled Cardigan shows power and endurance, proving it is capable of doing the job for which it was bred. Dogs with straight shoulders, with no reach in front or rear drive extension are faults we see in every breed and improvement in this area is a common goal for all of the breeds.

Breed specific type is essential for breed individuality, separating that breed from all other breeds. Losing these unique traits lead to generic, non-specific dogs. The Cardigan Welsh Corgi has several breed characteristics that were essential for herding and driving cattle in the hillside terrain of Wales during the course of the day.

The essential breed specific traits of the Cardigan are:

- Long and low to work at the heels of livestock and to be able to roll away from the kick of a cow
- Forelegs curved to support and fit around a well-sprung deep chest allowing for large heart and lung capacity to drive cattle in the Welsh hillside
- Keel-shaped chest, with prominent prosternum
- Definite waist line accenting the depth of brisket, giving the correct silhouette
- Heavy round feet - to work the rough Welsh terrain
- Croup sloping downward to a low tail set, not squared off, defining our breed from our Pembroke cousins, who are of Spitz origins. The Cardigan, from hound or Teckel origins, displays long, flowing curves that make up its unique outline.

When these traits are evident, the general impression is a dog that is long and low, with obvious graceful, flowing curves. Large ears *CURVE* rounded at the tips. An elegant neck *CURVES* to flow into a strong back, with a *CURVING* slope of croup (not sawed off), with a long graceful tail flowing

behind. Deep chest *CURVES* with a prominent prosternum and the *CURVE* of the waist is evident. From the front, forearms *CURVING* about a well-sprung rib cage bring the wrists closer together and are supported by big round (curved) feet, which turn out slightly. There is *BALANCE* of all the parts. No sharp angles - never blocky or squared off, from the forechest on to the rear croup; natural, flowing *CURVES*.

The Cardigan is not an easily understood breed. By observing other long, low breeds, such as Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, Skye Terriers, and others, we learn the similarity. A correct achondrodysplastic (dwarfed) front is not an ugly front and is essential to this breed. Cardigans with a straight front and squared croup are unsound and not typey. Seeing more correct fronts in the ring will help to grasp the concept of our breed. Correct fronts are the most difficult structural trait to keep in any breed, and they are hardest to get back in a line.

Sound temperament guaranteed a Cardigan to become a valuable family member. The typical herding temperament of being a bit wary of strangers ensured a devoted family watchdog. Add to this, the Cardigan comical nature for character. The correct medium length, weather-resistant double coat provided insulation and the ability to shake free when brought indoors.

Breeding and showing Cardigans as described in our Standard will improve on those breed specific traits. As guardians of the breed, we must strive to improve type and quality in Cardigans being shown in the conformation ring. Being tough and not swayed by emotional heart strings will help sort out that litter. Judges have the responsibility of evaluating our breeding stock in the show ring. Judging those correct dogs chosen for the purpose of breeding will continue to bring the breed a step further in the next generation.

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