

Dogs *not* in Canada

by Ria Hörter

THE CANADIAN KENNEL CLUB RECOGNIZES 164 BREEDS, BUT THERE ARE HUNDREDS MORE WORLD-WIDE, SOME OF THEM RARELY SEEN OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

Saarloos Wolfhond

A GERMAN SHEPHERD AND A WOLF

As we all know, the pedigreed dog of today is a distant relative of the wolf. Distant? Not when speaking about the Saarloos Wolfhond, because just 70 years ago, wolves were directly involved in a new Dutch breed. It seemed to have been a dream of several dog fanciers in Europe to use wolves to create a new dog breed. The first attempts took place in Finland and Sweden, but back in 1898, a certain Mr. Niedener in the Netherlands had succeeded in breeding a litter of eight puppies whose sire was a German Shepherd Dog and dam a wolf. This breeding was not continued, but set an example to the man who later created the Dutch breed, the Saarloos Wolfhond. This man may not have been the first wolf-cross breeder, but he undoubtedly was the most determined.

A JACKAL AND A PINSCHER

Leendert Saarloos, an animal fancier in general and dog fancier in particular, was born in the city of Dordrecht in 1884. All his life he was interested in – some say obsessed by – crossbreeding... for example, a rabbit and a hare; a ferret and a polecat. He even tried to breed a jackal to a pinscher. He succeeded, but the dogs were much too aggressive, even after several generations. The philosophy behind his attempts to breed a wolf to a German Shepherd was that in his opinion, dogs (i.e., the German Shepherd) had become much too domesticated. He wanted them to be more natural; at the same time, Saarloos tried to create a superior police dog.

RESERVED BUT NOT SHY

His first attempt failed because the female wolf, donated by the Rotterdam Zoo, died before he could breed her. A second female wolf, of the 'middle-European type' was donated, and he named her Fleur van de Kilstoom. The sire of his first litter (1936) was Gerard van Fransenum, Saarloos' own German Shepherd from old Prus-



ILLUSTRATION: JOHN FRASER

Origin: 20th-century Netherlands

Original purpose: Guide dog for the blind, then family dog

Description: First impression is of a powerful, wolfish, coarse-haired dog. Temperament is alert, cautious, affectionate; reserved but independent, not showing nervousness or fear. Build is harmonious with long legs, without being long-legged. The wolf-like head must be in harmony with the body. The broad skull is gradually wedge-shaped toward the eyes. The muzzle should not be pointed; the scissors bite is powerful. The medium-sized, almond-shaped yellow eye is a breed feature. Ears are very mobile, medium-sized, erect and triangular with a rounded tip. The neck is dry and well muscled, sometimes with a collar, especially in winter coat. The body is slightly longer than the height at the withers. The back is straight and strong with powerful loins; the ribs are normally arched. A too-massive chest disturbs the typical silhouette, which is rank and very wolfish. Forehand well hooked with straight legs; rear powerful and muscular, can be slightly cow hocked. A curl in the typical wolf tail is a serious fault. The double coat comes in brown, wolf-grey, and cream to white. Other colours are not permitted. The breed is a typical persistent trotter, moving lightly and loosely like a wolf.

Height/weight: Dogs 65 to 75 centimetres (25-1/2 to 29-1/2 inches); bitches 60 to 70 centimetres (23-1/2 to 27-1/2 inches).

Information: www.saarlooswolfhonden.com/english/ (Dutch Association of Saarloos Wolfdogs)

sian lines, known for their courage and trainability. Unfortunately, all the puppies of the first litter died within a month, but the following year there were puppies again.

After several litters from Fleur and Gerard, Saarloos owned 28 puppies, but only three were kept for breeding. The others were simply liquidated. The temperament of those half-wolves was reserved, sometimes shy, so Saarloos decided to use Gerard van Fransenum again. Later he used different female wolves, always called Fleur, but in the end it was clear that Saarloos

had not succeeded in his attempts to breed a superior police dog. Overall, his dogs were too reserved or shy, with an inbred urge to flee instead of attack.

People who knew more about heredity tried to help him, but Saarloos was stubborn and certainly a loner. He continued breeding, but never used a German Shepherd again, nor any other breed. When he found out that his dogs were not suitable as police dogs, he started breeding dogs for the blind and some of his dogs were rather successful. He founded a training college, a club of Wolfhond owners and in 1945 he founded the magazine *De Wolfhond*.

CLOSE WATCH

Meanwhile, German Shepherd fanciers kept close watch on Saarloos' breeding, fearing he would try to have an influence on the German Shepherd breed by using his own wolf-dogs. His activities were seen as a serious threat and they sabotaged his attempt to gain official recognition for the breed, which he named European Wolfdog. Saarloos carried on alone because he did not like to share his experiences and disappointments with other dog people.

PHOTOS: ALICE VAN KEMPEN



PHOTO: COURTESY RIA HÖRTER

Leendert Saarloos (1884-1969) with two 'European Wolfdog' puppies.



NEW 'WOLF INPUT'

In 1942, Saarloos asked the Dutch Kennel Club for official recognition, but the answer was no. He presented the breed at the Winner Show in Amsterdam, but in 1943 the Dutch KC wrote: "The dogs bred by Mr. Saarloos do not possess hereditary characteristics that make them into a separate breed." This happened in the middle of World War II, but Saarloos was not defeated. He carried on, but constant inbreeding produced very small dogs in which one could hardly recognize the wolf anymore. Against his will and in secret, some owners bred their dogs. Contrary to Saarloos, they tried to preserve the wolf-like appearance and avoided too much inbreeding. They in fact maintained the real type of wolf-dog we see today.

Twenty years later, in 1963, Saarloos used a female wolf for the last time, giving the breed new 'wolf input.' Again he tried to gain recognition for the breed, but the Dutch KC said no for the second time – not because of the breed itself, but because Saarloos insisted on being the owner after having sold the dogs, and on being the only one who could breed the dogs. When he died in 1969, his dream of being the creator of a valuable new breed and super police dog had not come true.

A NEW START

From the first litter, Saarloos had kept a stud book. Every dog bred by him had a four-generation pedigree. His wife and daughter have continued breeding under the same affix, van de Kilstroom.

In the early '70s, some well-known fanciers of the breed tried to find a solution and succeeded. Saarloos' heirs *continued on page 14*



Vitamins: Neither Too Many Nor Too Few

Everyone has heard of vitamins, nutrients essential for life that include a wide variety of substances. When even a single vitamin is completely or partially lacking in the diet, an organism exhibits clinical symptoms of deficiency that can eventually lead to severe illness.

As a group, vitamins have two distinguishing features:

- A dog's daily requirement for each vitamin is expressed in milligrams or even micrograms; and
- Vitamins are organic substances, unlike trace minerals such as iron, iodine, and zinc, which are just as essential.

Vitamins are found in food and are either liposoluble (soluble in fats) or hydrosoluble (soluble in water).

Dogs require thirteen different vitamins. Each plays a specific role or roles, from ensuring good vision, proper growth, and the efficient use of fats, to preserving the skin and maintaining the blood vessels and nervous tissue.

VITAMINS	ROLES IN THE ORGANISM	SOURCES
Vitamin A	Vision, growth, resistance to disease	Fish liver oil, liver, eggs
Vitamin D	Metabolic balance, phosphocalcic, improved absorption of calcium	Sun (UV), fish liver oil eggs
Vitamin E	Antioxidant, prevention of muscular pathology (exertion)	Milk, cereal grains eggs
Vitamin K	Production of elements in coagulation	Fish, liver, grains
Vitamin B1	Energy metabolism (carbohydrates), good nerve function	Grains, bran, yeast
Vitamin B2	Metabolism of amino acids and fats	Grains, milk, yeast
Vitamin B6	Metabolism of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and iron	Grains, milk, fish, yeast
Vitamin PP	Integrity of tissues (skin)	Grains, yeast, fish, eggs
Folic acid	Metabolism of proteins, synthesis of hemoglobin	Yeast, liver
Vitamin B12	Metabolism of proteins, synthesis of hemoglobin	Iron, fish, dairy products
Panthenic acid	Integrity of tissues (skin)	Liver, fish, dairy products, rice
Vitamin H	Integrity of the skin, metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins	Yeast, natural ingredients
Vitamin B14	Metabolism of fats, liver protection	Natural ingredients

It is important to note that excessive amounts of certain vitamins (particularly vitamins A and D) in the diet can be very dangerous. While these vitamins are necessary and useful in certain amounts, they are harmful and even toxic in others. However, some vitamins, including vitamin E, are well-tolerated even in large amounts. In fact, large amounts of vitamin E have a curative and preventative effect on cell membranes. So far, no signs of hypervitaminosis from this vitamin have been reported in dogs. Amounts of vitamin E above the physiological requirement may therefore increase the quality of a specific food.

Finally, owners should remember that brewers' yeast is a natural source of B vitamins, which can be a great aid to improving the appearance of the coat.

– Practical Guide for Sporting & Working dogs



PHOTO: COURTESY RIA HÖRTER

The forerunner of the Saarloos Wolfhond, the European Wolfdog (pictured in 1949).

continued from page 13 were invited to join the committee of a newly formed breed club and in exchange they agreed about the general transfer of rights of ownership. In 1975, the breed was recognized by the Dutch KC, and in 1977 by the FCI. In honour of its creator, it was named Saarloos Wolfhond. The breed standard dates from November 1981 and was modified in 1993.

A new start was made, but fewer than 80 dogs were suitable for breeding. However, since the '80s, the breed and the breed club have been in good hands. The breed is more homogenous and the characteristics of the wolf are back. Dogs that resemble German Shepherds are considered to be atypical. Socialization of puppies is extremely important because the temperament is complicated, to put it mildly. Typical for this wolf-dog is a wish to live very close to the family. Kennelling is quite impossible, especially when the dog is alone. The wolf in this dog makes it impossible to train him as a guard dog; there is no aggression toward people.

In the Netherlands and other European countries, the Saarloos Wolfhond is still a rare breed. Only a handful can be seen at championship shows. The Saarloos Wolfhond is not a great lover of dog shows.

A retired bookseller and publisher, Ria Hörter is a contributing editor of De Hondenwereld, the national dog magazine of Holland.



Under the supervision of Prof. Dominique Grandjean, the Practical Guide for Sporting & Working dogs is a close collaboration with many European and American specialists, researchers and nutritionists.



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