

A PUBLICATION OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Komondor Club of America, Inc. 2005



The Komondor

THIS PUBLICATION IS A PRODUCT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE

Komondor Club of America, Inc.

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To understand the essence of any dog breed, we need to know about the people who developed it and the purpose for which it was intended. To understand the Komondor, we must begin our story with the great migrations that took place almost one thousand years ago. In 895, the Magyar tribes under the leadership of King Árpád arrived in the Carpathian Basin, the area that historically became the Kingdom of Hungary. Historical Hungary was approximately three times larger than present-day Hungary. Much of Hungary's territory was given in 1920 to its neighbors by the Treaty of Trianon, which was imposed on the former Austro-Hungarian Empire by the victorious allied powers after the First World War.

It is known that the Magyars came from somewhere in the East, but the original homeland of the Magyars is not known. There have been some attempts to make a connection between the Magyars and the Sumerians based upon, inter alia, certain linguistic similarities. This theory is not accepted by mainstream linguists, historians and archeologists. A few linguistic similarities only provide, at best, weak (and possibly misleading) evidence for a connection between the two groups.



For example, we could use the large number of English words in modern French to infer that France was originally settled by English-speaking Americans, but this conclusion is obviously wrong. The Hungarian language is in the Finno-Ugrian family of languages (Finnish, Turkish, and Mongolian are also Finno-Ugrian languages), which are unrelated to the Indo-European languages, the family to which most European languages, including English, belong.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE KOMONDOR

The story of the Komondor would be rather simple if the Komondor were the dog of the Magyars, but recent archaeological evidence suggests that the Komondor was, in fact, the dog of the Cumans (or Komans, from light yellow or pallid), who were a Turkic speaking people originally living near the eastern bend of the Yellow River in what is now China. The Hungarian name for the Cumans is Kuns, taken from the name of the Cuman ethnic group. The language of the Cumans is known to have been Kipchak-Turkish, which is not to be confused with the Ottoman Turkish spoken in Turkey.

At the end of the tenth century, the Mongol expansion forced the Cumans to start migrating westward out of their ancestral homeland. By the eleventh century, the Cumans had migrated westward to the Ural Mountains and lower Danube and had clashed with the Russian Principalities. By the 12th century, the Cuman tribes controlled a large area, and perhaps their territory would have continued to grow but for the Mongol expansion of the early thirteenth century, which brought the Mongols into direct conflict with the Cumans. By the beginning of the 13th century, the Cumans, fleeing from the Mongols, had reached the borders of Hungary. By 1239, the leader of the Cumans, Köten Khan, asked King Béla IV of Hungary for asylum, and the Cumans were allowed to settle in the center of Hungary.

In 1241 the Mongols were ready to invade Hungary, and the Cumans in Hungary were suspected by the public of being spies for the Mongols. Despite the fact that Köten Khan and his family were taken under the direct protection of King Béla, they were massacred by German and Hungarian soldiers. The Cumans who, as horsemen, were armed against the Mongol invasion, decided to leave Hungary and fled South, ravaging the countryside as they went in revenge for the murder of their leaders.

The Mongols captured Eastern Hungary in 1241 and by 1242 had entered Western Hungary. King Béla was forced to flee. Only the death of the Great Khan, Ögedei, caused the Mongols to withdraw so that their leaders could be present at the election of the new chief Khan. Following the Mongol withdrawal, King Béla made every effort to strengthen his country's defenses. In 1246, he made an appeal to the Cumans, who had been encamped on the lower Danube plain in Bulgaria, to return to Hungary. Having heard the news that the Mongols were resuming their campaign against the West, King Béla arranged the marriage of his eldest son, Stephen V, to the Cuman Khan's daughter, who had been baptized Elisabeth. After the marriage, the Cumans swore allegiance to the Hungarian Crown. The Cumans returned to Hungary and were allowed to settle in the center of the country on crown lands and lands that had been abandoned because of the Mongol invasion. The word "Kun" is still found in many Hungarian place names in central Hungary. Excavations of Cuman grave sites in Hungary have uncovered tombs containing the remains of dogs (and horses). The dogs' remains have been identified as Komondor skeletons according to Horváth [Horváth 89]. Indeed, according to Horváth, the Cumanian origin of the Komondor is clear from the name, Koman-dor, i.e., dog of the Cumans.

The Cumans migrated through Southern Russia, and in that region today we find the South Russian Sheepdog (or Owtcharka, which is Russian for sheepdog), a dog that is probably a relative of the Komondor. To the South and West of Hungary, in the mountains, we find another dog that is probably a relative of the Komondor, the Bergamasco. The Bergamasco also has a corded coat but is not

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE KOMONDOR

white. Today, the Bergamasco is found in the Southern Italian Alps. We can speculate that there must have been some contact between this region and the Cumans, but proof will await further archeological findings.

The Cumanian origin of the Komondor helps to explain one rather interesting puzzle: how could a country as small as Hungary have two different breeds of dogs, the Komondor and the Kuvasz, of similar size and function, and how did the two breeds manage to stay separate over the centuries? The answer is that the Komondor was the dog of the Cumans and the Kuvasz was the dog of the Magyars. For much of Hungary's early history, the two peoples lived in separate areas in Hungary, and, as a result, didn't mix very much. Indeed, Hungarian King Matthias was supposed to have kept several Kuvasz with him at all times as guards. Since the peoples didn't mix, neither did their dogs. Eventually there was some divergence of function, as the Komondor remained primarily in the rural areas as a livestock guard dog, while the kuvasz became more of a town guard dog.



Magyar Film Iroda

Shepherd and Komondors of the early 20th century

Even though there isn't any archeological evidence yet, and the earliest historical references to the Puli are fairly recent, we can speculate that the Puli must have been the Cumans's herding dog because of the similarity of the Puli's coat to a Komondor's coat. The other Hungarian herding dogs were probably developed from the Puli. The Pumi is apparently a puli-terrier cross and the mudi is apparently a puli-spitz cross.

Reference: Horváth, András Pálóczi, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians, Steppe peoples in medieval Hungary, Corvina Kiado, 1989.

Komondor

The Komondor is an ancient breed of Asiatic origin. While its homeland has been Hungary for many centuries, it is generally thought to be the dog brought to what is now Hungary by the Kuns (Cuman, Koman) who were fleeing the invading Mongols. It is thought that the word "Komondor" meant the "dog of the Kuns". The word "Komondor" can be found in Hungarian documents dating from the 16th century, though references to large sheepdogs predate that.

The Komondor was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1937. During World War II contact between the United States and Hungary was cut off and there was virtually no importing and no breeding done in this country. In Europe the breed was almost wiped out because of the war. Only a few dozen specimens were left afterward, and the breed was slowly re-established in Hungary, but was rare even there. During the entire period between the end of World War II and 1960, only about 1000 Komondors had been registered in Hungary.

Contact between the American Kennel Club and the Hungarian Kennel Club was re-established in 1962, and importation of Komondors resumed. The next two decades saw dogs imported from Hungary and elsewhere in Europe, and American breeders produced an average of 50 litters a year in the 1980's.

Currently the Komondor is in the bottom five breeds in yearly registrations.

THE BREED STANDARD

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

General Appearance

The Komondor is characterized by imposing strength, dignity, courageous demeanor, and pleasing conformation. He is a large, muscular dog with plenty of bone and substance, covered with an unusual, heavy coat of white cords. The working Komondor lives during the greater part of the year in the open, and his coat serves to help him blend in with his flock and to protect him from extremes of weather and beasts of prey.



Komondors belong to the family of dogs known as Livestock Guarding Dogs. The AKC recognizes four LGD breeds: Komondors (Hungary), Kuvasz (Hungary), Anatolian Shepherds (Turkey), and Great Pyrenees (France/Spain). All of these breeds share some similar characteristics both in structure and temperament. In general these four breeds are quite reserved with strangers and will not show much excitement in the show ring. They should be smart enough to allow strangers to approach when the owner or handler says its okay to do so, so please do not approach any of these breeds from the side in the ring. These breeds will not seem very outgoing nor will they seem excited to be away from home.

Physical characteristics shared by these breeds includes large size, light coat color and dark pigment. Traits also shared but not preferred are dropped lower incisors, and close rear movement (at the hock, not the pelvis).

Other LGD breeds not recognized by the AKC are Maremmas (Italy), Akbash (Turkey), Shar Planinetz (Yugoslavia), and Tatra (Poland). All of these breeds are probably from the same genetic material that migrating tribes brought with them from Western China.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Nature and Characteristics

The Komondor is a flock guardian, not a herder. Originally developed in Hungary to guard large herds of animals on the open plains, the Komondor was charged with protecting the herd by himself, with no assistance and no commands from his master. The mature, experienced dog tends to stay close to his charges, whether a flock or family; he is unlikely to be drawn away from them in chase, and typically doesn't wander far. Though very sensitive to the desires of his master, heavy-handed training will produce a stubborn, unhappy Komondor.



Racka Sheep

Many breeds of sheep look much like the Komondor. We think the Hungarian shepherds developed the unusual coat in order to help the dog blend in with the flock. This acts to disguise the dog so a predator cannot determine whether the flock is guarded or not, and also helps the sheep accept the dog more easily.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

From the Standard

While reserved with strangers, the Komondor is demonstrative with those he loves, selflessly devoted to his family and his charges, and will defend them against any attack. The combination of this devotion to all things dear to him and the desire to take responsibility for them produces an excellent guardian of herds or home, vigilant, courageous, and very faithful



Although much of this does not pertain to judging, it does help guide your expectations about what to expect of a Komondor on first impression. When you first look at it, a Komondor should appear as "a large muscular dog with plenty of bone and substance". It should give the impression of imposing strength when standing still and of great power and agility when moving. Any dog which appears either large and lumbering or small and insubstantial should not meet your initial expectation of a typical livestock guarding dog.

A Komondor's demeanor will be somewhat reserved, calm, and almost regal. Puppies and inexperienced dogs might exhibit some suspicion about being touched by strangers, but the breed is smart and should be trained to stand still for examination. The true character of the Komondor is that of any livestock guarding dog; imposing, dominant, steady, aware, and independent.



"Type" in Komondors can be described as a large, slightly rectangular dog covered by a long, white, corded, protective coat. The typical outline of the dog will display a lovely line which goes from the top of the head, down a sloping neck, smoothly through the shoulders and along a level back, dropping down a slightly sloping croup and out along a gently curving tail. This lovely smooth line should also be seen when the dog is in motion. Any feature which breaks this line needs to be more closely examined by the judge to find it's cause. Dogs should be distinguishable from bitches.

When judging the breed, please approach them calmly from the front so the dog knows where you are. Exchanging pleasantries with the handler may help put the dog at ease. If you have any question about the dog's temperament, please have the handler pull the hair back away from the dog's eyes.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

“The working Komondor lives during the greater part of the year in the open, and his coat serves to help him blend in with his flock and to protect him from extremes of weather and beasts of prey.”



Size, Proportion & Substance



"While size is important, type, character, symmetry, movement, and ruggedness are of the greatest importance and are on no account to be sacrificed for size alone"

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Size, Proportion, Substance

Dogs, 27 1/2 inches and upward at the withers: bitches 25 1/2 inches and upward at the withers. Dogs are approximately 100 pounds and up, bitches approximately 80 pounds and up at maturity, with plenty of bone and substance. While large size is important, type, character, symmetry, movement and ruggedness are of the greatest importance and are on no account to be sacrificed for size alone. The body is slightly longer than the height at the withers. Height below the minimum is a fault.



These are both male dogs.....

One question we almost always get is about size in the breed. This is a large breed as described by the standard and a very large heavy dog tends to lose the agility we want to see in a working dog. The standard does not address an "ideal" size, but one can argue that a 28" dog and a 26" bitch are plenty big enough to get the job done. There is not an ideal size stated in the standard but please understand that a Komondor is a large breed not a giant breed.

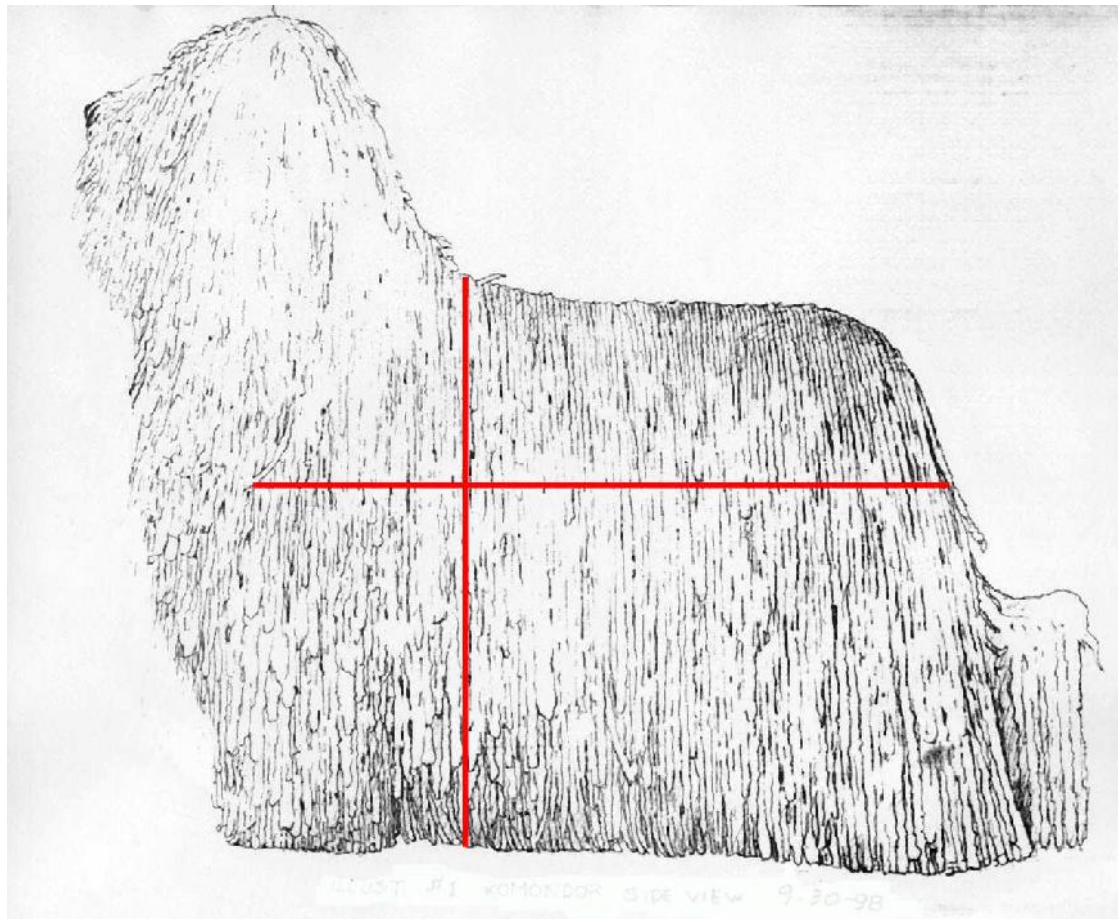
The actual height of the dog is less important than the relative substance. "Plenty of bone and substance" certainly implies that we want a dog with a good amount of bone and good body for its size.

The weights in the standard are not relevant to judging. It's a function of the size of the dog and how much they eat. A 27 1/2" dog who weighs 100 pounds could be fat. The breed should feel sturdy and "fit" under your hands. These dogs should never be soft and loose.

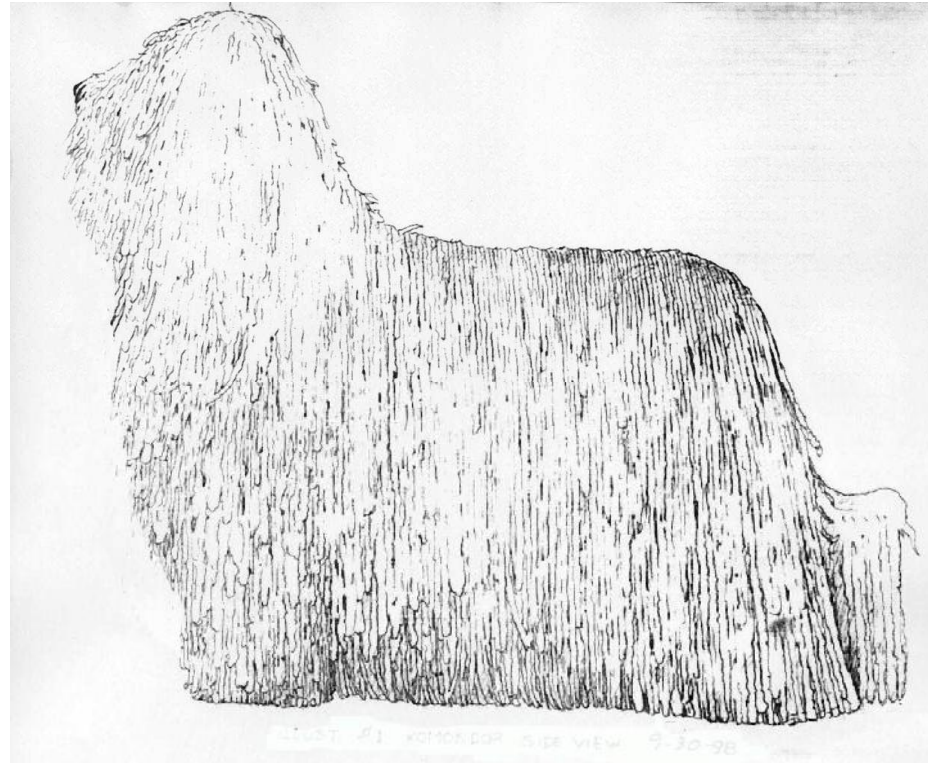
The Hungarian standard describes "slightly rectangular" as 100% - 108%, with the mean being 104%. Therefore, a 28" tall dog would be around 29 1/2" long, measured from sternum to ischium.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Slightly Longer than Tall 108%

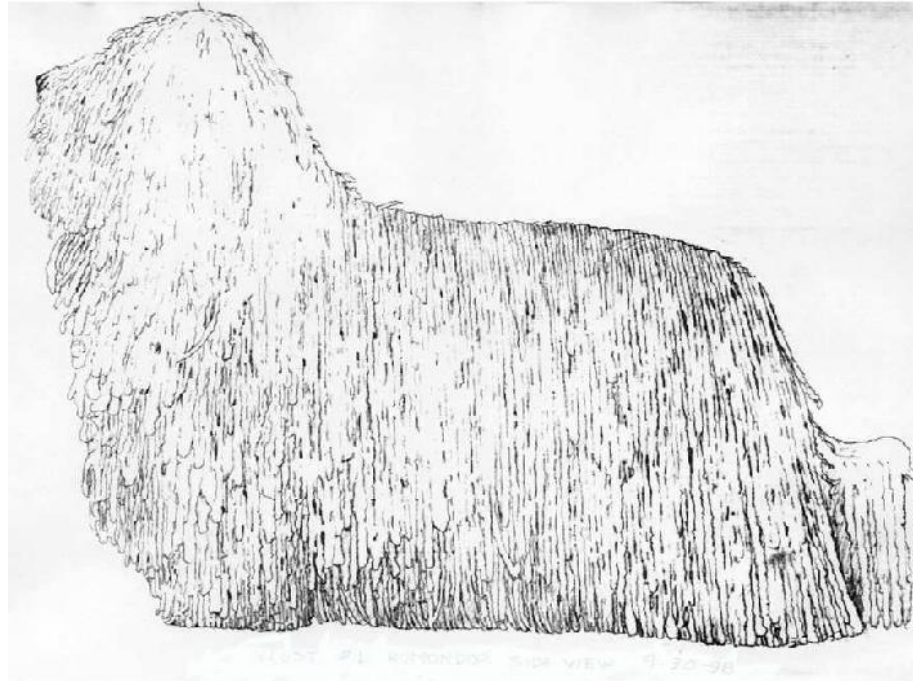


Proportion – “Slightly longer than the height at the withers”



This dog is exactly 108% longer than tall. He appears nearly square.

Proportion

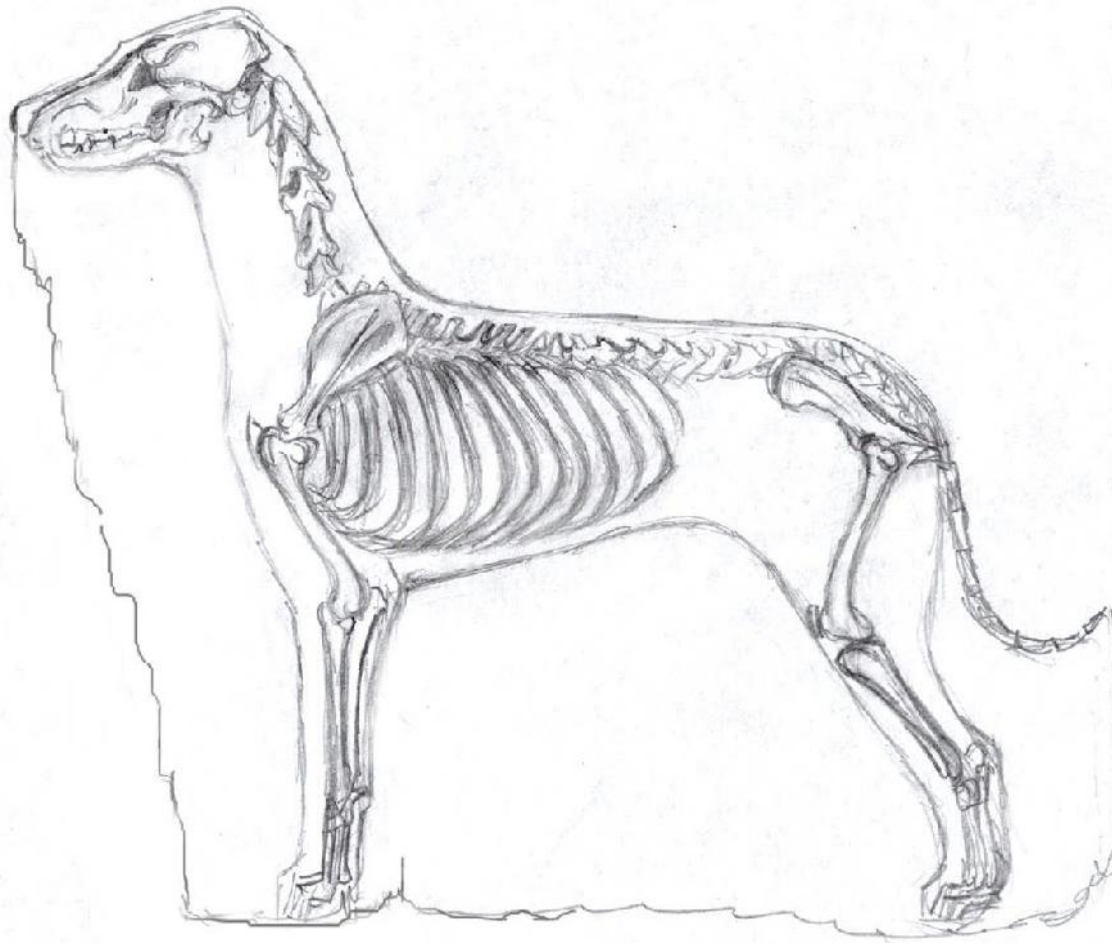


This dog is 119% longer than tall.

He appears short legged.

The dog above is 10% longer than the dog on the previous page. This is becoming an all too commonly seen proportion in our breed. If a dog appears either long or short-legged, please look closely at its proportions.

Structure



As you can see from this skeleton, which is also 108% longer than tall, the Komondor is a very balanced and moderate dog.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

From the Standard

“While large size is important, type, character, symmetry, movement and ruggedness are of the greatest importance and are on no account to be sacrificed for size alone.



The most important statement in our standard reads: “While large size is important, type, character, symmetry, movement and ruggedness are of the greatest importance and are on no account to be sacrificed for size alone.” This statement pretty well sums up how to judge a Komondor. Consider the function of the dog above all else and reward those features which help the dog do the job for which is was developed.

Do all of these dogs appear equally agile and balanced?



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Head

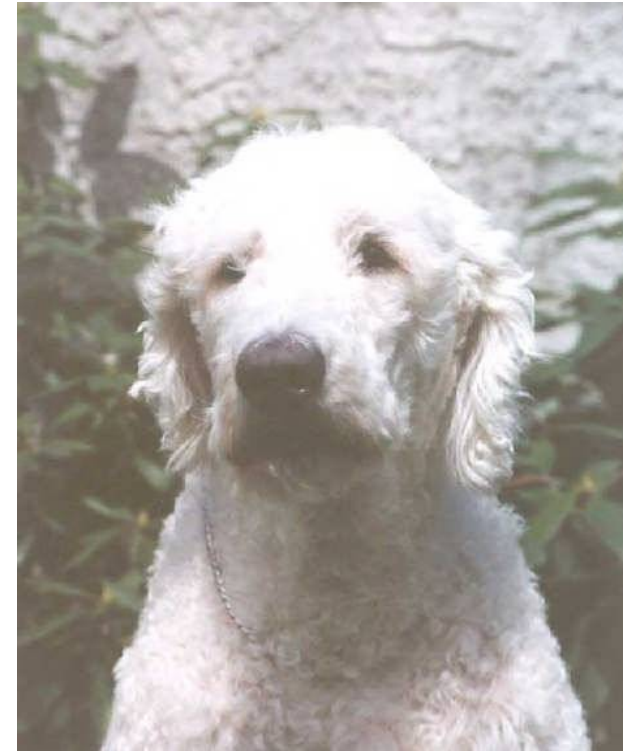
The head is large. The length of the head from occiput to tip of nose is approximately $\frac{2}{5}$ the height of the dog at the withers. The skin around the eyes and on the muzzle is dark.

These are both acceptable heads



As you can see here, you must feel the head under the coat in order to determine its proportions. The coat can cause your eye to be deceived.

Here is the same dog with and without coat.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Head Planes

Measured from inner corner of the eye to tip of nose the muzzle is $\frac{2}{5}$ of the total length of the head. The top of the muzzle is straight and is parallel to the top of the skull.



The Length of muzzle from tip of the nose to stop is 40% the length of the head. Stop to occiput is 60%. The planes are parallel.

Both of these are acceptable heads



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Eyes Medium-sized and almond-shaped, not too deeply set. The iris of the eye is dark brown. Edges of the eyelids are gray or black. Light eyes are a fault. Blue eyes are a disqualification.

The eyes should not be too deep set nor round and staring. Eyelid pigment and skin around the eyes should be dark.

Although this may not interfere with the dog's ability to do its job, please reward dark eyes when you can. Yellow eyes are too light. Occasionally you might have a dog with an entropic eyelid (rolling inward). Do not reward this fault.



These are nice eyes



Slightly round eye of lovely color and nice eye rim



Dark eye of correct shape with nice tight rims and good rim pigment

Blue eyes, like those of a walleyed Old English Sheepdog, are a disqualification. Because this is a white breed, we must avoid any dog that approaches albinism. Genetically the white of a Komondor is a dilute red, and should carry dark eye, nose, mouth, and skin pigment. Please check for this!

Eyes



Light eye - a fault



Blue Eye-DQ

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Eye Faults

Medium-sized and almond-shaped, not too deeply set. The iris of the eye is dark brown. Edges of the eyelids are gray or black. Light eyes are a fault. Blue eyes are a disqualification.

Eye Faults



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Ears

In shape the ear is an elongated triangle with a slightly rounded tip. Medium-set, hanging and long enough to reach the inner corner of the eye on the opposite side of the head. Erect ears or ears that move toward an erect position are a fault.



The ears hang down and are never erect. Erect ears change the head shape and may warn predators that they are being observed by something other than a sheep. Also, a hanging ear is protected better by the coat and is less vulnerable to injury during a fight. Ear length is difficult to measure because it is hard to tell where the ear starts because of the cords. It is not a good idea to pull the ear across the eye because it interferes with the dog's vision and he may become unsettled. The Hungarian standard now says the ear length should be 60% of the head length.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Skull

The skull is broad with well-developed arches over the eyes. The occiput is fairly well-developed and the stop is moderate.



The skull of the Komondor should have good bone without being too heavy. It will be rectangular in shape when viewed from the top and should be broader than the muzzle.

Our standard defines the skull as "broad" and the Hungarian standard defines it as broad in proportion to the body, but nowhere do any references give specific measurements. We have observed that the width generally is around 40% of the length of the head including the muzzle. The length of the head from the stop to the occiput is 60% of the length of the head. So this would mean that the skull would be rectangular with a ratio of 3 long to 2 wide, or another way of looking at it would be that the head is as broad as the muzzle is long.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Muzzle

The muzzle is wide, coarse, and truncated. Measured from inner corner of the eye to tip of nose the muzzle is 2/5 of the total length of the head. The top of the muzzle is straight and is parallel to the top of the skull. Underjaw is well-developed and broad. Lips are tight and are black in color. Ideally gums and palate are dark or black.



The muzzle should be powerful and broad, not pointed. There should be plenty of width to accommodate a large nose and a good set of teeth. Mouth pigment should be dark, which can be evaluated when looking at the bite.

Loose lips and a wet mouth are to be faulted. Although nervous dogs might drool a bit, generally loose sloppy mouths are not typical of a Komondor.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Nose

Nose is wide and the front of the nose forms a right angle with the top of the muzzle. The nostrils are wide. The nose is black. A dark gray or dark brown nose is not desirable but is acceptable. A flesh-colored nose is a disqualification.



Good black nose.



Pink nose.

The nose should be wide and large with good nostrils. Black pigment is strongly preferred but slightly off color noses are common at certain times of the year in some parts of the country. The nose disqualification refers to a totally pink colored nose, not one with pink flashes or spots. As in other breeds, injuries (scrapes or cuts) will heal with light pigment and then color in. It is up to the judge to determine if pink on a nose is an injury or not. Light noses, or noses with pink patches should be faulted.



Nose Pigment



Good,
big and black



DQ

“Nose is wide and the front of the nose forms a right angle with the top of the muzzle. The nostrils are wide. The nose is black. A dark gray or dark brown nose is not desirable but is acceptable. A flesh-colored nose is a disqualification.”

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Bite	Bite is scissors; a level bite is acceptable. A distinctly undershot or overshot bite is a fault. Any missing teeth is a serious fault. Three or more missing teeth is a disqualification.
<p><i>Good dark mouth pigment.</i></p>  <p><i>Dropped lower incisors. It is not unusual to see this in older dogs.</i></p> 	<p><i>Scissors bite is preferred. In older dogs it is not uncommon to see dropped lower central incisors, which can affect the appearance of the bite itself. This is not an undershot mouth. If you have any question, please check the tooth alignment along the sides of the mouth. Large teeth are preferred.</i></p> <p><i>We have a tooth disqualification which should be considered as important as that in Dobermans and Rottweilers. If you are not comfortable handling the dog's mouth have the handler do it for you. If the dog is not trained or you feel in danger, excuse the dog for "inability to check the bite". Please do not pressure a dog who cannot be examined. Missing premolars are the most common missing teeth in Komondors.</i></p> <p>This is a good bite.</p> 

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Neck

Muscular, of medium length, moderately arched with no dewlap. The head erect.



Neck length is not exaggerated and should be in balance with the rest of the dog. Lowered on the move, the Hungarian standard calls for the carriage to be 35 degrees from the horizontal.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Topline

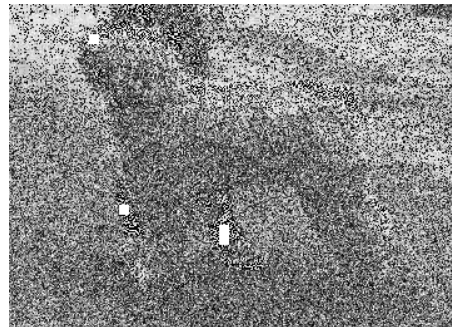
The back is level and strong.



A common fault in the breed is a bad topline. When you see this you should investigate the cause. Many topline faults can be seen more easily when the dog is moving. Often you will find that the dog has a short ribcage when compared to the total length of the back. The ideal ratio of ribcage to loin is 2:1. In other words, the ribcage should be 2/3 the length of the topline. This creates the best support for the back, especially when the dog has to carry around an extra heavy coat."

Sometimes a dog will look soft in topline when standing but handle it well on the move. This can be as much a "mental" problem as structural. Because the breed is calm, they often do not use themselves when at rest. A good topline on the move tells us that the dog is well coupled and has the balance necessary to do a day's work.

Conditioning is important and this is a breed which should be shown with good strong working muscle tone. Unfortunately judges have an expectation of a pristinely clean dog, and many people are afraid to allow their dogs to run fearing they'll get dirty. Sometimes a soft back can be the result of poor muscle tone. As much as we want clean dogs to be in the ring, soft muscles are useless to a working dog and are to be faulted.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Body

Characterized by a powerful, deep chest, which is muscular and proportionately wide. The breast is broad and well muscled. The belly is somewhat drawn up at the rear. The rump is wide, muscular, and slopes slightly towards the root of the tail. Softness or lack of good muscle tone is a fault.



The Hungarian standard says the width of the chest is 28% of the height at the withers with the average being 30%, also that depth of chest is 45% of the height at the withers but most often is between 50 to 56 %. If we apply these measurements to a 28" tall dog, the width across the front of the dog would be around 8". The depth would be between 13" and 15 1/2". This is NOT a barrel chested, wide bodied dog. Large, round bodies are as incorrect as slab-sided thin bodies. The rib cage should be oval shaped.

There should be good fill across the loin, good muscle down the croup, and good muscle in the rear. The croup should fall off about 15 degrees from the topline.

You may see some flat croups and a flat pelvic angle. On the move these dogs are unable to get their back feet far enough under themselves to get adequate drive in the rear. If you think a dog is carrying his tail too high on the move, please check the croup and pelvic angle and watch his side gait for rear drive. Many of these dogs do not get good thrust off their hind legs and would be unable to perform a full day's work in the field.

Here you can see the same dog with and without his coat.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Tail

A continuation of the rump line, and long enough to reach down to the hocks. Slightly curved upwards and/or to one side at its end. Even when the dog is moving or excited, the greater part of the tail is raised no higher than the level of the back. A short or curly tail is a fault.



The tail should be an extension of the lovely line down the neck and shoulders along the back and through the croup. It should fall gently with a slight curve at the tip. On the move, it should not be carried up and over the back, although the tip could be carried higher than the back out behind the dog. Tail faults are often seen with short, curly, and high set tail faults being the most common. Most Komondors carry their tails higher when excited, but short tails carried over the back are to be faulted.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Forequarters

Shoulders are well laid back. Forelegs straight, well-boned and muscular.

Viewed from any side, the legs are like vertical columns. The upper arms are carried close to the body, without loose elbows.



The same dog with and without coat

Although the generic rule of thumb for shoulder layback is 45%, most of the time even the best dogs will have about a 60% angle. The upper arm should be long and the entire front assembly well set on the dog. There should be an easily discernable but not exaggerated prosternum with good fill across the front. Most important is that the front should display sturdiness and power. Any hint of bad legs should be faulted. The legs should be straight both standing and moving.

Carefully watch the front legs coming at you. As the foot is landing on the ground, look for where the foot lands under the dog and how strong the pastern is. Please fault narrow fronts and crashing pasterns. The front feet should converge under the dog but should never cross.



FOREQUARTERS



Shoulders are well laid back, viewed from any side, the legs are like vertical columns

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

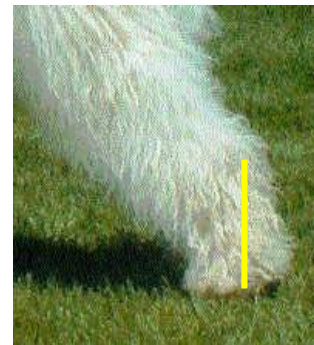
Hindquarters

The steely, strong bone structure is covered with highly-developed muscles. The legs are straight as viewed from the rear. Stifles well-bent. Rear dewclaws must be removed.

Although the issue of hock length is not specifically addressed in the standard, the general rule of thumb is that dogs who need to be good trotters should have well bent hocks. The shorter the hock the more acute the angle between the hock and the lower thigh. (Fibula/Tibia).



The same dog with and without coat.



Short hock



Medium hock



Long hock

A medium hock is probably the most efficient for a functional Komondor as it supports both agility and reconnaissance trotting.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Feet

Strong, rather large and with close, well-arched toes. Pads are hard, elastic, and black or gray. Ideally, nails are black or gray, although light nails are acceptable.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat

Characteristic of the breed is the dense, protective coat. The puppy coat is relatively soft but it shows a tendency to fall into cord-like curls. The young adult coat, or intermediate coat, consists of very short cords next to the skin which may be obscured by the sometimes lumpy looking fluff on the outer ends of the cord.

The mature coat consists of a dense, soft, wooly undercoat much like the puppy coat, and a coarser outer coat that is wavy or curly. The coarser hairs of the outer coat trap the softer undercoat, forming permanent, strong cords that are felt-like to the touch.



Although the coat is the most notable feature of the breed, the judge must evaluate the dog under the coat first. There are multiple words in Hungarian to describe a corded coat. The range is from string-like to ropes and even plaits.

One common misunderstanding of the coat is age. A puppy coat is soft and falls into curls, and older adult coat is long and corded, but there's a period of a few years in between which can only be described as "juvenile". The juvenile coat is corded too, but is lumpy and bunchy before it gets its length. It is completely corded at the skin, but might not appear so from across the ring. If you have any question about the coat, examine it at the skin level. You will see that each cord is separate from its neighbors and it is indeed corded.

The outline of a dog is affected by this age difference also. A dog that has just begun cording can completely lose its outline and may look like it has no neck. Use your hands to get under the coat to evaluate what is really going on.



The disqualification for failure of a coat to cord before the age of two means that we want to be able to distinguish our breed from other white livestock dogs. Once the puppy coats start matting, it's cording. It is rare to see a coat that will not cord at all. You should consider a coat to be corded when it is matted at the skin and those mats are separated into bunches. Even if it appears fuzzy from across the ring, it's corded when it begins to mat.

*A grown dog is entirely covered with a heavy coat of these tassel-like cords, which form naturally. It must be remembered that **the length of the Komondor's coat is a function of age**, and a younger dog must never be penalized for having a shorter coat. (Emphasis is ours.)*

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat

Straight or silky coat is a fault. Failure of the coat to cord by two years is a disqualification. Short, smooth coat on both head and legs is a disqualification.

This is a lovely correct coat on a young dog.



Newborn puppies have wavy coats – the wavier the newborn coat is, the better the adult coat will be.



4 days

As the puppies get older and the coat gets longer they appear fluffier.



5 weeks



8 weeks



16 weeks

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat Age Comparison



7 Months

1 Year



2 Years

3 Years

Note: 1, 2, and 3 year pictures are of the same bitch.

The taller the dog is, the longer it takes the coat to reach the ground. Note that on the smaller bitch the length of coat reaches the ground sooner. At the age of 5 her coat "appears" to be longer than that of the dog because the ends of his cords are higher off the ground.



5 Years (Bitch)

7 Years (Bitch)

The bitch pictured above was 24 1/2" tall, the dog below was 28 1/2" tall.



5 Years (Dog)

7 Years (Dog)

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat Development



This bitch has damaged coat, but the quality of the coat is acceptable.



Length of coat is a function of age. A longer coat just means that the dog is older, not that it's a "better" coat. It can take as many as five years for a dog to get the full length you often see in the group ring. Older dogs with short cords are not to be penalized. Length of coat is immaterial as long as it is corded in a dog over two years of age. Missing coat on an otherwise corded dog is not to be faulted. The coat grows at a rate of 4" to 6" per year.

Please understand that the amazing thing about the beautiful long corded coat isn't that it's long and corded, but that it's there at all! During it's lifetime the dog never got a hotspot, or a flea allergy, or any other kind of coat/skin accident that can damage or completely eliminate a part of the coat.



This is how you separate the coat. As the coat grows in it needs to be separated at the skin. The cords stay distinct—only the new growth needs to be worked

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat Development



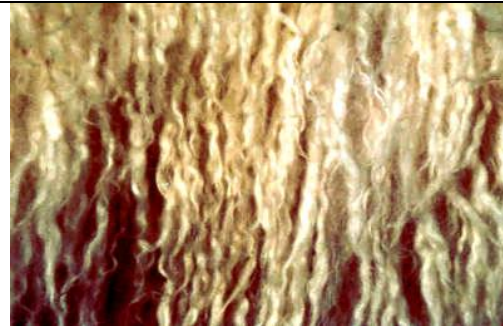
Puppy coat just about to cord.



Mature Cords



Fuzzy ends of developing coat



Thin Cords

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Corded Coats

Other Coats can be Corded too



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Coat Color

Color of the coat is white, but not always the pure white of a brushed coat. A small amount of cream or buff shading is sometimes seen in puppies, but fades with maturity.

Color other than white, with the exception of small amounts of cream or buff in puppies is a disqualification.



The color of the Komondor can be described as butter-cream, pearl white, or bone white. It is not the glistening blue-white of some other white breeds. Because genetically the Komondor is a dilute red, the white may have some buff or apricot in puppies. Light does not reflect off the coat as in other breeds, but is either reflected off obliquely or absorbed. You have the right to expect every dog in your ring to be clean, but do not fault stains. If you have a question about color, look at the coat at the skin.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Skin Color

In the ideal specimen the skin is gray. Pink skin is not desirable but is acceptable.



This is the skin of a wet shaved-down dog.

You can see the grey skin through the wet hair.



Good dark skin seen between the cords.

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Gait

Light, leisurely and balanced. The Komondor takes very long strides, is very agile and light on his feet. The head is carried slightly forward when the dog trots.



Agility and balance are crucial attributes because the Komondor must be able to catch and kill a wolf. Wolves don't just run in a straight line. The Komondor normally jumps on and knocks down its victim, often after "posturing" by leaping and throwing its coat out to make it look bigger. To evaluate movement look at pads coming and going and watch the coat.

A well balanced dog will flow and the cords will remain vertical. Common movement faults are lack of front and rear balance, over reaching, straight shoulders, over or under angulated rears, cow hocks, and poor coupling between front and rear which causes a rolling gait. Because this is a breed to be evaluated for its working ability, soundness should be considered part of type.



Komondor Breed Standard Defined

Disqualifications



Blue Eyes



Flesh colored nose



Short, smooth hair on both head and legs
(This is a Kuvasz — the disqualification was meant to designate a clear difference between the two breeds.)



Color other than white, with the exception of small amounts of cream or buff in puppies



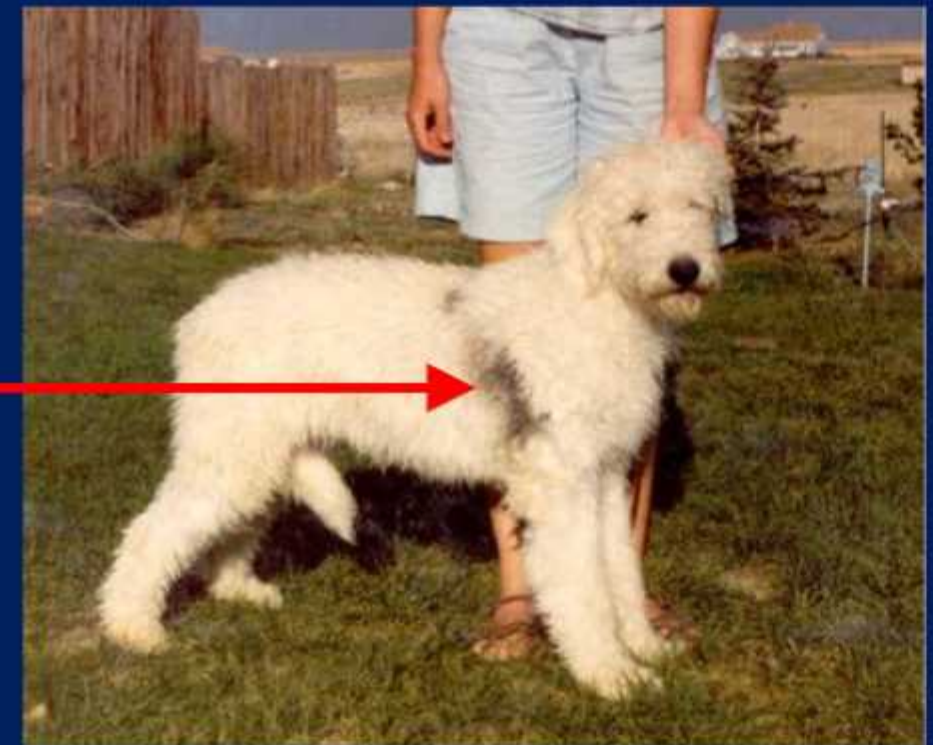
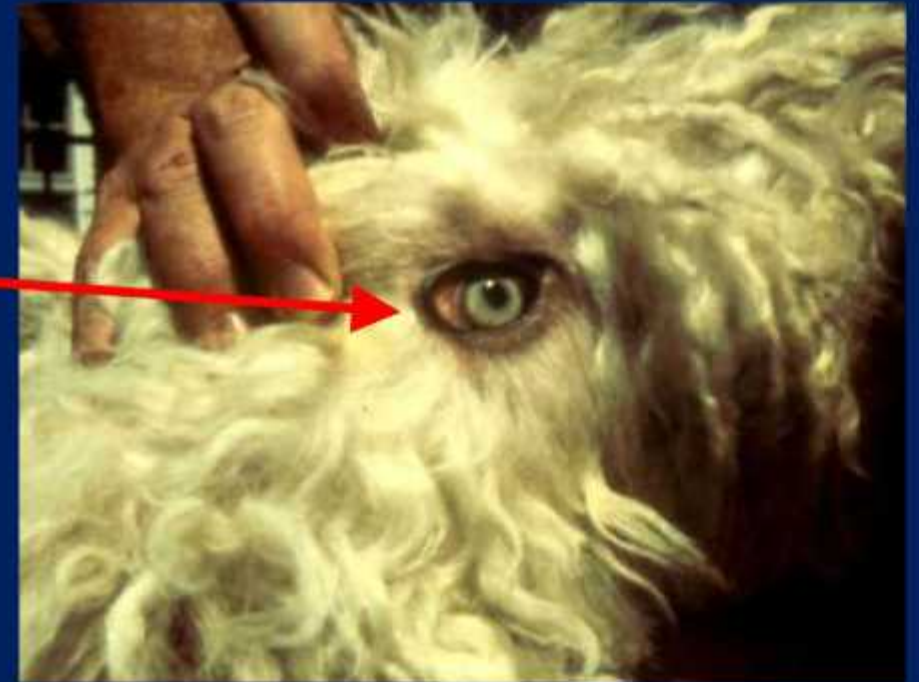
Three or more missing teeth

Failure of the coat to cord by two years of age

Effective July 31, 1994

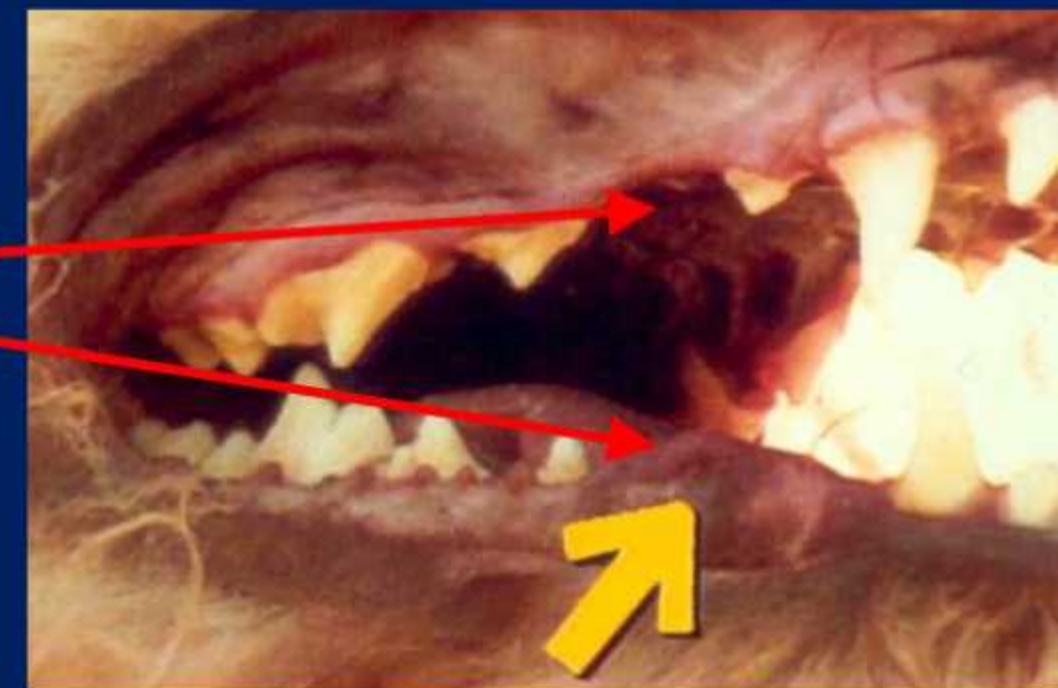
DISQUALIFICATIONS

- *Blue eyes (one is enough)*
- *Color other than white, with the exception of small amounts of cream or buff in puppies*



DISQUALIFICATIONS

- *Flesh-colored nose*
- *Short, smooth hair on both head and legs (i.e. not a Kuvasz)*
- *Failure of the coat to cord by two years of age*
- *Three or more missing teeth*



Effective July 31, 1994

Komondor Breed Standard Defined

In Closing

The forgoing is a description of the ideal Komondor. Any deviation should be penalized in direct proportion to the extent of that deviation. Extreme deviation in any part should be penalized to the extent that the dog is effectively eliminated from competition.

When you are judging this breed you will be faced with a lot of choices. Since our standard does not give a point scale or a list of priorities, please base your decisions on the relative ability of each dog to do the job of a livestock guard. Emphasize those good attributes which relate to function, while understanding that "type" is more than coat.

It is not uncommon to have a class of dogs who are all of one type except one. Please do not assume that the "odd dog out" is the one who is incorrect. Step back and mentally review what is important in the standard and put up the dog who comes closest to the ideal dog to work in the field.

