

Two New AKC-Eligible Dog Breeds

Adding to the list of AKC-eligible dog breeds, the Beauceron and Swedish Vallhund will be able to compete in shows starting June 27.

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Two new dog breeds, the Swedish Vallhund and Beauceron, have become eligible for American Kennel Club registration as of March 1 and may compete in the Herding Group at shows held on and after June 27, 2007, the AKC has announced.

The Beauceron is an old, distinct breed closely related to the longhaired Briard. They were developed solely in France to herd large flocks of sheep up to 50 miles a day.

When sheep herding declined in the late 1800s, sheepdogs became for the most part obsolete. To preserve the Beauceron, the French breed club promoted the dog in other fields, specifically in the area of protection of home and family.

Beucerons served in both World Wars as messenger and mine-detection dogs. They experienced a surge in popularity after World War II. Today, Beucerons are known as athletes with a steady disposition and an uncanny ability to focus on the task at hand.

They are still utilized as herding dogs, serve as personal protection dogs, and are used for tracking, police, military and search-and-rescue work, according to the AKC.

“The earliest record of this breed is said to date back to a Renaissance manuscript from 1578. Since then, the Beauceron has developed into a multi-faceted and eager-to-please dog that is a hardworking and faithful family companion.” said American Beauceron Club President Marion Karhatsu.

The Swedish Vallhund, a Spitz-type breed has been kept for centuries as a farm dog and used for herding cattle and eventually sheep as well.

Historians believe that during the eighth or ninth century, either the Swedish Vallhund was brought to Wales or the Corgi was brought to Sweden, hence the similarities between the two breeds.

The Swedish Vallhund has longer legs and is less stocky than the Corgi; the breed herds by rounding up and nipping at the hocks of their herd. By 1942, the Swedish Vallhund was almost extinct; Bjorn von Rosen is credited with beginning a program to revitalize the breed.

Currently the Swedish Vallhund is an athletic breed that often participates in obedience, agility, tracking, herding and flyball, and is willing to work and eager to be a family companion, the AKC says.

“The Swedish Vallhund is a wonderful companion as well as a great herding dog. Many people refer to this enthusiastic, energetic breed as a ‘big dog in a small body,’ ” said Swedish Vallhund Club of America President Louise McCombs.

Learn more about the Swedish Vallhund >>