

Back to the Future: [Herding Dogs Then and Now](#)

By Carolyn Wilki

Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

Bangor, PA

February, 2011



Carolyn & her [German Shepherd Dog](#) Blondie with Flock, 1994

Look at any photo or video of a pack of wolves trying to catch dinner, and you will see behaviors that are also useful to herding.

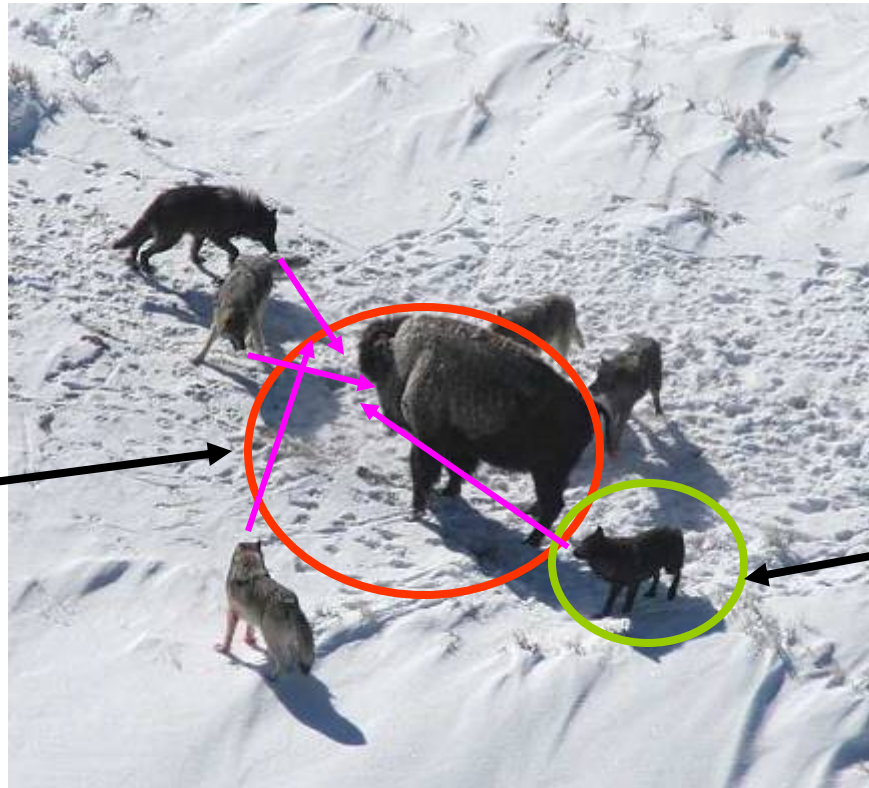
The wolves have set this moose on the run as they keep a respectful distance on the edge of its flight zone (yellow circle).



These wolves are chasing the moose.

This large bison is standing off this pack of wolves.
The wolves are holding the bison—heading and containing—
trying to prevent a potential dinner from leaving.

The *pink arrows* show the direction of the wolves' stares, most of which converge at the head/eyes of the bison. The wolves are "heading" the bison—going to the "head" to control or turn the animal.



The *stance* of this wolf is similar to the stance of the Border Collie (next slide).

These wolves respect the flight zone of the bison—
moving closer might get them hurt.

This Border Collie is using “heading” and “eye” (on the lamb) and “wearing” (moving back & forth along the edge of the flight zone) to control the flock at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm.



Over the centuries, from their crude, wolffy beginnings, many different herding breeds have been developed with differing herding styles for different herding purposes.

The AKC currently recognizes 48 herding breeds in its herding program.

List of AKC Breeds Eligible to Participate in AKC Herding Program

AKC Recognized Breeds

[Australian Cattle Dog](#)
[Australian Shepherd](#)
[Bearded Collie](#)
[Beauceron](#)
[Belgian Malinois](#)
[Belgian Sheepdog](#)
[Belgian Tervuren](#)
[Bernese Mountain Dog](#)
[Border Collie](#)
[Bouvier des Flandres](#)
[Briard](#)
[Canaan Dog](#)
[Cardigan Welsh Corgi](#)
[Collie](#)
[German Shepherd Dog](#)
[Giant Schnauzer](#)
[Great Swiss Mountain Dog](#)
[Icelandic Sheepdog](#)
[Kerry Blue Terrier](#)
[Norwegian Buhund](#)
[Old English Sheepdog](#)
[Pembroke Welsh Corgi](#)
[Polish Lowland Sheepdog](#)
[Puli](#)
[Pyrenean Shepherd](#)
[Rottweiler](#)
[Samoyeds](#)
[Shetland Sheepdog](#)
[Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier](#)
[Standard Schnauzer](#)
[Swedish Vallhund](#)

* AKC Foundation Stock Service Breeds

[Appenzeller Sennenhunde](#)
[Belgian Laekenois](#)
[Bergamasco](#)
[Berger Picard](#)
[Boerboel](#)
[Catahoula Leopard Dog](#)
[Czechoslovakian Vlcaks](#)
[Entlebucher Mountain Dog](#)
[Finnish Lapphund](#)
[Lancashire Heeler](#)
[Mudi](#)
[Pumi](#)
[Spanish Water Dog](#)
[Schapendoes](#)
[Slovensky Cuvac](#)
[Swedish Lapphund](#)

(* May compete for suffix titles only)

[AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)
[Listed by Sub-categories](#)

The 48 AKC herding eligible breeds can be divided into 10 sub-categories based on geographical origin and herding style.

[General Information about Herding Breeds, Their Training, and Behaviors](#)



* = AKC FSS breed, a breed currently eligible to compete for suffix titles only.

There are 16 breeds on the AKC FSS list eligible for herding participation.

[A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)

[AKC Herding Eligible Breeds Listed by Sub-categories](#)

The 48 AKC herding eligible breeds can be divided into 10 sub-categories

1. Mollusius Types

Appenzeller Sennenhunde*
Bernese Mountain Dog
Boerboel*
Catahoula Leopard Dog*
Entlebucher Mountain Dog*
Great Swiss Mountain Dog
Rottweiler
Slovensky Cuvac*

2. German–Low Country Types

Belgian Laekenois*
Belgian Malinois
Belgian Sheepdog
Belgian Tervuren
Bouviere des Flandres
Czechoslovakian Vlcahs*
German Shepherd Dog
Giant Schnauzer
Standard Schnauzer

3. Tibetan Terrier Types

Mudi*
Polish Lowland Sheepdog
Puli
Pumi*
Schapendoes

4. French-Italian Types

Beauceron
Bergamasco*
Berger des Picard*
Briard

5. Iberian Peninsula Types

Australian Shepherd
Pyrenean Shepherd
Spanish Water Dog*

6. Collie Types

Bearded Collie
Border Collie
Collie
Old English Sheepdog
Shetland Sheepdog

7. Heeler Types

Australian Cattle Dog
Cardigan Welsh Corgi
Lancashire Heeler*
Pembroke Welsh Corgi

8. Irish Types

Kerry Blue Terrier
Soft Coated Wheaten
Terrier

9. Nordic Types

Icelandic Sheepdog
Norwegian Buhund
Samoyeds
Swedish Vallhund
Finnish Lapphund*
Swedish Lapphund*

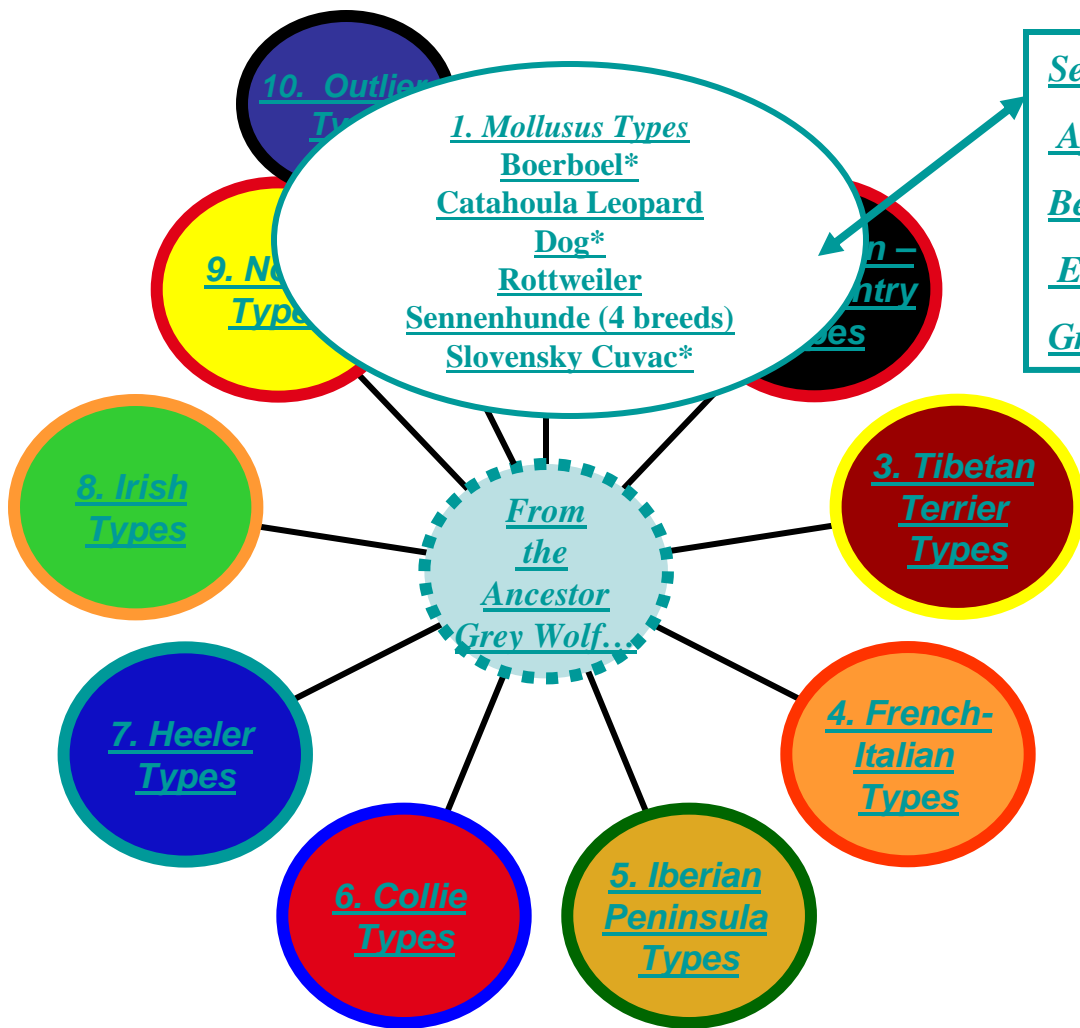
10. Outlier Type

Canaan Dog

(* May compete for suffix titles only)

Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds

[General Information about Herding Breeds, Their Training, and Behaviors](#)



1. Mollus Types
Boerboel*
Catahoula Leopard Dog*
Rottweiler
Sennenhunde (4 breeds)
Slovensky Cuvac*

Sennenhunde breeds:
Apfenzeller*,
Bernese Mountain Dog,
Entlebucher*, and
Great Swiss Mt. Dog.

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 There are 16 breeds on the AKC FSS list eligible for herding participation.

[AKC Herding Eligible Breeds Listed by Sub-categories](#)

[A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)

Mollus Types:

Extinct, ancient breed derived from shepherds in the Balkans; thought to be the foundation of mastiff type dogs, including these herding breeds:



*Carving of Mollus Dog
from 2nd Century AD*

- [Boerboel](#)* (South Africa, from Boer farmers)
- [Catahoula Leopard Dog](#)*
(all-purpose Louisiana farm dog)
- [Rottweiler](#)
(butcher's dog of Rottweil, Germany)
- [Sennenhunde](#) (4 Swiss farm dog breeds):

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog
Bernese Mountain Dog
Apfenzeller Sennenhunde*
Entlebucher*

[Slovensky Cuvac](#)*

(white guardian-shepherd dog of Tatra Mts.)

[← Back to Mollus Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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Boerboels*

are all-purpose farm dogs who guard and herd. They were developed by South African Boer farmers who used Mastiffs, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, and Boxers as the foundation stock for their farm dogs. The dogs weigh between 150-200 pounds. They are a Mollus type.



Drawing of the Great Trek of 1835
-- Grazing Farmers Migrate to Interior of African Continent

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Boerboel* (1)



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Boerboel* (2)

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Catahoula Leopard Dog*

Is one of the oldest recognized American breeds, dating back to the first American settlements in the 1500's. The breed resulted from interbreeding ancient Native American domesticated dogs (brought via Asia) with mastiffs (another [Mollus](#) type), greyhounds, French [Beaucerons](#), and terriers, all of which early European settlers brought with them.

What resulted was a tough, agile, versatile farm dog able to guard, chase wild boar, hunt, and herd the most challenging of livestock.

The breed is named after Catahoula Parish in Louisiana and is the official state dog of Louisiana.

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Catahoula Leopard Dog*(1)



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Catahoula Leopard Dog* (2)



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Catahoula Leopard Dog*(3)

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Catahoula Leopard Dogs working by teasing and leading the livestock forward.

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Rottweiler

also known as the Butcher's Dog of Rottweil. The Rottweiler is in the AKC's Working Group and is better known for its protective abilities although it is an able herder. The breed was formed from a combination of Mollosus type dogs mixed with ancestors of current French-German herding breeds such as the Beauceron.

The butchers primarily used the dogs to protect their purses and themselves when they walked out through the countryside to collect animals and then used the dogs to drive livestock back to Rottweil where the dogs would pen them at market or at their shops.

The town of **Rottweil** is in southwestern Germany, not too far from the Alps, and near France. It is said that when Hannibal invaded and traveled through the Alps, his armies brought the Rottweiler prototype—the Mollosus type of dog—as a war dog who also guarded and herded the army's flocks.



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Wolf and Fox Hunt, ca. 1615-21,
Peter Paul Rubens and Workshop,
(Flemish, 1577-1640).

**The Rottweiler type dog
by Rubens, 1621.**

Rottweiler

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Rottweiler



Same Rubens painting from previous slide-- enlarged to see detail of Rottweiler type dog (*in yellow circle*).

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Rottweiler (1)



Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

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Rottweiler (2)



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SENNENHUNDE

refers to 4 breeds of all-purpose Swiss farm dogs that mostly herd small groups of cows in Switzerland and also serve as watch dogs and as carting dogs, too.

The four breeds (from largest to smallest):

Great Swiss Mountain Dog

Bernese Mountain Dog

Appenzeller Sennenhunde*

Entlebucher Mountain Dog*

They are notable for their strength across the chest and shoulders which allows them to pull carts (many dogs and owners enjoy this).

The Sennenhunde are thought to be a mix of indigenous Swiss dog breeds and the descendents of Hannibal's war dogs– the ancient Mollosus type. Although the coloration pattern of the 4 breeds is remarkably similar, the four breeds have distinct size, coat, and tail types. The Appenzeller* (a curly tail) and Entlebucher Mountain Dog* (sometimes born with a natural bob-tail, sometimes docked) are known for being more active than the larger, heavier-boned Great Swiss Mountain Dog (largest and smooth coat) and Bernese Mountain Dog (large with rough coat) who are better known for their strength and carting ability.

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Green

[Sennenhunde](#)

[Transportation](#) at turn of 20th Century



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Great Swiss Mountain Dog (1)



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Great Swiss Mountain Dog (2)



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Bernese Mountain Dog (1)



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Bernese Mountain Dog (2)

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Appenzeller Sennenhunde*



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Entlebucher Mountain Dog*



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Slovensky Cuvac*

From the Tatra Mountains of Slovenia/Poland, this breed is related to the Hungarian Kuvasz and is a large livestock guardian dog that generally protects livestock, but apparently sometimes also herds.

The Mollus, an ancient, extinct breed and the ancient foundation for the breeds of this large, solid type of shepherding dog, is said to have originated from the same high Carpathian Mountain regions.

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Slovensky Cuvac* (1)



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Slovensky Cuvac* (2)

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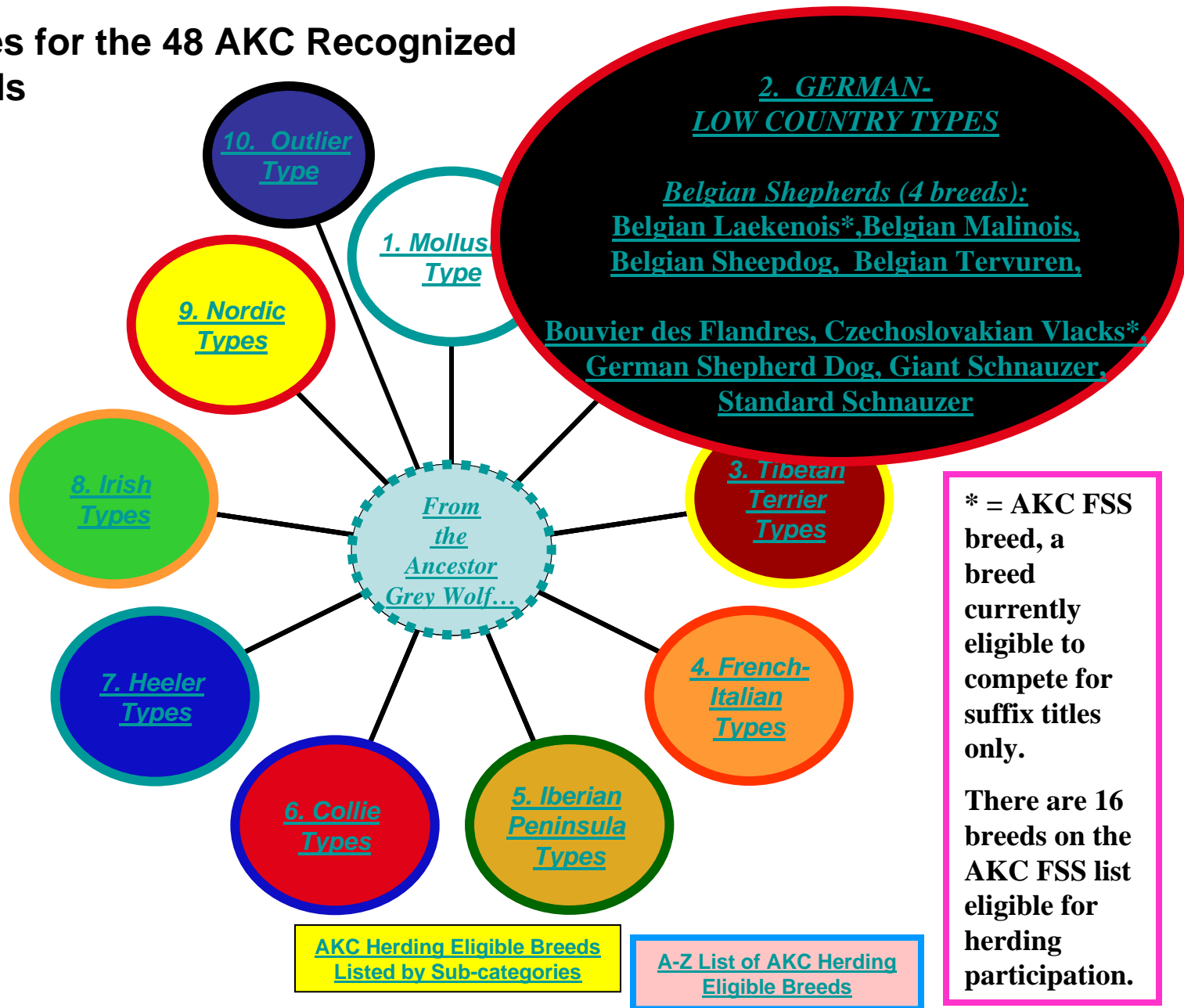
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2. German-Low Country Types—

(Note: The French-Italian Type herding dogs perform similar functions)

Belgian Shepherds (4 breeds):

*Belgian Laekenois**, *Belgian Malinois*,
Belgian Sheepdog, & *Belgian Tervuren*

[Bouvier des Flandres](#)

[Czechoslovakian Vlacks*](#)

[German Shepherd Dog](#)

[Giant Schnauzer](#)

[Standard Schnauzer](#)

These breeds were the all-purpose farm and shepherd dogs on the flat European plains. The dogs drove livestock along the roads, tended (functioning as moving fences to keep the livestock safely contained in unfenced graze areas) and guarded the animals and farms to protect them from wild animals and burglars.

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[Belgian Shepherds \(4 breeds\):](#)

[Belgian Tervuren](#), [Belgian Sheepdog](#), [Belgian Malinois](#), & [Belgian Laekenois*](#)

—the four breeds are differentiated by length of hair, coat type, and coat color.

World War I wiped out the sheep industry in Belgium, so that the breeds have been used only sporadically to herd in their native land since then.

The breeds were originally used for [tending](#) like the Briard of France and German Shepherd Dog of Germany although the four Belgians are [smaller](#) (with lighter bone) and quicker.



**Old man with
Belgian Tervuren, 1900.**

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Circa 1900: Belgian on the graze



Tending

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Belgian Sheepdog (1)



Tending

This Belgian is learning to patrol a border in its training as a tending dog while the sheep eat their winter ration.

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Belgian Malinois



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Belgian Sheepdog (2)



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[Tending](#)

This Belgian is learning patrol a driveway border to tend a flock of sheep.

The ram wants to get to the tempting feed pan full of corn. The dog's responsibility is to ward the ram off the driveway and keep him grazing on the grass with the rest of the flock.

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Belgian Tervuren



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Belgian Laekenois*



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Bouvier des Flandres—

- a droving dog from Belgium, known especially for its ability with cattle, who lost its herding job when railways and trucks supplanted the need to drive stock to market on foot. Some were also used to tend livestock.

Now trained to be an all-around herder, the breed is better known for carting and protective abilities.

Bouviere were used to run lace illegally across borders in WWI—the material was wrapped around their broad bodies.

Bouviere were also interbred with Standard Schnauzers to produce a larger, more intimidating-looking herding dog from Schnauzer stock—the Giant Schnauzer.

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Circa 1900:
Tending is Part of the Herding Tradition
of the **Belgians** and
Bouvier des Flandres In Belgium



[Tending](#)

**Circa 1900: Belgian on left (yellow),
Larger Bouvier des Flandres on right (red)?**

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Bouvier des Flandres (1)



Tending

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Bouvier des Flandres (2)



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Czechoslovakian Vlacks*

Breed of dog developed in Czechoslovakia starting in 1955, which became officially recognized there in 1982.

German Shepherds and Eurasian wolves were interbred with the purpose of developing a new breed that would retain the trainability of the German Shepherd while promoting better health and endurance from the wolf's genetics.

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Czechoslovakian Vlcsks*



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German Shepherd Dog

the premier herding dog of Germany was originally used to tend sheep by patrolling as a living fence as the sheep grazed daily on unfenced fields. They kept sheep in, thieves & predators out, and adjacent crops safe. Modern flock size averages 1000 sheep.

There are still GSDs in Germany actively working sheep, and competitions to promote the tradition of the sheep tending and herding GSD are held for them in Germany as well as in North America. GSDs are also used on other classes of livestock. Although the breed originated as a sheep herding dog, nowadays they are better known for their army, protective, and police work.

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German Shepherd Dog



Luch von Sparwasser
{Litter brother of Hektor (later Horand), the 1st GSD}
DOB: January 1st, 1895

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German Shepherd Dog(1)



Tending

Tending the Flock at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

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German Shepherd Dog (2)



Tending

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German Shepherd Dog (3)



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Moving the Flock at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

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Giant Schnauzer—

The dog's foundation was derived from the Standard Schnauzer. The Standard Schnauzer was mixed with various other herding dogs (very likely the Bouvier des Flandres, among others) to create a larger, more intimidating-looking dog, a breed of Germany-the Low Countries. This new type dog became know at one time as the “Munchener” or “Riesenschnauzer” and was particularly popular with cattle and hog farmers.

The Giant Schnauzer was and is was used as an all purpose farm dog, protecting, guarding, and driving difficult stock. It is probably better known for its protection and police-work functions.

It weighs about 100 pounds.

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Giant Schnauzer (1)



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Giant Schnauzer (2)



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Standard Schnauzer—

This is the original prototype for all 3 Schnauzer breeds.

These medium-sized dogs, descended from early European herding and guardian breeds, were not related to the superficially similar terriers of Britain.

As all-purpose farm dogs, they were used to guard and protect livestock and the home and chase and kill rodents.

Many of them exhibit good talent for herding.

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Standard Schnauzer (1)



From the Middle Ages, there are pictures, like this one, of dogs that look like Schnauzers.

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Standard Schnauzer (2)



**This picture is by Malers Vernets (a Frenchman), drawn around 1780.
The Wire Haired and Smooth Haired Pinschers—
as the Standard Schnauzer and German Pinscher were originally called— were shown in dog
books as early as 1884.**

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Standard Schnauzer (3)



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3. Tibetan Terrier Types

Hungarian Herding Breeds:

Mudi* Puli Pumi*

&

Polish Lowland Sheepdog (PON)

Schapendoes (The Netherlands)

These 5 breeds of dogs are a bit geographically dispersed across Europe but were used mostly in the lowlands of Europe. They show enough similarity in type and herding style to be grouped together.

All five breeds are remarkably similar to Tibetan Terriers, a type of dog that Mongol invaders or European traders traveling to and fro from Asia likely brought to Europe.

These dogs use a lot of fierce barking, movement, and body contact to get large livestock— or large numbers of livestock— to go.

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Tibetan Terrier in 1927



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CH THOOMBAY OF LADKOK
born: 9th October, 1927
bred by Buddiman (Lama of Tibet) & owned by Mrs A.R.Greig

Thoombay was the first champion in the breed in the United Kingdom

Tibetan Terriers, which weigh an average of about 30 pounds as adults, are not true terriers but were named “terrier” because they reminded Europeans of terrier type dogs back home. The breed is known for being a fierce barker.

Tibetan Terriers were used for guarding, hunting, and herding.

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Hungarian Herding Breeds

There are 3 ancient Hungarian herding breeds thought to be derived from Tibetan terrier and native Hungarian breeds:

Mudi*

Puli --The **Puli** is best known of the 3.

Pumi*

Each is used primarily in the Hungarian region it originated from. The small Hungarian herding breeds often work in tandem with a large livestock guardian dog where predation is a problem.

The three breeds are small with similar body structure and differ primarily in coat type and ear carriage. The **Mudi** and **Pumi** are shorter-haired dogs. The **Puli** grows long hair that does not shed which was often clipped with the sheep. The **Pumi** has a characteristic semi-erect ear carriage. The dogs primarily work sheep but also work cattle.

All 3 breeds use their bark and bounce and close body contact to get livestock to move.

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Picture of 19th century [Hungarian shepherd with his dog.](#)
(Dog is in yellow circle.)



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Mudi*(1)



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Mudi* (2)

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Puli



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Pumi*



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Schapendoes*—

This breed is also known as the Dutch Sheepdog and has been around for centuries in the Netherlands. The breed was formed from a combination of long-haired breeds such as the [Bearded Collie](#), [Polish Lowland Sheepdog](#), [Puli](#), [Briard](#) and [Bergamasco](#). The Schapendoes seems to be a Tibetan Terrier type of herding dog.

Its primary function was to herd sheep. When [Border Collies](#) were brought in during the early part of the 20th century, they were favored over this breed for herding. The Schapendoes then almost went extinct shortly before WWII.

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Schapendoes*(1)



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Schapendoes* (2)



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Schapendoes* Tending a Large Flock (3)



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Polish Lowland Sheepdog—

is frequently referred to as a "PON", a nickname derived from his native name, *Polish Owczarek Nizinny*. The dog was primarily used with sheep.

The Polish Lowland Sheepdog is a very old breed, dating back to the 1600's. The breed's ancestors include the Tibetan Terrier and the Lhasa Apso.

Like the other Tibetan Terrier types, the PON is not afraid to express his opinion with some barking, and uses this weapon to herd sheep.

As is typical of a herding breed, the dog is a working dog, and enjoys having a 'job' to do.

[Back to Tibetan Terrier Type](#)

Polish Lowland Sheepdog(1)



Pre-WW II PONS

[Back to Tibetan Terrier Type](#)

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Polish Lowland Sheepdog(2)



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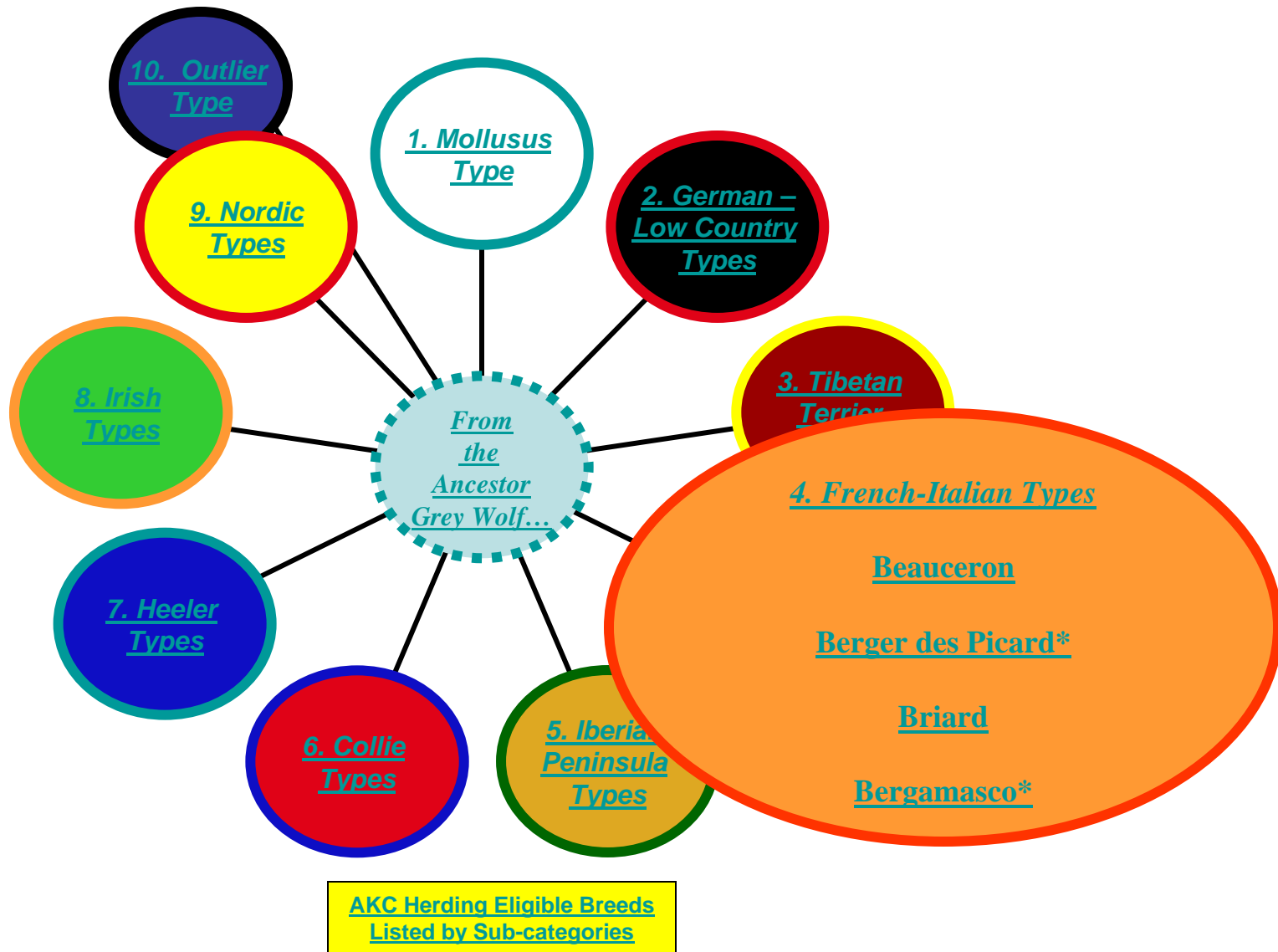
[Back to Tibetan Terrier Type](#)

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Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds

General Information about Herding Breeds, Their Training, and Behaviors



* = AKC FSS breed, a breed currently eligible to compete for suffix titles only.

There are 16 breeds on the AKC FSS list eligible for herding participation.

A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds

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[4. French-Italian Types:](#)

(Note: the [German-Low Country Type](#) herding dogs perform similar functions)

[Beauceron](#) (French)

[Berger des Picard*](#) (French)

[Briard](#) (French)

[Bergamasco*](#) (Italian)

The French-Italian types are all about the same medium size and are closely related, differing primarily in coat type and colors. They are all [ancient breeds](#) that have existed for centuries. Some of them have almost become extinct. Most worked on flatter land, not mountains. Dogs such as the [Bergamasco](#) of Italy, that had to work in cold, harsh climates of the mountains, also developed long, thick, wooly coats. [Bergamasco](#) and [Briards](#) are basically the same type of dog with just different coat types.

These breeds were all used primarily to tend large flocks of sheep. The [Beauceron](#) in particular has a reputation of being a little fiercer and was also noted for its ability to handle cattle with ease. All of these dogs not only tend sheep while they graze, they also guard the flock from intruders.

[← Back to French-Italian Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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1770s Painting—
pre-[Briard](#)/[Bergamasco](#)/[Picard](#)/[Beauceron](#) ancestor

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Beauceron (1)



Tending

The ancestors of the Beauceron likely contributed to the formation of the Rottweiler and Catahoula Leopard Dog breeds.

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Beauceron (2)



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Bergamasco* (1)



The Bergamasco, the mid-sized tending dog of Italy mountains, who both herded and defended the flocks, is very closely related & similar to the Briard, except for coat type/length.

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*When Called by the Shepherd (here, in Upstate New York),
A Herding Dog Must Come Immediately*

Bergamasco* (3)



***Bergamasco Practicing Tending
Its Flock in NY State***

Tending

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Bergamasco* (4)



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Bergamasco Lounging with the Livestock

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Berger des Picard*

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This rough-haired, short-coated breed, which almost went extinct, is similar to the [Briard](#) in temperament and type, except for its naturally erect ears and shorter coat length.

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Briard (1)



Early 20th Century Photo, Working with Soldier

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Briard (2)



This Briard is not yet in *fetching balance*
(at the right position to control and fetch the flock to the handler)
with handler or flock.

Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

Briard (3)



This Briard now is in fetching balance with the handler/flock and is not as agitated as he was in the previous slide.

Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

Briard (4)



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[Tending](#)

Briard Tending Sheep Flock

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[AKC Herding Eligible Breeds Listed by Sub-categories](#)

[A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)

[5. Iberian Peninsula Types:](#)

[Australian Shepherd Dog](#)

[Pyrenean Shepherd Dog](#)

[Spanish Water Dog](#)

Despite their names, all 3 of these breeds have roots in the Iberian Peninsula and all 3 are herding dogs. They are able to handle all manner of livestock, from sheep and goats to cattle and fowl, and were also valued for being all- purpose farm dogs who could guard and alert.

[← Back to Iberian Peninsula Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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Australian Shepherd Dog—

probably the second most popular working dog (after the [Border Collie](#)) among U.S. stockmen. Dogs from strong working lines are capable of handling sheep, cattle, or ducks. They are also notable for their guarding and alerting capabilities. They can hunt, too.

Contrary to the name, the breed did not originate in Australia. The [Australian Shepherd Dog](#) was and is used by Basque herdsman--worldwide. Although they did try to find work “down under,” the skills of the Basque and their dogs, who specialized in managing large groups of migrating flocks, did not fit the needs of the Australian sheep stations where sheep never needed to migrate and never needed to be guarded (no natural predators). And so, some Basque and their dogs came to find more appropriate herding jobs in the USA by way of Australia—hence the name of the breed, Australian Shepherd Dog.

The breed most definitely has its [roots in Iberia](#).

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Australian Shepherd Dog (1)



Arrogante, a Spanish sheepdog, from *Sheep Husbandry* by Henry S. Randall (1856)

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Australian Shepherd Dog (2)



Bunk, Australian Shepherd Dog silent movie star, in 1920's

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Australian Shepherd Dog (3)



Las Rocosa Sydney, who resembled the dog the Basque sheepshearer brought to the World's Fair in Seattle Washington.

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Australian Shepherd Dog (4)



Las Rocosa Scooter working a band of 2,000 head of sheep in Wyoming on the TTT ranch. Scooter, a linebred son of Ch Stonehenge Justin Case of Las Rocosa CD, traces back to Feo, the little blue dog that was brought to the United States by a Basque herder from Spain.

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Australian Shepherd Dog (5)



Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

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Australian Shepherd Dog (6)

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Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

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Pyrenean Shepherd Dog*—

The Pyrenean Shepherd is a medium-small breed, native to the Pyrenees mountains between southern France and northern Spain, and bred since at least medieval times for herding livestock, especially sheep. Basque and French shepherds typically use this native dog.

The French classify it as a “foot” dog, so-called because it goes out to work on the shepherd’s command, completes the task, and then returns to sit by the shepherd’s foot while waiting for the next directive.

In its native land, the Pyr Shep works as an active, high-energy herder together with the Great Pyrenees, the breed often chosen to be the flock's more phlegmatic guardian.

The Pyr Shep was often used to drive large flocks in the centuries-old tradition of large-scale, seasonal migration of flocks and shepherds with their families from high altitude to low altitude pastures and back-- called the “transhumance.”

The Pyr Shep is known also for alerting when something is amiss, and is valued as a vocal, early warning system.

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Pyrenean Shepherd Dog* (1)



Detail of a nineteenth-century engraving of a tavern in the Pyrenees

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Modern Pyrenean Shepherd Dog* (2)



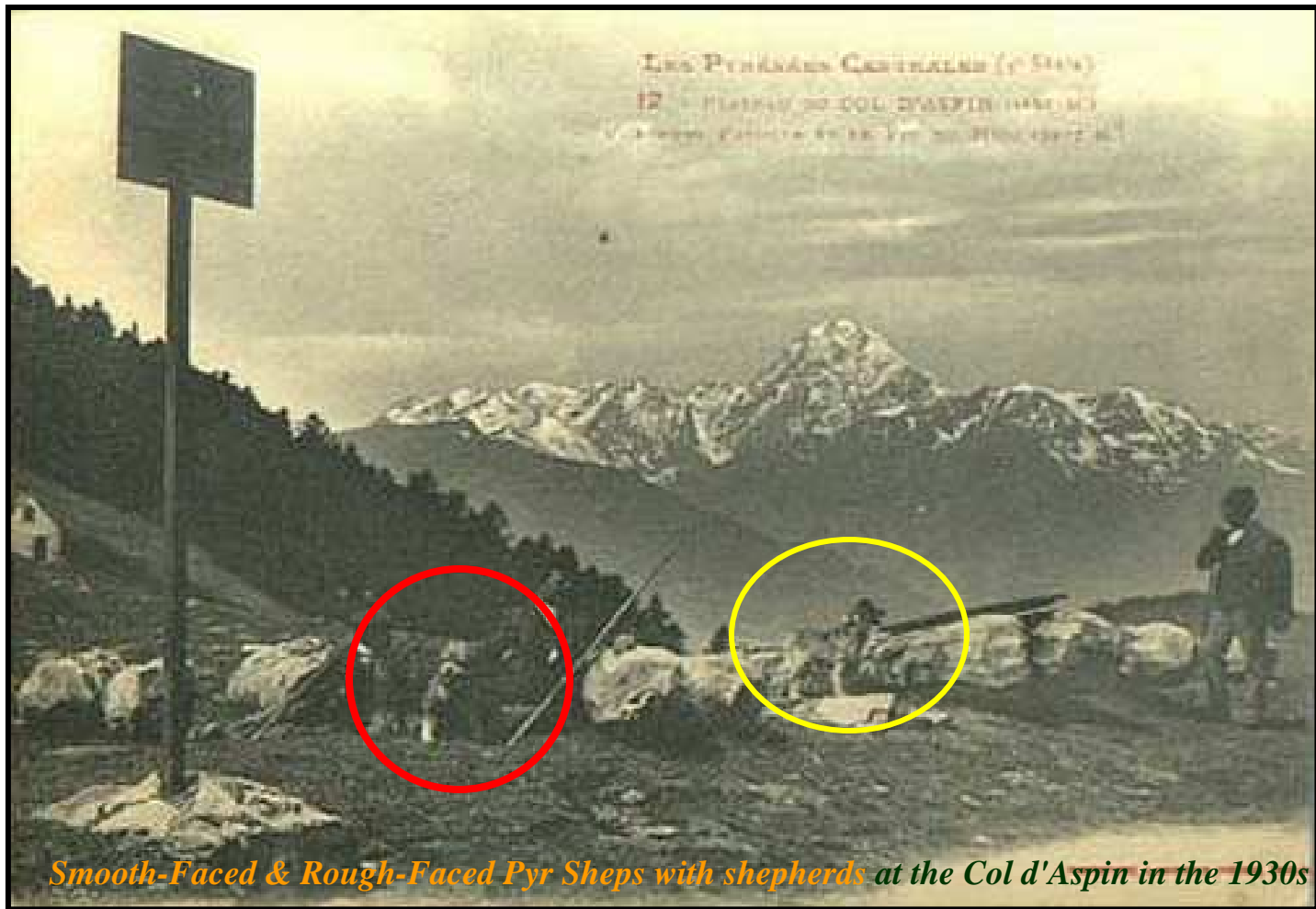
First encounters.

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Pyrenean Shepherd Dog* (3)



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Pyrenean Shepherd Dog* (4)

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The protection of the Great Pyrenees guardian dog meant that the Pyrenean Shepherd could be quite small.

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Spanish Water Dog*—

The Spanish Water Dog's origins are unknown and debated by many experts. What is known is that this rustic multi-purpose breed was developed in Spain over the last 800 years or so to fulfill a variety of purposes, including herding, hunting, water work, ratting, protection of home and farm, and companionship.

In the central regions, the dog was primarily used for driving herds of goats, ewes, cows, and pigs to seasonal pastures, and for hunting fowl and small game in the marshes. SWDs can still be found in the central and southern countryside with their flocks.

In the northern coastal regions, the Spanish Water Dog functions much as its Portuguese Water Dog cousin, retrieving fishing tackle and nets and guarding the catch. The northern dogs probably also hunted and performed other functions during the off-season.

The breed was also utilized in the mines to protect mule transports, guard against thieves, and work as rat control in the mines.

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Spanish Water Dog * (1)



At the turn of the 19th-20th century

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Spanish Water Dog* (2)

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[General Information about Herding Breeds, Their Training, and Behaviors](#)



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[A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)

6. Collie Types:

- Bearded Collie
- Border Collie
- Collie
- Old English Sheepdog
- Shetland Sheepdog

These dogs all originate (mostly) in the British Isles. “Collie” is an old Gaelic term meaning “useful,” and the dogs were definitely useful. These were the original droving and herding dogs of Great Britain and were used primarily for sheep herding, although some were also used for cattle droving, too.

Sheep’s wool was the first, major raw material exploited by the early Industrial Revolution. The industrial efficiency of newly-built textile mills created a higher volume demand for wool in the 18th and 19th centuries. Highly skilled shepherds and dogs were then required to manage the larger, industrial-sized flocks that were necessary to supply the textile mills.

Then, whenever the British colonized new land for sheep production (such as Ireland, Australia, New Zealand where, just like home, there were no needs for seasonal migration or flock guarding), they brought their own shepherds and their own breeds of sheep and dogs with them.

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[10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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Collie Dogs at Work in the mid 19th Century



Turning the Drove, Richard Ansdell, 1851

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Bearded Collie—

One of the Collie types that mostly originated in the British Isles, and may have interbred with other breeds such as the ancestors of Schapendoes, Briards, etc. when flocks (and the dogs that worked them) were shipped to and from the European continent.

This breed was traditionally used as a "huntaway." A "huntaway" is a dog who uses its bark and bounce to flush sheep out of heavy hillside thickets (all the commotion is necessary when the sheep cannot see the dog in the brush) and gather them to the shepherd.

The style is also effective on large groups of livestock where the animals in the middle of the flock need to be able to hear a threat (their vision is blocked by the outer members of the herd) in order to become motivated to move.

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Bearded Collie (1)



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Bearded Collie (2)

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Border Collie—

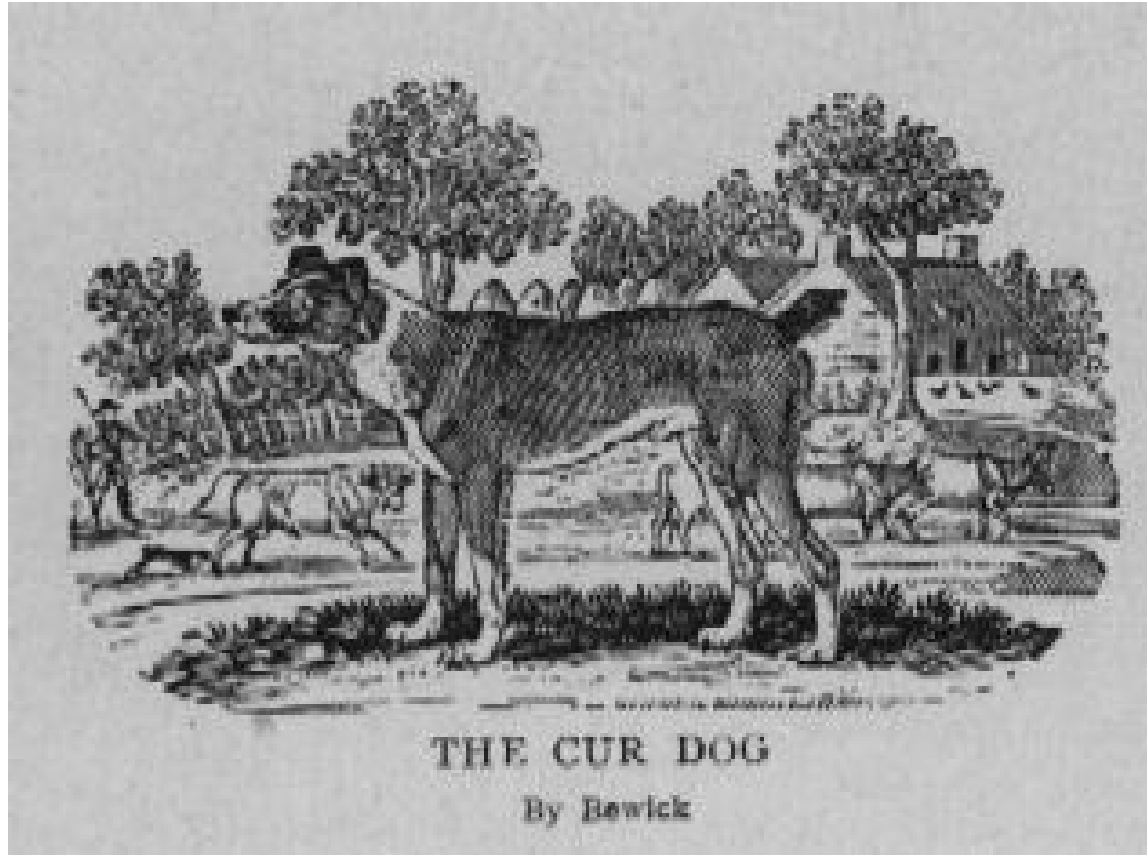
One of the Collie types, this is probably the most popular stock dog worldwide. The breed is very focused and known for its distinctive way it uses its "["eye"](#) and stance to stare sheep into submission. The Border Collie is also used on [other classes of stock](#) as well. [Eye](#) was uniquely developed in the Border Collie and related types (such as the Kelpie, McNabb, etc.) by interbreeding [traditional droving Collies](#) with pointer, spaniels, and setter type hunting dogs.

The breed originated in the border Cheviot hills between Scotland and England where traditionally sheep were kept wild on the hills to forage on their own (there have been no wolves or coyotes to harass sheep in the United Kingdom for at least 400 years—therefore, no need to guard them) and brought down to the shepherd once or twice a year.

The skill set of these dogs allows them to work delicately with very skittish, almost wild animals and succeed when other dogs' herding styles may be too blunt and overwhelming for such nervous creatures.

[Back to Collie Type](#)

A drawing of a Collie type dog from 1700s with “eye” like a modern [Border Collie](#)– note the docked tail which would indicate that the dog was a working dog owned by someone.



Can you find the dog droving cattle in the background?

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Drawing of a recognizable Border Collie type from mid 19th Century.



Border Collie (1)

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Border Collie (2)

Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm



Young Border Collie in training, showing strong style, strong “eye.”

[← Back to Wolfy Beginnings](#)

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Border Collie (3)

13 Year Old Border Collie fetching sheep down the mountain slope.



*Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)—
the dogs let you know when it is time to retire.*

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Border Collie (4) Yes! That's a clicker!

Two dogs who are herding together are called a "brace."

Here, we have an old dog and young dog working the sheep.



Crook held at the ready position to ward off sheep from crashing into fragile, human knees.

Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

[Back to Collie Type](#)

Collie

The breed is divided into two varieties according to coat length, Rough and Smooth.

These dogs, as is true of all Collie types, originally hail from the United Kingdom, and the rough coated version is what you think of when you think of "Lassie."

The Scotch Collie dogs were originally used to drove livestock to market and to move the stock around on the farm from grazing place to watering hole and back to the barn.

Breeding practices to refine the look of the Collie for the show ring somewhat diluted the herding instincts of these two types and changed their conformation (they are larger) from the old droving collies; nonetheless, many fine herding Collies still exist.

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Collie (1)

An 1888 drawing of an AKC registered Collie, at about the same time recorded sheep herding trials were first being held back in the United Kingdom.



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Collie (2)



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Collie (3)



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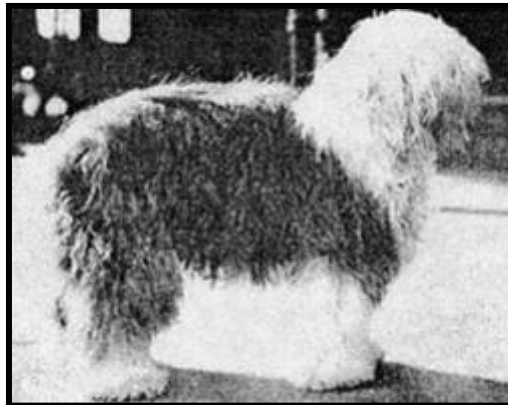
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Old English Sheepdog—

a [droving dog of England](#), who worked primarily with sheep. The breed is thought to be derived from [Bearded Collies](#) and [Collies](#). Some are born with a natural [“bob tail.”](#)

The breed, one of the Collie types, lost its droving job when trucks became the means by which animals were transported to market.

Although seldom seen today with stock, the best are steady, all-purpose workers, able to move large groups of animals very smoothly and with ease.



*Ch. Slumber, best in show at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 1914,
the only time an Old English Sheepdog has won there.*

[Back to Collie Type](#)

Old English Sheepdog (1)



A **“Bob-tail”** ancestor of the Old English Sheepdog
mid 19th century

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Old English Sheepdog (2)



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Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

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Shetland Sheepdog–

small dog from the rugged Shetland Islands, where all livestock were bred small. “Shelties” were and are used with all types of livestock, but they do best with sheep and fowl.

The breed was valued for its ability to bark livestock away from gardens in its native Shetland Isles.

The herding history of the breed is murky. It is said that Nordic herding dogs, specifically the dogs Vikings might have brought with them, play a major part in its foundation, making it less pure-British than the other Collie type breeds. There is a strong resemblance between the Icelandic Sheepdog and the Sheltie both in appearance, size, coloring, and coat, and behavior (both like to bark). However, the modern-day Sheltie tends to be meeker than its cousin to the north.

Also colloquially known as "miniature Collies" (a name which drives aficionados crazy who would rather call them “Shelties”).

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Shetland Sheepdog (1)



Picture from 1915 of Shetland Sheepdog

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Shetland Sheepdog (2)



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Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds



7. Heeler Types:

Australian Cattle Dog

Cardigan Welsh Corgi

Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Lancashire Heeler*

These breeds of dogs owe much of their ancestry (but not all of their ancestry) to breeds that are native to Great Britain.

All are or were used primarily for cattle droving.

“Heeling” refers to the dog working and sometimes nipping at the heels of a cow to drive the animal forward.

The low build of these breeds was particularly advantageous when driving cattle through narrow lanes in crowded villages where the dog could not easily duck to the side to dodge flying hooves.

[← Back to Heeler Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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Australian Cattle Dog—

also known as Queensland, [red](#) or [blue](#) heelers depending on color.

Independent and tough-minded yet biddable, they don't easily take an answer of "No" from a stubborn cow.

Created from a mix of herding breeds, including various droving [collie types](#) imported [from Scotland](#), kelpie, possibly bull terrier, Dalmatian, kelpie, plus dingo in Australia.

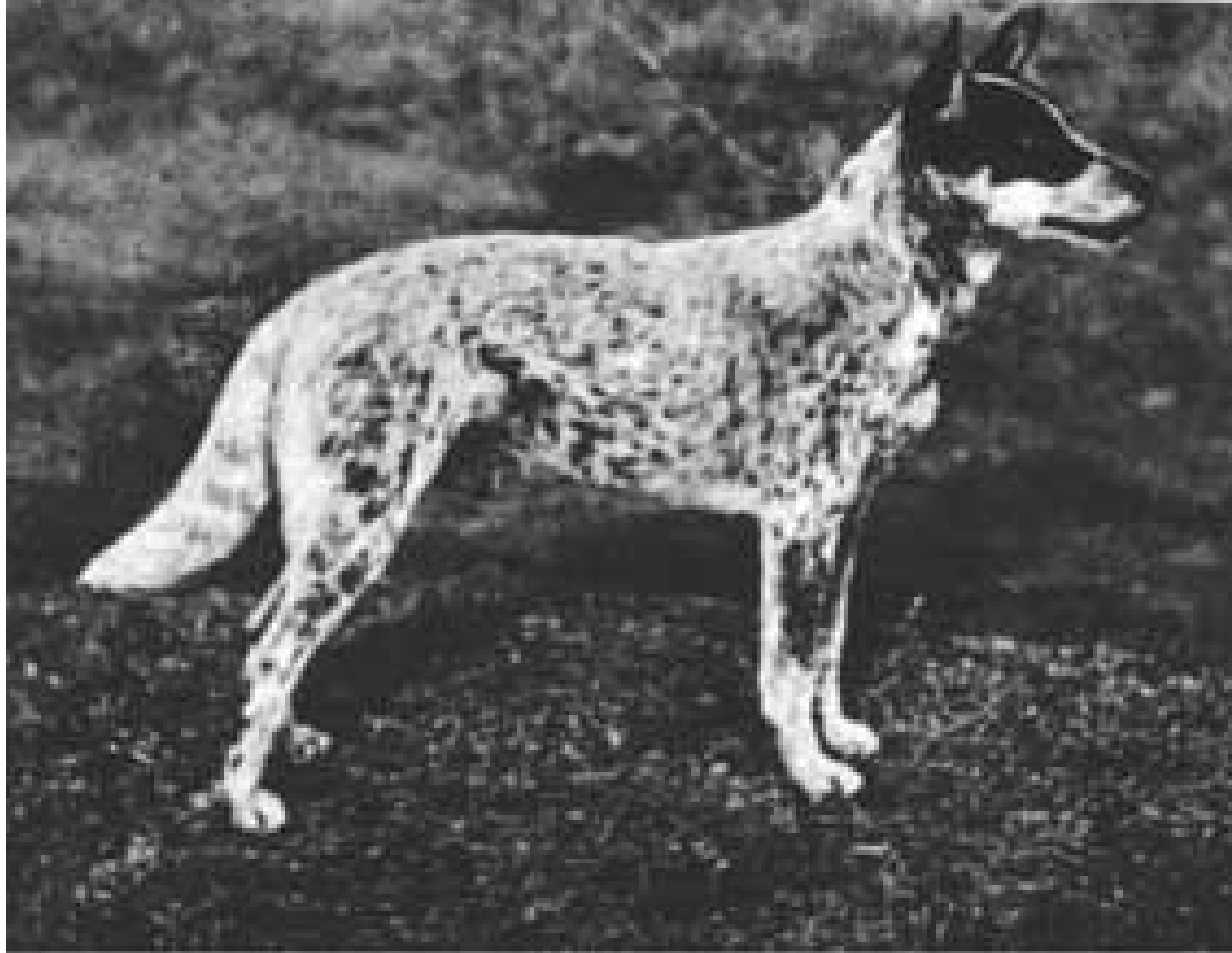
One of the problems of the English herding dogs limiting their usefulness in Australia was their heavy coats which caused them to overheat in the scorching Australian outback. Another was their tendency to head the livestock too often.

Eventually a proper dog was bred— the [Australian Cattle Dog](#).

The [ACD](#) is capable of herding all types of livestock, not only cattle.

[Back to Heeler Type](#)

Australian Cattle Dog (1)



Born 1897

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Australian Cattle Dog (2)



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Australian Cattle Dog (3)

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Welsh Corgis

Cardigan Welsh Corgi &

Pembroke Welsh Corgi–

These two breeds were developed originally in Wales to be heelers, although they can fetch livestock also. Particularly, many of the Pembrokes seem to have a natural sense of fetching balance. Both breeds seem to be naturally inclined to work at a close distance to livestock.

Always short, the breeds' legs have been bred to be even shorter by modern breeders.

The two breeds are differentiated by tail (Cardigans, yes; Pembrokes, no) and body type, with the Cardigans heavier and broader.

The dogs were bred originally to drive cattle by nipping at their heels.

Their low build makes it easier for them to duck under flying rear hooves of large bovine beasts in narrow lanes where there was no room to move to the side. Ducking rear hooves is not an important skill for working with sheep because sheep don't kick.

It is possible that these breeds were interbred with Viking breeds, particularly the ancestors of today's Swedish Vallhund and the Icelandic Sheepdog.

[Back to Heeler Type](#)

Picture of a Cattle Drive Through a Village in England



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Welsh Corgi



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Cardigan Welsh Corgi

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Pembroke Welsh Corgi (1)



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Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep [Farm](#)

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Lancashire Heeler*

The **Lancashire Heeler** is an all-purpose farm dog, capable of both ridding and driving cattle. The precise origin of this breed is unknown. The **Lancashire Heeler** almost went extinct in the 1990s.

There have been Corgis in Wales heeling cattle for centuries, and it is thought that one of the breeds behind the Lancashire Heeler is the Cardigan Welsh Corgi.

A black-and-tan terrier called the **Manchester Terrier** was introduced into the **Ormkirk** area and may have led to the black-and-tan, distinctive coloration and type of Corgi known as the **Lancashire Heeler**.



← Toy Manchester Terrier

Lancashire Heeler →



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Lancashire Heeler*

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Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds



8. Irish Types

Kerry Blue Terrier

Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier

These two breeds are distinguished mainly by coat and color. Both were the common farm dog of the poor Irish peasant and do not seem to have been bred to be as specialized for “going to ground” to kill rodents as other terrier breeds might– although they certainly can do that!

The Kerry Blue and SCWT performed many general farm duties, such as ratting, alerting, hunting/poaching, and guarding, as well as gathering in and herding the impoverished Irish crofter’s few farm animals and chickens as needed.

The two breeds did not become standardized into breeds until the 1930s.

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Kerry Blue Terrier

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Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier

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Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds



9. Nordic Types

These breeds can be divided into two groups because they were somewhat isolated from each other by the races of people who owned them (Sami and Vikings) who traveled geographically to completely different areas.

Breeds of the Sami

Finnish Lapphund*

Samoyed

Swedish Lapphund*

Breeds of the Vikings

Icelandic Sheepdog

Norwegian Buhund

Swedish Vallhund

[← Back to Nordic Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

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The Breeds of the Sami:

Finnish Lapphund*

Samoyed

Swedish Lapphund*

Considered [Nordic types](#), these breeds were the [helper dogs](#) of a tribe of semi-nomadic people, the Sami, in [Lapland \(the northern region of Finland, Sweden and, in part, Russia\)](#) who followed the herds of caribou/reindeer on their migration routes. These dogs were used also for their [sledding and hauling](#) capabilities.

Over hundreds of years, the originally nomadic Sami culture evolved into a more sedentary existence, which revolved around the keeping of reindeer herds. At the same time, the dogs evolved from the hunter/protector dogs of a nomadic tribe, to the herding dogs needed to [help maintain the reindeer](#).

As migration diminished, the dogs owned by the various isolated settlements of Sami evolved into similar but distinct breeds.

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Lapland



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Sami Children with Their Dog-- Early 20th Century



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Sami with their Lapphunds-- 1 in harness



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Finnish Lapphund* (1)



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Finnish Lapphund* (2)



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Samoyed (1)



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Samoyed (2)

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Swedish Lapphund*

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Breeds of the Vikings:

Icelandic Sheepdog

Norwegian Buhund

Swedish Vallhund

Considered to be Nordic types but distinct from the breeds of the Sami there is evidence that the ancestors of all 3 of these breeds were the dogs of the Vikings.

The Vikings in their travels during the 9th Century A.D. probably allowed their dogs to breed with native English breeds and may have brought some of the English dogs home, while leaving some of their own dogs behind in the British Isles.

The **Welsh Corgis** and **Swedish Vallhund** seem to related-- with the **Vallhund** having slightly longer legs. The **Icelandic Sheepdog** seems to be linked with the Shetland Sheepdog (both are breeds that bark without too much encouragement) and Welsh Corgis.

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Icelandic Sheepdog—

The Icelandic Sheepdog is a breed of dog originating from the dogs brought to Iceland by the Vikings.

It is of similar type to the Norwegian Buhund and to the ancestor of the modern Shetland Sheepdog and Welsh Corgi.

They are still commonly used to herd sheep in the Icelandic countryside. The breed typically uses its bark and quick movement to direct livestock.

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Icelandic Sheepdog (1)



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Icelandic Sheepdog (2)



Nowadays, to be controlled,
herding dogs often have to be carefully trained
to lie down and stop when in the presence of
livestock.

Learning to Herd at Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm

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Icelandic Sheepdog (3)

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Norwegian Buhund—

The name Buhund is derived from the Norwegian word ‘bu’ which means farm, homestead or mountain hut, where the shepherd lived while looking after his herd in the summer.

As a dog of the Vikings, skeletons of ancestral dogs resembling the modern Buhund have been found in Viking burial grounds dating from 900 A.D.

The Buhund was used as an all purpose farm and herding dog for sheep and cattle, as well as a watch dog.

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Norwegian Buhund (1)



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Norwegian Buhund (2)

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Swedish Vallhund—

The Swedish Vallhund is longer legged, shorter in body length and not as stocky as the Corgi. Their ancestors were dogs that the Vikings traveled with. It is possible that the Vikings either allowed their dogs to interbreed with Corgis (influencing the Welsh Corgis) or brought Corgis home with them to interbreed with their native farm dogs, eventually producing breeds such as the Swedish Vallhund.

Swedish Vallhunds are bred to work on farms and ranches as cattle/sheep herders.

Their herding style is low to the ground and they herd by rounding up and nipping at the hocks.

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Swedish Vallhund (1)



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Swedish Vallhund (2)

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Sub-Categories for the 48 AKC Recognized Herding Breeds



[General Information about Herding Breeds, Their Training, and Behaviors](#)

* = AKC FSS breed, a breed currently eligible to compete for suffix titles only.

There are 16 breeds on the AKC FSS list eligible for herding participation.

[AKC Herding Eligible Breeds Listed by Sub-categories](#)

[A-Z List of AKC Herding Eligible Breeds](#)

10. Outlier Type:

Canaan Dog— This is the only breed that has no strong connection with any of the other dogs on this herding breeds list. It is, however, possible that crusaders from England and Europe brought some hunting and herding dogs of all types along with them, and these **European/British dogs** may have intermingled with the native pariah dogs of the Holy Land.

For centuries, native pariah dogs had been the guard and herding dogs for the Israelis. **Drawings of dogs** similar in type to the **modern Canaan Dog** have been found in tombs **dating to 2200-2000 B.C.**

After Israel became a nation, the Canaan Dog breed was especially created from selected native pariah dogs to become guard dogs, but the breed retains some **herding ability** also.

[← Back to Outlier Type 10 Sub-Category Diagram](#)

Canaan Dog – Then



Spotted dog from the Tombs at Beni-Hassan

Dating about 2200-2000 B.C.

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Canaan Dog— Now



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Canaan Dog (1)



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Canaan Dog (2)



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QUESTION: What Happens When You Select and Breed for Herding Behavior?

Answer: *You might get useful herding behavior (if you are a good trainer and your dog has access to a livestock job), plus this:*

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What do herding dogs have in common?

1. They are capable of being very active dogs, both physically and mentally, especially when young.
2. They are traditionally very hardy, adaptable dogs who had to live and work outdoors with their shepherds and livestock.
3. It is usually not enough for them to get only physical exercise– they need mental exercise, too! And they are often happiest if they have a regular herding job –or at least a weekend herding hobby to think about the rest of the week.
4. They are bred to work closely with a human– they thrive with fair rules you enforce, behavioral boundaries you establish, and jobs that YOU give them to do. They can become bored and highly destructive nuisances without a job, without something to focus on, without those boundaries, without your rules. They naturally want to go; you need to train them to stop and slow.
5. Although they are all herding dogs, the tasks each breed specialized in performing were different depending on the management practices and needs of the local shepherd/herdsman. If the dogs are not trained well, some of their valuable herding behaviors can pop up as “bad” behaviors that you don’t want in a pet. On the other hand, for the modern owner, the vitality, intelligence, enthusiasm, and core behaviors of a herding dog breed can make them real joys to live with, too!

What *bad* herding behaviors might I see from a herding breed pet?

(All of these “Bad Behavior” problems can be prevented and solved with training. Pre-emptive positive reinforcement training saves you time in the long run. It can take about **twice as long** to rid a dog of undesirable, bad behavior habits than to train desirable habits in the first place.)

Some were bred for “eye” (Border Collies) & must learn when not to eye;

some were valued more for gathering and might encircle your friends or collect and guard their toys;

some might heel (nip and push animals, people, objects from behind);

some might head/block your forward motion;

some might bark at any movement;

most bark readily at any strange sound;

some might nip and bite;

some were bred to work large groups of livestock– they might ceaselessly scan and patrol their environment;

others were bred to work carefully large, dangerous animals or skittish species or individuals-- they might easily obsess on some thing or an activity;

some had to ward off canine predators from their flock by themselves– they might have dog aggression issues;

some had to ward off strangers and potential burglars– they might be shy, too protective, or aggressive.

and most need little encouragement to chase anything moving!

Is my dog herding me or hurting me?

←What herding dogs have in common?

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QUESTION:**Is My Dog Herding Me?**

(Or is my dog just trying to hurt me?)

ANSWER: Any herding behaviors used by a dog out of context of herding might be cute, but also can be annoying, even dangerous. **Training can prevent and solve problems when they arise.**

The behaviors that annoy you (and everyone else) can also be the basis of fun activities. Train your herding breed dog!

Herding breeds easily can be trained to channel themselves into non-herding activities such as fetching toys, bringing in the newspaper, rolling over and playing dead, etc. They are willing to work for you. (If your dog is “stubborn,” YOU trained that!)

Also, please consider herding training for maximum human-canine fulfillment. Many herding breed dogs seem to thrive especially well as pets when they have a steady, weekend herding hobby to look forward to, to complement their weekday at-home training. As good as tennis balls are, for some dogs, tennis balls simply are not enough. For those dogs, herding can satisfy innate needs that you might be unable to identify until your dog tries herding.

Herding lessons can teach you and the dog how to control him(her)self willingly. At the least, dogs should learn to come on command and/or stop and lie down (or stand) on command in difficult, arousing circumstances while working livestock– or they fail as herding dogs.

My concluding 2 thoughts on the subject of herding?

1. Herding Dogs Are Happy Dogs!



2. Positive Reinforcement Training—*Use it don't lose it!*

— Carolyn Wilki, **Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm**, Bangor, PA

I have enjoyed sharing my view of herding breeds with you. Comments? Questions?

You can reach me at Carolyn@raspberryridgesheepfarm.com