
NEW DOG BREEDS RECOGNIZED BY THE FCI

The FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale), the World Canine Organization, includes 87 member countries and contract partners (one member per country). Each issues its own pedigrees and trains its own judges. The FCI ensures that the pedigrees and judges are mutually recognized by all FCI members.

Recognition of a breed by the FCI means that in almost every European country, that breed can be awarded FCI championship prizes. One of the recently provisionally recognized breeds is the:

Dansk-Svensk Gårdshund (Danish-Swedish Farmdog)

The Dansk-Svensk Gårdshund is classified by the FCI in Group 2, Pinscher and Schnauzer – Molosoid breeds – Swiss Mountain and Cattle Dogs (Section 1.1 Pinscher type). Denmark and Sweden are the countries of origin. The original valid standard was published on May 19, 2009. In 2011, the breed was accepted in the American Kennel Club Foundation Stock Service®.

DANSK-SVENSK GÅRDSHUND

(Danish-Swedish Farmdog)

text and illustrations by **RIA HÖRTER**

Courtesy MRS. SOFIA WESTERGREN LARSEN
kennel 'Sofalex', Sweden



The Farmdog's skull is rather broad and slightly rounded; the head is triangular in shape and a bit small in proportion to the body. The stop is well defined. (photo: Wikipedia)

PINSCHERS AND FOX TERRIERS

For ages, this type of dog was known around farmhouses not only in Denmark, southern Sweden and northern Germany, but also in the Baltic countries. They were useful animals that destroyed vermin such as mice, rats and other small rodents, but also kept foxes away from the chickens, and strangers from the premises.

Almost nothing is known about the breed's early history, but most dog writers assume that its ancestors were Pinscher-Fox Terrier crosses. Some are of the opinion that this type of dog has existed for 200 years. Others assert that its history goes back to the Vikings and that these dogs were depicted in the 15th century.

Mentally and physically they most resemble the Russell Terrier, but the easy-going little Danish-

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Swedish Farmdog has a softer temperament.

RUDOLF STEINER

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher and social reformer, is said to have known the breed and formed an attachment to one named 'Pschulek.' He was photographed twice with a farmdog, possibly Pschulek. In 1891, Steiner earned a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Rostock, in northern Germany. Rostock is in the region where the Danish-Swedish Farmdog was developed.

Steiner was interested in the soul of dogs and gave lectures on this subject: *Über das Verhältnis der Tierseele zur Mensenseele* (The relation between animal souls and human souls) and *Die Seele der Tiere im Lichte der Geisteswissenschaft* (The soul of animals in the perspective of the humanities).

SIMILAR TYPES

In the 1960s, first attempts were made by the *Svenska Hundklubben* (svenskahundklubben.se) in Sweden to get national



A typical Danish farmhouse. The Farmdog keeps foxes away from the chickens, and strangers from the premises. (photo: Lars Schmidt, Wikipedia)

The first breed club – *Rasklubben för Skånskt terrier* – was founded in Sweden in 1983. At a meeting in Malmö, Sweden, in February 1986, 107 dogs were photographed, filmed and recorded. At the end of the day, the owners concluded that the dogs were of a similar type, a positive conclusion when it comes to the development of a breed. In Denmark, the dogs had been more-or-less purebred since about 1985.

In 1987, the Danish-Swedish Farmdog was recognized by the Danish Kennel Club (dkk.dk) and Swedish Kennel Club (skk.se). The first championship prizes were presented in September 1987. About 50 Danish-Swedish Farmdogs were exhibited at the World Show in Copenhagen in 1989, where well-known Swiss dog writer Hans Räber first encountered the breed: "When I saw the first Danish-Swedish Farmdog on the showground, I did not dare to ask people the name of the breed – because there was a possibility that they participated in agility or obedience and therefore it was not necessarily a pedigreed dog. When more turned up, I became suspicious! Indeed, they were purebred dogs!"

RATTER

Originally, the Danish-Swedish Farmdog was a working dog, keeping farmhouses and stables free of vermin. In northern Germany, especially in the province of Schleswig-Holstein, the "Ratter" was a well-known type of dog seen everywhere in the countryside. However, with urbanization their numbers decreased.

Cynologist Jytte Weiss, who was working for the Danish Kennel Club, was one of the people credited with helping to save the Danish-Swedish Farmdog from extinction. She was interested in the breed because her parents owned this type of dog.

Today, fanciers in Denmark and Sweden are working hard to preserve this living piece of cultural history and have sought out dogs of good type. A breeding program was started with help from the Danish and Swedish kennel clubs – both interested in saving national endangered dog breeds. Luckily, sufficient healthy and typical dogs were found to form the basis of the present population.

VERSATILE DOG

Apart from catching mice and rats, the versatile Danish-Swedish Farmdog announces visitors loudly and is a playmate for children. It is said that he once performed in circuses.

Today, his old job of catching vermin has largely disappeared, so this energetic and fast little dog must have other things to do.



Mrs. Iris Alexandra Strand, her friend Alva, and a farmdog, circa 1915. Mrs. Strand is the great-grandmother of Sofia Westergren Larsen, a Swedish breeder of Danish-Swedish Farmdogs.

(Collection of Sofia Westergren Larsen)

recognition for the breed. Because the breed developed separately in Denmark and Sweden, there is no synchronicity in historical dates. The little Farmdog was recognized only about 30 years ago, but sources are not unanimous on details.

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That this inquisitive, intelligent and uncomplicated breed is bursting with energy makes him suitable for canine sports such as agility and flyball. For years, the sociable Farmdog has been part of the family, so staying home alone is not a good option for him.

At first sight, the breed resembles a Russell Terrier because of its white coat with tan or black patches. Dog writer Hans Räber states that it's more closely related to Pinschers than to Terriers; however, as is usual in the history of dogs, others disagree. The FCI agreed with Räber, though, and classified the Danish-Swedish Farmdog in Group 2 (Pinschers and Schnauzers). In literature, the breed is also mentioned as Scanian Terrier, Skåns Terrier (after the province of Skåne in southern Sweden) or simply Ratter.

EXTENSIVE INFORMATION

In Sweden, the breed is promoted by the *Svenska Gårds-och Vallhundklubben* (sgvk.org). The club's website has extensive information about the Farmdog's ancestors and health, and the number of litters born per year. Almost every genetic disorder reported in 203 surveys is at under five percent occurrence. In the investi-



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(photo: Gaardhundeliv)

dogs.org – was established in 2003 and incorporated in March 2005. In 2013, their specialty will be held on November 8, 9 and 10 in Claremont, California. Well-known Danish specialist judge Svend Lovenkjaer will officiate.

Danish-Swedish Farmdogs USA – farmdog-susa.com – was founded in 2001 and incorporated in 2010 to promote breed education and recognition.

In 2010, an application was made for acceptance to the American Kennel Club Foundation Stock Service®, which was granted in January 2011, making the Danish-Swedish Farmdog eligible to compete in various AKC companion events: Obedience, Agility, Tracking and Rally. In November 2011, the AKC announced that as of July 2012, Foundation Stock Service® breeds would be eligible for Open conformation shows.

BREED STANDARD

The Danish-Swedish Farmdog bears a resemblance to the Russell Terrier, Fox Terrier and Brazilian Terrier. The points in their breed standards are largely similar, although the differences to the Fox Terrier (one of its ancestors) and the Russell Terrier are greater. Some points of the Farmdog standard and some of the notable differences are:

- *The Danish-Swedish Farmdog is small, compact and slightly rectangular.* (Fox Terrier: "Balance.... [Some] chief points for consideration are... height at withers and length of body from shoulder point to buttock – the ideal of proportion being



The breed is inquisitive and intelligent, and has an uncomplicated character.

(photo: Sofia Westergren Larsen, Sofalex Kennel, Sweden)

gated dogs, allergies and incorrect bites were also reported.

The percentage of inbreeding is known thanks to a study in 2004 at the University of Stockholm's Department of Zoology and Population Genetics. Its recommendations to reduce the incidence of Legg Perthes disease and hip dysplasia were adopted by the breed clubs.

The breed club in Denmark is the *Dansk/Svensk Gårdhundeklub* (dansk-svensk-gaardhund.dk), founded in 2002. The club states that the Danish-Swedish Farmdog is the same dog as the old Danish Fox Terrier, sometimes mentioned in literature.

RARE BREED

The first Danish-Swedish Farmdogs in America were imported from Denmark in the late 1990s and registered with the American Rare Breed Association (ARBA).

The Danish/Swedish Farmdog Club of America, Inc. – farm-

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A symbolic photo: portrayed in his old environment, but now with championship ribbons.

(photo: Sofia Westergren Larsen, Sofalex Kennel, Sweden)

- reached when the last two measurements are the same.”)
- *The Farmdog’s skull is rather broad and slightly rounded; the head is triangular in shape and a bit small in proportion to the body. The stop is well defined.* (Fox Terrier: “The skull should be flat and moderately narrow, gradually decreasing in width to the eyes. Not much “stop” should be apparent....”)
- *The color of the nose is in accordance with the color of the patches.* (Fox Terrier: “The nose... should be black.” Russell Terrier: “Nose. Black and fully pigmented.” Brazilian Terrier: “Nose... dark colored”)
- *The muzzle is well developed and slightly shorter than the skull. It must not give a snipey expression.* (Fox Terrier: “There should be apparent little difference in length between the skull and foreface of a well balanced head.”) *The Danish-Swedish Farmdog must have a scissor bite, but a pincer [level] bite is tolerated.*
- *Its eyes are medium sized, slightly rounded, neither protruding nor sunken. Dark eye color in dogs with black patches. Slightly lighter eye color is permissible in dogs with yellow or liver brown patches.* (Fox Terrier: “Eyes and rims should be dark in color, moderately small and rather deep set... and as nearly possible circular in shape.” Russell Terrier: “Dark, almond shaped....”)
- *The ears are of medium size, rose or button. The fold should be just above the skull. The tips of button ears should lie close to the cheeks.* (Fox Terrier: “V-shaped and small.... The topline of the folded ear should be well above the level of the skull. Disqualifications – Ears prick, tulip or rose.” Russell Terrier: “Small V-shaped button or dropped ears.... The fold is level with the top of the skull or slightly above....”)
- *The Danish-Swedish Farmdog’s medium-length neck is strong and slightly arched with no throatiness.* (Fox Terrier: “Clean and muscular, without throatiness, of fair length, and gradually widening to the shoulders.”)
- *Its loin is short, broad and slightly arched. Forelegs straight and parallel. The front is broader than the ribcage.*
- *The forefeet are small, oval and not tightly knit.* (Fox Terrier:



From ratter to show dog. Zkrubbes Lionheart at the Hallands Kennel Club (Sweden) in 2010.

(photo: Ragnar Hellberg)

- “Feet should be round, compact....” Russell Terrier: “... moderate in size, oval shaped....” Brazilian Terrier: “Forefeet tight... hare feet; the two median toes are longer. Hind feet tight, longer than the forefeet.”)
- *The long tail or naturally short (stumpy tail) is not set too high. The tail should be carried straight, with a slight curve or like a sickle.* (Fox Terrier: “Should be set on rather high, and carried gaily, but not over the back or curled....” Russell Terrier: “set high enough so that the spine does not slope down to the base of the tail....”)
- *The Farmdog’s coat is short, smooth, and harsh on the body.* (Russell Terrier: “[The coat] may be smooth, broken or rough. Must be weatherproof.” Brazilian Terrier: “Short-haired, smooth, fine but not soft. It lies close to the skin, in the type of rat’s hair.”) *White dominates in the Danish-Swedish Farmdog, Fox Terrier, Russell Terrier and Brazilian Terrier coats. The Farmdog’s patches can be of different colors, sizes and combinations (black, tan, brown and different shades of brown), with or without tan markings. Flecking is permissible.*
- *The height at the withers is 13-14.5 inches (34-37 centimeters) for males, and 12.5-13.75 inches (32-35 centimeters) for females, with a tolerance of three-quarters of an inch (two centimeters) either way.* (Fox Terrier: “... should not exceed 15-1/2 inches [39 centimeters] at the withers....” Russell Terrier: “10-12 inches [25-30 centimeters].” Brazilian Terrier: “Males from 35-40 centimeters [13.75-16 inches]; bitches from 33 to 38 centimeters [13-15 inches]”)

Some of the faults in Danish-Swedish Farmdogs are: an elegant general appearance, narrow in front, low on leg, lack of depth in chest, neck too long, flat or short ribcage and a steep croup. Disqualifying faults are aggression or over shyness. Denmark and Sweden co-own the breed standard (fci.be).

We have tried to find the names of all photographers. Unfortunately, we did not always succeed. Please send a message to the author (www.riahorter.com) if you think you are the owner of copyright.