

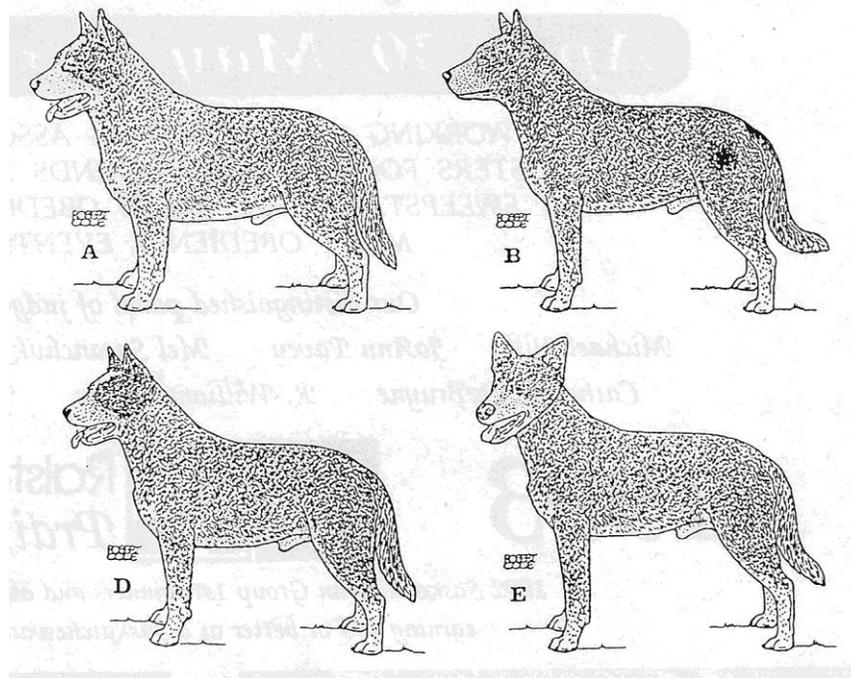
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, March 1993

AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG

Base your selection of first, second, third and fourth place in this class of six Australian Cattle Dogs on this agile working breed's ability to control cattle in both wide open and confined areas.



ABILITY

Breeders describe the Australian Cattle Dog, which possesses the strength, agility and stamina to continue work over a period of many hours, as the greatest worker of cattle known. It is required to have a strong, snapping bite that will shift the most stubborn beast, and the courage to head off a troublesome one, sending it in the desired direction. The Australian Cattle Dog must be able to turn quickly out of the way of danger, or flatten below a powerful kick from a steer.

Versatile, it can gently herd cows to the milking barn or work stubborn pigs in a piggery. It can even work sheep if trained not to bite. In addition to participating in conformation shows, more and more ACDs are to be found in obedience and tracking competitions.

TYPICAL

With cattle dog function in mind, the typical ACD's skull is broad and only slightly curved between the ears, flattening to a slight but definite stop. His cheeks are muscular, but not coarse or prominent. His underjaw is strong and deep; the bit is scissor.

His foreface is broad, well filled under the eye, and tapers gradually to a black nose. Lips are tight. The length of muzzle is equal to or slightly shorter than the length of skull, the two planes parallel. His dark brown

eyes are oval shaped, medium in size, set well apart, and express alertness and intelligence. The warning or suspicious glint is characteristic. His small, pricked ears are broad at the base, moderately pointed, set well apart, and incline outwards.

An exceptionally strong neck is required of this worker of cattle. His neck broadens to blend into his body, free from throatiness. I have drawn a medium length neck and included a slight arch. His broad, muscular shoulders are well laid back, the upper arm appearing to be of equal length, and also angled. The elbow is level with the deepest part of the brisket, half the height of the dog. Strong, round bone extends to the feet; the strong front pasterns slope slightly. The compact feet are round, the toes are well arched and the pads are thick.

He stands 19 inches at the withers (dogs 18-20 inches, bitches 17-19 inches). His length of body from breastbone to buttocks is greater than his height at withers; the 10 to 9 ratio promotes the ability to turn quickly away from danger.

His level topline has a slight, strong arch over a broad loin. His tail is set on moderately low, following the contours of the sloping croup, and reaches to the low hocks. His hindquarters are broad, strong and muscular and the stifles are well turned.

DOG A

Any tendency to grossness, such as that exhibited by this dog, is a serious fault. Dog A conveys great substance and power, but these elements are not combined with either agility or endurance. Robert Kileski in his book, *Australian Barkers and Biters*, likens the appearance of the ACD to that of a small, thick-set Dingo, and faults any departure likely to diminish speed and endurance. This sound example's heave head, body and bone lessen working ability to a degree; the exact proportion of the degree is yours to decide.

DOG B

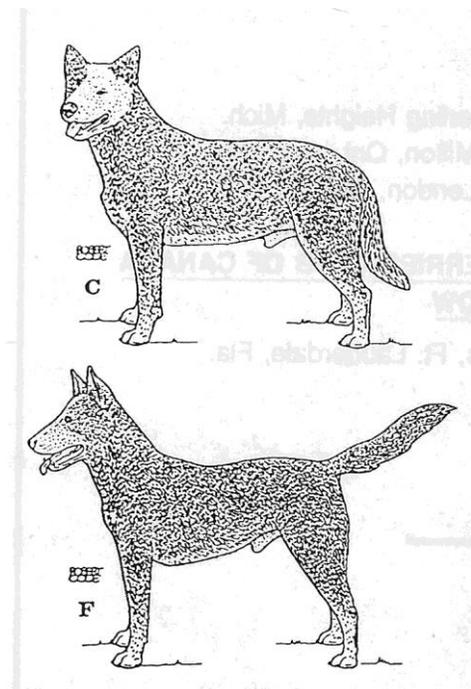
This full profile, mouth closed representation of typical exhibits undesirable markings – one on his left hip and one at the base of his tail. This is a blue dog and the markings are black. While black is permitted on the head, it is undesirable on the body. In the case of a red speckle dog, darker red markings on the body are permissible but not desirable. In both, if dark head markings are present, it is desirable that the markings be even.

Tom Dixon, speaker at an ACD seminar in Australia, advised that “although black body patches are undesirable, an otherwise excellent blue mottled or blue speckle specimen should not be put down under a dog without undesirable markings which is inferior in general conformation.”

DOG C

I have drawn his correct head in three-quarter view to illustrate the required broad skull; broad foreface; wide set of the ears, inclined outwards; fill under the eyes; and muscular cheeks. I have given his head dark markings on the right side but not on the left to emphasize that, although even head markings are desirable, they are not so desirable that a lesser head would be given preference.

His quick turning ability is reduced by his longer than typical body. He provides an informative comparison to the correct 10 to 9 length to height ratio of my representation of typical. His ribcage is long, not his loin; his topline, although long, is still firm. Because of his longer body in ratio to his leg length, he will not endure as long at the trot or the gallop as a more compact, symmetrically built cattle dog.



DOG D

This is my representation of typical. He could be blue mottled, blue speckled or red speckled, all with or without other markings. He has a smooth, double coat with a short, dense undercoat. The outer coat is close; each hair is straight, hard, and lies flat, so that it is rain resistant. As an average, the hairs on the body should be from one to 1 ½ inches in length.

DOG E

This over 20 inch, long legged example (over 20 ½ inches disqualifies in Canada) cannot quickly flatten under a kick from a bullock. His long rear pasterns also prevent quick starts, turns and stops. His ears are large but, more serious, there is a lack of width between his ears – not because they are too high on the head (which sometimes occurs), but because the skull lacks required breadth; in tur, there is a lack of filling under the eye.

DOG F

This poor specimen exhibits many of the faults current in the breed. To begin, he has four head faults; lack of black nose pigmentation; lack of definite stop; a long muzzle; and large, round eyes.

He is poorly constructed in many apparent ways. He is steep in the shoulder and in the upper arm; his neck lacks arch and does not broaden; his front legs are too far forward on his body, covering forechest, producing a hole between the front legs and uncovering the deepest part of a brisket; tuck up is pronounced; his pelvis is horizontal, forcing the upper thigh and second thigh to steepen, the croup to flatten and the tail to set on high, and contributing to the dip in the soft back; his bladed rather than round bone is light; and his flanks are shallow (and without a doubt, his loin lacks breadth).

1.2.3.4

Dog D takes first place, Dog B second place, Dog C third place and Dog A fourth place.

If Dog A, representing typical, was undershot, overshot, had yellow eyes, was under 17 ½ inches or over 20 ½ inches, he would be disqualified in Canada. If Dog C possessed one of these faults, would you put Dog A up over him?

A scissors bite is required. If Dog B has a pincer rather than scissors bite, would you put longer bodied Dog C up over him?