

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

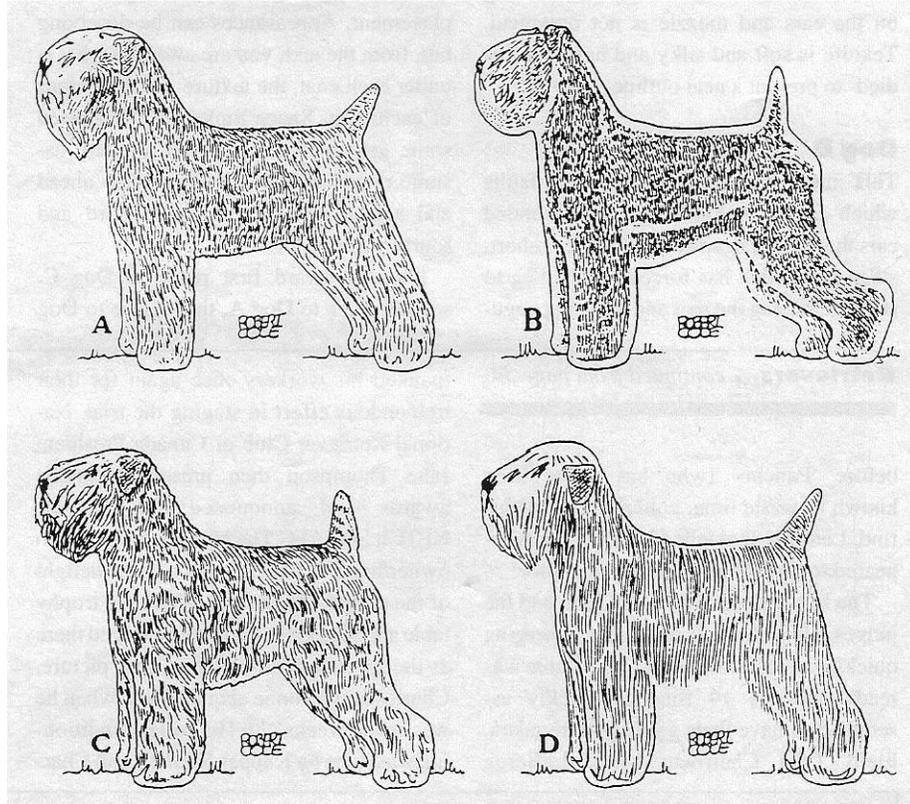
The Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier requires a hands-on examination to see beneath its abundant coat. What is under each coat, the texture of the coat and its colour, will be described. The order of placement will depend on the importance you attribute to each feature.

DOG A

This Wheaten stands the ideal 18 ½ inches at withers (females 17 ½ inches), is compact and possesses the same typical body length and depth as the best of these four examples. However, his body appears long and shallow and he seems to lack angulation and to have an overly large, coarse head.

His body appears long and shallow because too much of his coat has been trimmed. He does possess angulation at stifle and hock, which is hidden by poor grooming. Inferior grooming has made his head appear domey and the flat sides cheeky.

The correctly docked tail is “well set-on, carried gaily” (carried up – CKC glossary) but doesn’t quite have the specific “high set” as described in both Canadian and British standards. Dr. Pierce advises in an article that Wheatens who fail to keep their tails erect when moving should be severely penalized. This dog’s adequate tail carriage remains erect, both stacked and moving. Equally



important, this dog's long pelvis is correctly sloped, and his buttocks project beyond the tail, complimenting angulation at stifle and hock.

This example's nose, eye rims, lips and pads are black. But it would be preferable if his nails were also black or completely dark, rather than having just a dark brown line down the centre of cream. Some latitude has, in the past, been given to nails of different colours.

DOG B

This overly trimmed, sculptured coat should be severely penalized. The coat is also woolly – a serious fault. Angulation is present in the front and rear. But in the rear, the second thigh is too long, and the high hock's sickle. The short head is not in proportion to the body. His ears fold above the top of the skull – a major fault. Not visible, his almost yellow eyes are also a major fault. However, his nose, eye rims and lips are black and so are his deep pads.

His feet are round and compact, but the dewclaws have only been removed from the front legs. The dewclaws on the hind legs *must* (in Canada) be removed. The word “must” is a very strong demand. Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier breeders consider dewclaws to present a health hazard and believe they serve no useful purpose. I have never heard or read where SCWT hind dewclaws suggest an outcross.

DOG C

This dog has a square outline, and is well balanced with a medium-length neck that gradually widens and blends into well-laid back shoulders. He possesses a short, level back, a depth of body reaching to the elbows, a short loin, a high-set tail, well angulated hindquarters and round, compact feet. He stands 18 ½ inches at withers, and weighs 40 pounds.

His skull and foreface are of equal length, the rectangular head in proportion to the body. The skull is of medium width but is not coarse, there is a defined stop, and the cheeks are smooth. His strong, square muzzle is parallel with the skull, and is filled below the eyes. His slightly almond shaped eyes are dark brown and set fairly wide apart. The eye rims are black. V-shaped ears are folded at the level of the skull, the nose is black, the bite is scissors, the black lips are tight.

His single coat is a good, clear wheaten, and falls in loose waves. The dark shading on the ears and muzzle is not untypical. Texture is soft and silky and has been ‘tidied’ to present a neat outline.

DOG D

This interesting example has three faults which cannot be hidden: 1) low, rounded ears that lie flat against the skull, 2) a short, steep pelvis that has forced the hindleg to steepen, raising the rear and reducing angulation at stifle and hock, and 3) an objectionable straight coat

His coat is a desirable warm, honey colour (it can be any shade of wheaten). Also on the credit side, his nose is large and black, and he has a pincer bite (it can be either scissors or level bite – scissors preferred). Not readily discernible, his muzzle is incorrectly a little longer than the skull, and forequarters and hindquarters lack required angulation. A slight hollow can be felt behind the withers, and the shoulders feel loaded and have too much space between their tips. The brisket does not reach the elbow.

DECISION TIME

They are stacked in profile, in catalogue order, as they might be prior to your final placement. Appearances can be deceiving but, from the text, you are aware of what is under each coat, the texture and the colour of each coat. Space limitation has caused some general features to be

omitted; assume these features are correct. Go ahead and select your first, second, third and fourth place.

I would award first place to Dog C, second place to Dog A, third place to Dog D and fourth place to Dog B.

COAT

Trimming is a vexing question. On a recent judging assignment to Sweden and Finland (where, under the new law, I saw undocked tails), I found SCWT trimming more uniform than in the United States and Canada, where it is often overdone. In England, they mostly just tidy the natural coat removing untidy ends.

When coat colour forms part of a breed's name, judges take particular interest. Any shade of ripening wheat is acceptable, from pale gold through to warm honey. A white coat and a red coat are objectionable. Upon close examination, occasional red, white or black guard hairs may be found. However the overall colouring must be clearly wheaten, with no evidence of any other colour (usually grey) except on the ears and muzzle.

Puppies under one year of age may carry deeper colouring and occasional black tipping. The adolescent, under two years, is often quite light, but must never be white or carry grey (usually on the forehead) other than on the ears and muzzle, where blue-grey shading is sometimes present.