



World Boerboel Breeders Association PTY. LTD.

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www.worldboerboel.com

WBBA Boerboel Breed Standard

General Appearance

The Boerboel is a wide mouthed Mastiff type dog originating from South Africa. The Boers are the descendants of Dutch colonists who settled the southern African continent in the late 1600s. Pronounced “Boo-r-bull”, the name “Boerboel” literally means “farmer’s dog”.

Boerboels should be strong and muscular in appearance. They are a large dog with formidable presence but must retain athletic gait and agility to reflect the breed’s history as an all-purpose farm dog whose first job was to guard the homestead.

Despite origins dating back to the 1600s, attempts to standardise the Boerboel weren’t cohesive until the early 1980s. The WBBA standard focuses on producing stable dogs capable of performing the tasks the breed was originally developed for, avoiding breeding for potentially ‘fashionable’ traits such as disproportionate head and chest size or overall bulk that interferes with athleticism.

Size

The Boerboel is a well-balanced dog in form and function, all body parts are in proportion to each other, and the sexes being clearly distinguishable in appearance. Its height is in balance with mass, overall balance, and overall conformation.

Adult, well balanced and completely grown males should ideally be 66cm (26in) in height measured at the top of the withers (the top of the shoulder blade). The accepted range of height for an adult male measured at the top of the withers will be 60-78cm (23.6in to 30.7).

Adult, well balanced and completely grown females should ideally be 60cm (23.6in) in height measured at the top of the withers. The accepted range of height for an adult female measured at the top of the withers will be 55-70cm (21.65in to 27.55).

General Proportions

The main structural components of the dog should be proportionate, with functional capacity, balance and sound movement of greater importance than overall size. Dogs must not be “square” and should have a greater total length than total height. The relation between length and height should ideally be 10:9. Body length is measured pro-sternum (the prominent bump at the midline of the chest) to the farthest point of the rump. Dogs should display sturdy, compact confirmation to achieve the highest degree of mobility.



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Head

Skull

The head is one of the most important aspects of the Boerboel breed and represents the character of the dog. The head should be short, broad, block shaped, muscular and a slight frown must be visible on the dog's forehead when its interest is aroused. The zygomatic arch (the cheekbone) should be well muscled but not prominent.

The length of the roof of the skull, (measured from the middle of the eye to the end of the occiput) must be relative to the length of the nose bone in a relation of 1:1.5 as the ideal relationship.

The dome of the skull must be broad and flat on top. The general rule is to attract the dog's attention to get it to lift its ears to the "attention" position, then gauge the "flatness" of the dome of the skull.

Both the head and the muzzle must be cube shaped. In profile, the dome of the skull should be on the same parallel plane as the nose bone.

The stop (the drop or break in the plane from the frontal bones of the skull to the nasal bones of the muzzle) must have a gradual slope and be well filled between the eyes. It should not be a sudden vertical plane such as in a Boxer nor non-existent as seen in English Bull Terriers.

Muzzle

The muzzle should be blunt and perpendicular to the snout with a gently sloped stop.

The stop should not be steep or abrupt. The muzzle narrows only slightly toward the nose and should measure slightly more than one third the total length of the head.

Nose

Nostrils are large and evenly spaced, with the septum perpendicular to the jaw.

Jaws, lips and teeth

The jaws must reflect the characteristics of the Boerboel breed, be strong and show good muscular development. The jaws must not be lacking in depth and must not be "pointed".

The teeth are strong and correctly spaced. The dog should have a scissor bite, (outside of bottom teeth fits flush against the inside of the upper teeth) though an underbite up of up 1cm is allowed. Any visible sign of an overbite (where the upper jaw protrudes further than the lower jaw), will lead to disqualification.

A level bite is acceptable. Wry bites are a disqualification.



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The upper lip is fleshy and preferably tight, with the end touching the top of the bottom lip under the nose. When the dog is viewed in profile, the flews must not extend below the lowest level of the jawbone. The lower lip must be moderately tight.

Eyes

The eyes should appear intelligent, with an attentive and guarded expression. Iris colour can be yellow to brown. Blue iris colouring is a disqualification.

The eyes should be horizontal, and any slant will be penalised. The eyes must be widely spaced and look straight ahead.

Eyelids must be firm and well pigmented. The hair in the spectacle area (which describes the facial markings that include shadings or dark markings over or around the eyes and line of hair slanting from the outer corner of each eye toward the lower corner of each ear) should show adequate pigmentation.

The area between the eyes must be well filled and show a gentle depression. Eyes must not protrude (bulge) or be deep-set. The third eyelid (nictitating membrane) must not be visible.

Ears

The ears must be medium sized (the tip must just reach the corner of the dog's mouth), V-shaped and of medium thickness.

Ears must be high set but must still be on the sides of the head. They must fall away sideways and to the front but remain against the cheek.

Deformity of one or both ears resulting from a viral infection or injury is acceptable. Any cosmetic procedure not allowed under local law such as cropped ears are a disqualification.

Neck and topline

The neck must gradually increase in width from the head to the shoulders and be muscular to the extent that it shows a visible crest. The dewlap and scruff should be loose but the skin across the chest, especially between the front legs, should be tight. The neck must be in proportion to the rest of the dog.

The shoulders must not be too erect and show good, visible muscle definition.

The back is defined as starting from a point between the scapula to the top of the tail attachment. The top line of the back must not be completely flat but must show a slight indentation behind the shoulders. The back of all dogs should show prominent back muscles. Viewed from the front or the rear, the back should be straight, broad and in proportion to the rest of the dog.



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The loin is defined as the area from the rib cage to the pelvis. The loin should be thick and strong and short, ideally have a length proportion of 1/3 of the total torso length. A slight arch is permissible and gives propulsion.

The croup of the dog, defined as the last section of the back above the rear legs must be firm, strong and show visible muscular development. The croup must not droop excessively in adult dogs but it is accepted that the croups of younger dogs have a tendency to. The ideal slope of the croup should be 23 degrees.

Torso

The ribcage (defined as the area from the first chest vertebrae to the last rib bone) must ideally have a length proportion of 2:1 to the loin (the back and side of the abdomen between the ribs and pelvis).

Front legs

The front legs should be thick (substantive girth), strong and muscular.

Seen from any angle, the front legs must be as straight as possible and vertical to the plane of the ground. The elbows, wrists and paws must not turn inwards or outwards.

The pasterns must be short, sturdy and form a slight angle to both the pastern joint and the front leg. The distance between the knee joint and hock joint must not be too long to allow a well-balanced dog with supple, fluid movement.

The upper arm must show good, visible muscular development.

The front feet should be large, well cushioned and rounded in shape.

The dog must have strong, short nails of any colour. The front feet must be aligned close to straight to the front but it is recognised that most large dogs breeds show a slight turn-out of their front feet.

Hind legs

The upper hind leg must be well developed with prominent, visible musculature.

The lower hind leg must be well developed with prominent, visible musculature both on the inside and the outside of the leg.

The knees should be strong, firm and show correct angulation.

The hock joints must be strong, firm, relatively short, thick and parallel to each other. Hock joints should be bent at an angle of 45 degrees.

The hind paws must be slightly smaller than the front paws, well cushioned, rounded and point straight forward.



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The nails must be short and strong with a slight curve. The nails may be of any colour.

Tail

The tail must be positioned high and must be straight. Tails may be left long or docked (where allowed). Kinked, corkscrew or deformed tails are not desirable. Long tails should be sabre shaped and of adequate girth and length. Natural tails reach down to the hocks or little below and hang slightly curved when the dog is standing. The tail is carried with a slight upward curve when the dog is excited or moving

Sexual organs and the anus

Sexual organs must be well developed. Males must have two well developed testicles.

The vulva must be firm in female dogs.

The skin and hair around sexual organs should show adequate pigmentation

The anus should show adequate pigmentation.

Coat

The coat of the dog should be dense, smooth and short. Long and curly hair is not desirable.

Colour

All colour variations currently seen in the breed are acceptable. Recognised colours include all shades of fawn, sable, cream, brindle, tan points, dominant black.

A black mask is optional.

Dogs may have irish marking, piebald patterns and saddles.

Dilute, liver and recessive red colour modifiers are accepted.

Harlequin, merle and recessive black are not accepted.

Ticking is accepted but should be minimal.

Pigmentation

All dogs should ideally show dark pigmentation on their skin.

Weak or inadequate pigmentation will be heavily penalised and could lead to disqualification.



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In piebald dogs there must be some pigmentation around the eyes, this may be slight but must surround the eye itself.

Appearance

Old scars resulting from declared, acceptable surgical procedures, accidents or work factors are irrelevant and will not be penalised.

General Condition

The presented animal must be in a good general condition and should not be obese to the extent that muscular development and actual girth of the bone structure cannot be determined.

The weight of the presented dog must be in relation to size of the dog.

Gait

The movement of a Boerboel is powerful, purposeful, buoyant and fluent, with comfortable reach in front and rear. Propulsion must come from the rear without crabbing or twisting. The legs must, when viewed from the front or rear, be retained as a straight column both walking and trotting. Elbows, pasterns and hocks must remain firm. The topline must be stable, without roaching or drooping in the middle or with excessive body roll. Absolute soundness and freedom of movement is essential.

Temperament

Boerboels are known for their fearless character and high intelligence. The dog must show loyalty to its master and obedience to commands (even if given by a handler). Boerboels are known for their threat perception and guarding instincts. Boerboels must accept children and not pose a threat to them or other persons that do not pose a threat to the dog, its owner or their property.

Boerboels must have an intelligent and trainable nature, and have a calm, stable and confident composure.

Faults

The following are considered faults.

Behaviour:

- Disobedience

Build and conformation:

- Lanky build



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- Too short legs.
- Square build where height and length is equal.
- Not carrying the physical characteristics of their sex

Head:

- Entropion, ectropion or distichiasis
- Bulging eyes
- Deep set eyes
- Third eyelid visible
- Upper lip too long
- Jaws lacking in depth
- Pointy jaws
- Excessively low set ears
- Excessively highly set ears

Teeth:

- An under bite of less than 1 cm
- Inability to keep tongue in mouth
- Wry bite

Body:

- Loose shoulder blades
- Too narrow chest
- Back showing a prominent indentation behind the shoulders.
- A round back
- A hollow back
- Drooping or hanging croup
- Bandy legs
- Cow hocks
- Sickie hocks
- Weak or inadequate pigmentation
- Obesity or under-weight relative to size
- Long hair
- Curly hair
- Kinked, corkscrew or deformed tails
- Males without two well developed testicles