



Bedlington Terrier Gazette Column for August, 2007 issue

A Living Art Form Part II

Our last column discussed color and pigmentation in the Bedlington Terrier as described by our breed standard and interpreted by the parent club's Judges' Education Chairman, Kristine Mullen. We have invited our Breeders of Distinction to comment on the subject for this column. All of these persons have 20 or more years of experience with the Bedlington Terrier.

Sandy Miles of **SANDON** writes: "As a long time breeder of Bedlingtons, I have seen all different shades of color and pigment in the dogs at shows and in my kennel. Pigment implies skin color, and I know for a fact that exposure to the sun can make a big difference. I agree that nutrition, climate, seasons and care can influence the color of the coat and skin. A coat that stays very light with few guard hairs year around is not a proper coat. I do believe that genetics plays an important role, too, but you cannot breed for just one thing. You must take the whole dog into consideration. Not all my breedings have produced the same type of coat, but all have had good proper color.

This is a tough subject for Judges to understand, since most of our Bedlingtons are always changing color throughout the year. Within reason, I would place more importance on overall conformation and movement and a dog trimmed to the proper length of coat called for in the breed standard."

Nancy Rappaport of **STARCASTLE BEDLINGTONS** tells me that her take on the subject is that it is purely genetic as far as whether or not a particular dog has good or bad pigmentation. Nancy cites the advice of her early mentors, Marianne Cumming, Aquina Meyer, Connie Willemsen and Oscar Crouthamel who told her that matings should be selected to mix blue and liver or sandy rather than stick with one color exclusively in order to preserve good pigment in the dogs. Nancy states, "I do my best to mix colors when I breed and the only other thing I can attribute to the color and pigment of my dogs is that I supplement all of them with Kelp as soon as they are weaned."

Linda Freeman who's **CHELSEA BLUE BEDLINGTONS** have displayed proper color and pigment over the years states: "The Bedlington Terrier is born a self-colored dog. Simply put, self-colored is one solid color. The breed, however, should carry a gene that allows the head to lighten up, while the body will retain some shade of the birth color. The breed standard mandates this color pattern.

I am concerned that we are losing the gene that allows the top knot to lighten up, while maintaining that beautiful ‘very distinct mixture of hard and soft hair’ and darker pigmentation. This concern stems from many years of exhibition both here in the U.S., in Great Britain and Scandinavia. I have seen a large number of solid white dogs and now a disturbing number of solid dark dogs. The elusive gene that allows for a beautiful white top knot seems to be recessive to the ‘self-colored’ gene. Since our breed is rare, our priority must be healthy specimens with good quality.”

Finally, Marjorie Hanson, a long time breeder under the **VALGO** affix, has begun keeping records of the color changes in the dogs that she currently breeds and exhibits. She states that “there seems to be more and more discussion among breeders about color and pigmentation and I want observe my dogs very closely. When I am judging the breed, beautiful color and pigment is a tie breaker between two good ones, but can never justify awarding an average dog over a good one just because of color”.

Thanks to all who have made this so interesting and enlightening.

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