

## **MEASUREMENT OF THE SHETLAND SHEEPDOG**

Unless otherwise noted quotes are from the AKC *Rules, Policies and Guidelines For Conformation Dog Show Judges*

### **HEIGHT DETERMINATION:**

***"You are responsible for making a height determination whenever you suspect a dog is not within proper limits as specified in the standard..."***

The official standard for the Shetland Sheepdog states "the Shetland Sheepdog should stand between 13 and 16 inches at the shoulder. Note: Height is determined by a line perpendicular to the ground from the top of the shoulder blades, the dog standing naturally with forelegs parallel to line of measurement. Heights below or above the desired range are to be disqualified from the show ring".

As a Sheltie breeder, exhibitor and judge, I encourage you to measure **using the AKC wicket** whenever you are in doubt about size. Sheltie exhibitors appreciate judges who measure dogs that appear possibly too tall or too small, if the judge's measuring procedure is consistent and fair. We would rather you measure and be wrong, than to put a dog you like at the end of the line because you think it *might* be over or under the standard!

After you have become accustomed to measuring Shelties it will be easier to determine whether you should do so by inspecting the dog as you examine it. Some dogs appear safely in size but upon examination, upright shoulders make the dog quite tall. Shelties under 14" may appear smaller than they are because the other dogs in the ring may be noticeably larger. It takes almost no time to measure once you have practiced with the wicket. If you are considering a taller or smaller Sheltie for a win and you suspect it is not within proper limits, please measure rather than rejecting the dog because of size.

### **WICKETS:**

Take a look at the wickets and the adjustable parts. Place the wicket flat on a table to make the necessary adjustments so as to avoid dropping the legs. If you must use your examination table for this task, please do not have the dog on the table at the same time! Once you have set the screws in place take out your metal measuring tape and check 16 inches for the tall dog or 13 inches for the small dog, and show the measurement to the exhibitor. Most often we will use the 16 inch wicket to determine height, but have no hesitation about measuring the smaller Sheltie using the 13 inch wicket. Some specialty clubs are fortunate to have AKC "fixed" wickets — both a 13 and a 16 inch. At present the show superintendents have the adjustable kind.

### **TABLE:**

***"Dogs normally examined on a table should be measured on a table."***

### **HANDLER:**

***"The handler is to set the dog to the judge's specification. At no time should you try to set the dog or hold the dog's head."***

Many people showing Shelties have their own ideas as to their "rights" when their dog is being measured, but you are the judge — you are in charge. Be reasonable, be calm, and be clear, and simply follow the AKC Rules and Guidelines.

### **HELPFUL HINTS:**

It is most important to help the exhibitor feel as relaxed as possible. Measuring is a big thing, made a little easier in that measuring has become more commonplace over the years. But it is still a big thing.

Be sure you are familiar with the newest edition of the "Rules Applying to Dog Shows," which every judge must have.

Some exhibitors have no idea how to prepare the Sheltie for measurement and so you might need to give some helpful hints. Advise the handler that he may part the hair at the highest point over the dog's shoulder blades. See that the handler places the legs under the dog - - not too far forward, nor too far back or pulled apart. Ask the handler to reposition the legs if they are not to your satisfaction. Every judge has his/her own method of going about a measurement. You will learn helpful things when talking to the field reps or other judges that you may wish to include in your plan. I advise the handler that he may hold the lead in one hand (not up, not down) and that he may steady the dog with the other hand. I also remind him "remember, I want the dog to measure in as much as you do" and then I ask him to tell me when he is ready for me to measure. It would be a good idea for you to create your own set of directions for the exhibitor.

#### **MEASURING:**

Once the handler has indicated readiness and you are satisfied that the dog is standing properly, quickly find with the fingers of the left hand the highest point over the dog's shoulder blades. If the place that you find is not the same as where the handler parted the hair, advise him and let him have another chance to part the hair correctly. Then with your right hand bring the wicket directly and carefully forward over the back of the dog to where your left fingers are marking the highest point over the dog's shoulder blades, and place the wicket down on that point as move your fingers out of the way. Make sure that the legs of the wicket touch the table with both legs if using the 16-inch wicket. If using the 13-inch wicket, remember that an exactly 13" dog is in size under the Sheltie standard. Therefore, either one or both legs of the wicket must not touch, or if both touch the table, the crossbar of the wicket must be resting snugly on the dog's withers.

*"If you measure a dog "out" you should clearly and concisely communicate this to the exhibitor." Mark your book accordingly, whether the dog measures in or is disqualified.*

#### **PROBLEMS:**

If the dog moves as you are about to measure, take the wicket away immediately and try again. Only once did I have to excuse a dog because I was unable to get a correct measurement. There is no set time limit in measuring a dog. **Use your common sense.** *"There is a presumption that dogs of measurable breeds are trained to be measured. Make only one attempt to measure the dog. Any dog you are unable to measure must be excused. You should always mark your book, explaining the reason for the excusal."*

#### **THINGS TO BE AWARE OF:**

In order to make sure that the dog "measures in" the handler might attempt to manipulate the dog in some manner. For instance the legs of the dog may be placed so as to make the dog taller or shorter. The handler may hold the head up or perhaps pull it down, or place bait on the table in front of the dog to encourage him to look down. The main problem that you will have is that the dog is not set correctly. **Be sure you are totally satisfied with how the dog is standing and where the handler is placed before you begin your measurement.** There are many things that can make a difference in measuring a dog in or out.

#### **MARK YOUR BOOK:**

"Measured in" or "Measured out — Disqualified" and initial the statement.

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