

Institutional support – or lack of it - in the management of dog breeds.

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FCI listed 331 breeds dogs world-wide¹ in 2005. Of these, Europe is credited for defining the majority. Within Europe, according to the FCI list, Germany and France have defined most of the versatile breeds, and the British Isles most specialists. Given the number of dogs held in North America, our continent is noteworthy for having defined the fewest. This is even more surprising considering that at the time of Columbus, Europe counted 14 breeds of dogs and North and South America 17 (Cummins 2002). How did this imbalance come to be so?

A key feature in the formation of the hunting breeds during the post-revolution period (France 1789-99; Germany 1848) was hunter/breeders coming together on a local or regional level to name and define their unique breed. The breeding chaos that ensued after 1848 was soon recognized as harmful and institutional mechanisms were put in place to chart a cohesive future for dogs on a breed basis. Breeders were encouraged to form breed clubs and jointly define their breed's working ability, performance levels and appearance. The dog's functional characteristics as a hunting dog were meant to guide its development, hence the frequent use of the words *Jagd-Gebrauch*, "hunting utility" or "hunting deployment" in test names and in the Verband's name.

The first of these coordinating institutions was called a 'Commission of Delegates' (*Delegierten-Commission, DC*) established in 1879 (Uhde 1999). This was also the time when dog shows were becoming popular, and the notion of pets and toy dogs took hold among a broader public. The purpose of the Commission was to oversee the formation of breed standards initially for hunting dogs but later also for other working dogs and companion dogs, and to maintain a registry.

Growing pains surrounding the *Commission* lead to the formation of new dog breeds and breed clubs outside of the commission's purview. In 1899, these new clubs formed their own *Verband der Vereine zur Prüfung von Gebrauchshunden zur Jagd*, an organization for performance testing of versatile hunting dogs. This *Verband* united fully 20 clubs that were already in existence, and 6 to join later. Some clubs were local multi-breed clubs and others were single-breed clubs. The *Verein Deutsch Langhaar* and the *Verein der Pudelpointer-Züchter* was among the first 20 founding member clubs. The *Verein Deutsch-Drahthaar*, and, interestingly, even a German club for pointers and setters joined later (Uhde 2004). Performance field trials were common by then, but the revolutionary step taken by the *Verband* was to make performance an integral part of breed development, hence the phrase *Jagd-Gebrauchs-Hund*.

Later still, in 1906, a third organization was formed, called the *Kartell*. Key members of the *Griffon-Club* and the *Club Kurzhaar* helped in the formation of the *Kartell*. The *Commission*, the *Verband* and the *Kartell* coexisted until they were forcibly combined into a *Reichsverband* in 1933. In 1937, the *Verband* removed itself again from the *Reichsverband* and became the *Jagdgebrauchshundverband* or JGHV.

¹ There are more dog breeds in the world still, as not all countries are members of FCI.

In 1949, collaboration with JGHV was renewed, when the *Kartell* morphed into the current-day *Verband Deutsches Hundewesen* (VDH). Over the decades, the original organization, the *Commission* had been lost. JGHV and VDH remain as the premier dog organizations in Germany, with the VDH representing Germany in international matters through FCI. However, VDH agreed to turn over all matters concerning versatile breeds to the JGHV, and represented the collective interests of JGHV internationally at FCI, including the protection of JGHV affiliated breed clubs and their breed standards.

In 1984, the VDH cancelled this power sharing and began to offer competing registries for some versatile breeds. The working relationship between VDH and JGHV is now a matter of ongoing negotiations as new issues arise. JGHV is quite well known in North America as it works closely with north American chapters of the German breed clubs (e.g. VDD-USA., VDD-Canada, NADKC) and offers some testing for versatile dogs registered in Germany and according to German testing guidelines.

The German clubs for Small and Large Munsterlanders became members of the *Commission* as soon as the breed clubs were formed, in 1912 and 1922, respectively. For the Large Munsterlander this recognition by the '*Commission*' happened when its first LM breed exhibit was held in 1922, where 21 LMs had been entered. The *Verband Grosse Münsterländer* and the *Verband für Kleine Münsterländer* have been members of the JGHV throughout these institutional evolutions. Today, the LM standard is protected by FCI through representation via VDH.

The crux of the differences in the various institutional arrangements was performance testing. The breed was not only recognized by its appearance but also through performance. For an LM to be registered as an LM its parents not only had to look like LMs but they also had to prove their hunting ability and hunting-related health features (e.g. hip-dysplasia free).

For comparison, AKC was founded in 1884 and CKC in 1887. Unlike JGHV, the AKC, CKC and others may have sponsored field and bench events, but their registries became fee-oriented enterprises and dogs were registered based on pedigree alone, irrespective of qualifications. A similar unwillingness early on, refusing to link a fee-based registry service to performance testing was one of the factors that caused the split in the Commission in Germany and the formation of the competing *Kartell* and the *Verband*.

In North America, separating what a dog is (pedigree) from what it does (performance) was seen as a problem too, but no coordinated correction happened. Influential sporting dog enthusiasts tried several times to write performance into a standard, but it merely led to splits in club membership and the formation of competing organizations. There was and largely still is, a lack of institutional leadership (but see Animal Pedigree Act of Canada). The forerunner of American Field, the Chicago Field, began registering only dogs that placed in field trials. Still, no mechanism evolved that would link a performance standard to a breeding strategy (Frame 2002).

The element of performance as a defining part of a breed is not maintained in North America, nor is it in the U.K. In North America, CKC and AKC will register a pup based on pedigree alone. As a result, many North American breeds such as the German Shorthair, exist as three different types, a show dog, a versatile dog, and a specialist pointing dog (Thoms 2005). These types are as different within the same breed as some breeds are from one-another. To be sure, there are many excellent specimen of the German Shorthair in each of these three camps. However, this three-part existence with various combinations in between has also caused product

confusion and disappointment among some owners who expected one type of dog and obtained another.

It is for the above product-confusion reason, that various North American breed clubs have tried to include and enforce a performance requirement via their registry. This need for proof of performance is obvious to most hunters and has always been embraced with enthusiasm. However, as breed clubs grew, competing interests emerged and the resulting divisions did not allow breed clubs to maintain a firm foothold on their breed. There was no institutional leadership.

Some members of North American dog organizations and registries accept and even value the freedom of doing as one pleases with dog breeds. Others quip that 'in North America we have so much freedom that we can't accomplish anything.' The key is that on the other side freedom's coin lies the need for respect of such freedom. If a group of breeders freely chooses to collectively manage a breed, how is freedom served by others undermining that choice?

Reflecting on the early 1900 North American dog scene, before versatile dogs arrived here, Betten (1945:386-387) wrote: "It is a notable fact that with one exception, the Chesapeake Bay dog², all of the important gun dog breeds employed in American gunning originated or were perfected in the British Isles. This does not speak well for a continent the size of ours, with its infinite variety of winged game. Improved methods of training have brought the latent qualities of several breeds to the fore, but it is still a question if these breeds of today are actually superior to the parent stock. Certainly, the inherent breeding genius which distinguished British sportsmen in the past has been lacking here: we merely imitate - we do not originate."

Similarly, Wehle (1964:138), the originator of the Elhew Pointer, wrote: "There are few true dog breeders in the country today. Many so-called breeders are not breeders in the above sense. They have no preconceived plan and, in many cases, do not even have a clear cut objective. Their matings are not carefully planned and little consideration is given to the pedigrees or bloodlines. They fly by the seat of their pants into some short range program merely because they may have one good individual - and some friend has another. They conclude that by breeding the two they should get a litter of above average dogs. If an outstanding prospect results from such a mating, it is largely accidental."

² This needs to include also the American Water Spaniel and the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever.



Photo legend. This first *Herbst-Zucht-Prüfung* (HZP) for Large Munsterlanders was held in 1925. Second from right stands Johann vom Walde, a member of one of the families that had been known for decades for their dedication to the Large Munsterlander. This HZP, as are all national HZPs today, was named after the vom Walde family. The person in the background, 3rd from left, is Edmund Löns, a principal co-founder of the Small Munsterlander, originally under the name *Heidewachtel*, or heath spaniel.

Postscript

The theme of the 6 June 2007 issue of the German hunting magazine *Wild und Hund* was about German hunting dogs abroad, particularly the versatile breeds. Hunters in Austria and the Czech Republic have long worked closely with their German neighbors, but the German influence reaches beyond that to include most of the world today. The German dog-men and women are proud of their accomplishments and deserve to be so.

The German Shorthair, for example, is used as a hunting dog in 32 countries, with roughly 20,000 puppies born per year (Wörmann 2007). In Germany, some 30% of the 1500 puppies annually are exported. The German breeders and breed clubs generally do not have big advertising campaigns abroad, the non-German hunter largely comes to them. This is attributed to the goal-oriented coordination, the minimum standards and testing schemes under which all German breed clubs operate, in other words a reliable consistency in type according to breed.

With 140 years of leadership, from the *Delegierten Commission* to the *Jagdgebrauchshundverband* of today, the system of testing and breeding has been fine-tuned and remains largely true to the breed's origin yet is responsive to the types of uses the dogs have in German hunting practice today. After all, while shot primers, game densities and the administration hunting itself may have changed some, ever since technology gave hunters shotguns light enough to swing, the sequence of hunt-find-flush-shoot-retrieve, has remained fundamentally the same for three centuries. So has the role of the dog remained the same in this sequence.

All versatile-dog breed clubs use three levels of testing and judges approved by the JGHV. Two levels of tests that were approved by JGHV and agreed upon by breed clubs starting in 1911, were the *Verbands-Jugend-Prüfung* (VJP; natural aptitude), and the *Herbst-Zucht-Prüfung* (HZP; fall breeders' test). These are organized by and recorded by the breed clubs under the auspices of JGHV. The third level, the *Verbands-Gebrauchs-Prüfung* (VGP) is organized on behalf of JGHV and the dogs that pass this are recorded in an all-breed *Deutsches Gebrauchshundestammbuch* (geneological register of German versatile dogs). *The first VGP was held in 1892.*

There is one breed club, the *Klub Deutsch-Kurzhaar*, later changed to *Deutsch-Kurzhaar Verband* (DKV) that did not entirely subscribe to the jointly agreed-upon JGHV testing guidelines, and kept its own. The *Deutsch-Kurzhaar Verband* retained the name Derby for its test of hunting aptitude, a spring test on paired Hungarian partridge. In the Derby, exquisite field manners are valued and a rabbit track may be judged but is not required. The first *Derby-Deutsch-Kurzhaar* was held in 1893 and this name and approach has survived to today. A second test, evaluates aptitude combined with training, similar to the HZP model. This test is known as the *Solms*, so named in honor of Prince Albrecht of Solms.

The attraction of the German system is so strong that some breed clubs now have chapters abroad, such as the *Verein Deutsch Drahthaar* (VDD Gruppe Canada, VDD Gruppe USA). The *Deutsch-Kurzhaar Verband* also has North American chapters, which were initially the *Klub Deutsch-Kurzhaar-USA*, starting in 1988. In 1995, the DKV affiliation was given to a new club, the North American Deutsch Kurzhaar Club (NADKC) along within the rights to German pedigrees. Both clubs still exist today.

Furthermore, to facilitate collaboration, several breed clubs have formed a world-wide association, namely the German Shorthair and German Wirehair clubs, and most recently the Small Munsterlander clubs. The future challenge will be how to blend the German system, excellent as it is, with the hunting practices abroad, particularly as these are themselves evolving under ecological and cultural pressures.

The recent successes of the JGHV and its many members are clearly due to diverse and numerous factors, indeed a German culture for goal orientation and orderly development itself. Among these must rank two main features, a critically constructive breed club management, and legal structure.

The field-testing system that began over a century ago was designed with hunting practice in mind and it was objectively executed. In the latter half of the 1900s, the JGHV instituted new services that proved to be attractive and unifying. Although splinter breed clubs developed here and there, membership in JGHV proved indispensable and had a major unifying function. As elsewhere, the German breed clubs struggled with personalities and small-p politics, but these differences were sorted out through effective JGHV leadership. The JGHV initiated a research partnerships with German universities, a regular seminar series for education and information sharing, and public education. The JGHV also represented and vigorously defended hunter-breeder interests at a national level, including animal care issues and national/international dog matters.

Destructive club divisions and disorientation, which have greatly limited the potential impact of many North American breed clubs, could be avoided also through the legal structures in which breed clubs were anchored. This brought with it a degree of responsibility toward democratic operation, professionalism and critically objective club behavior and reporting.

Breed clubs and the JGHV are ‘legally registered’ as indicated by the postscript “e.V.’ or *eingetragener Verein*. More importantly, however, the use of a dog in hunting is mentioned in many statutes that regulate hunting itself (Uhde 1999). For several types of hunting, a proven hunting dog must be present by law. This enabling legislation has been enormously important.

Two phrases that, judging from their frequent repetition, have deeply influenced the development of German hunting breeds are “There can be no ethical hunting (*waidgerecht*) without a capable hunting dog,” and “Form follows function.” Developing breeds for sport has been consistently avoided. The law, and the policies flowing from it, are cognizant of the need to enable goal-oriented breed management. They recognize the need to ensure that capable hunting dogs are available to the German hunter now and in the future. The policies also recognize that this can be best achieved by encouraging hunters breeding for hunters, and through the maintenance of different breeds that offer a choice to the hunter.

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