



Bedlington Terrier Gazette Column for November, 2007

A Living Art Form Part III

This is the third and final installment of our discussion of color and pigmentation in the Bedlington Terrier as described by our breed standard and interpreted by our Judges' Education Chairman, Kristine Mullen. Our designated "Breeder of Distinction" have been invited to comment on the subject for these columns. The parent club's awards policy defines a Breeder of Distinction as those members in good standing who have bred and/or owned 20 or more Bedlington Terrier Champions, established by providing evidence of AKC titles to the Awards Chairman. All of these persons have had 20 or more years of experience with the Bedlington Terrier.

Carol Rappaport, STARCASTLE BEDLINGTONS, is our youngest Breeder of Distinction. She retains the record of being the breed's top Junior Handler and actively participated in the breeding program developed by her parents, Norman and Nancy Rappaport. In terms of color designation, Carol comments that most fanciers today, including Judges, have little knowledge of bi-colors or how to spot them. Carol comments as well, that if a liver dog appears to be washed out in color, it is sometimes misidentified as Sandy, which is not necessarily the case. Carol hopes that fledgling breeders will take the time to learn how to identify the colors accurately.

Carol comments that most of the Bedlingtons exhibited today are washed out looking, or if not, quite obviously artificially colored. She feels that some fanciers have overlooked the issue of color and pigmentation in our breed for a long time. It has reached the point, Carol states, that exhibitors and Judges expect our dogs to be "white" and that dogs with color are questioned or faulted. Obviously, this is contrary to the breed standard. Carol feels that if color is lost in the process of breeding sounder, healthier dogs we must continue to strive to restore our dog's pigmentation.

Dr. Dennis Corash, BONNYBROOK BEDLINGTONS sends the following comments: "In watching this breed for over fifty years, I can honestly say that color has not changed much over the years, and neither has the discussion for that matter. Our breed varies and changes throughout their lives in terms of coat color. Fanciers place far more emphasis on color in their discussions than does the Bedlington breed standard. Breeders need to be

producing dogs with intense pigmentation with light topnots. It grows most tiresome to see artificial color added onto our dogs for the show ring. One must remember that leg coat need NOT be lighter than the body coat.”

Dr. Kristin Corash, Dennis’ wife adds: “Pigment is the skin color throughout the body. It is often best noted on the eye rims and the lips. Blues and Livers should have deeply colored pigment, Sandies have intense color but a lighter shade than Liver colored Bedlingtons. In a discussion of color and pigment, Judges must not confuse the white blaze on the chest that is very noticeable on many Bedlingtons, as a lack of pigment and penalize it. This is not what the breed standard is referring to by stating, ‘Darker body pigmentation in all colors is to be encouraged.’”

Your columnist is a Breeder of Distinction as well, and it is most gratifying that my colleagues seem to be so consistent in prioritizing the issue of color and pigmentation, so that health and soundness are not sacrificed in our breed. Universal pet peeve of these breeders seems to be artificial coloring of our show dogs, and color given a value above conformation quality. They have spoken about our living art forms that we call the Bedlington Terrier and it has been most enlightening.

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