

Fanciers can check the AKC Canine Health Foundation and the Morris Animal Foundation to see what research studies are being conducted. You can also check with your state vet school to see what clinical trials are being done. Perhaps your corgi can serve as a control in a study.

If we aren't going to help researchers, then who will?

—Lynda McKee,
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Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America website: pwcca.org

Polish Lowland Sheepdogs

The following was written by Russ Tesarz.

Temperament

Possibly the most important attribute of any dog in today's world is to have a temperament that allows him to be a good citizen. Depending on the breed, the work involved in shaping or developing a canine's temperament can vary from very easy to very difficult. The Polish Lowland Sheepdog, or PON, requires some work in this regard.

Let's examine what the standard has to say about temperament. In the section on "General Appearance," the standard says, "His herding and working ability are due to an intense desire to please and compatible nature. He is lively but self-controlled, clever and perceptive, and well known for an excellent memory."

Under the section on "Temperament," the standard continues:

"He is stable and self confident. He needs a dominant master and consistent training from the time he is very young. If this is not provided, he will tend to dominate the master. When not used as a herding or working dog, he can be a magnificent companion, as he seems to fit into any type of lifestyle. He is extremely loyal, but somewhat aloof and suspicious of strangers."

The PON is a working breed and an independent thinker who was sometimes required to do his job without direct interaction with his owner. In

many situations, without being given direction a PON will use his mental abilities to solve problems on his own. Unfortunately, in today's world such solutions may not always be acceptable.

It is very important for the owner to establish dominance in a fair and consistent manner so that the dog does not get too creative on his own. It must be clear to him where he fits into the family dynamic. A PON should be subordinate to all human beings in the household. This means that he should be shown in a clear and simple manner what is expected of him. In addition, it must be understood by all family members that consistency is required in order for the dog to live up to those expectations.

Socialization may be the single most important training tool in raising a well-adjusted PON. The breeder has begun this process with frequent interaction with the pups as a group and individually.

Once in his new home, continued exposure of the pup to new environments, situations, and people is crucial to healthy development into adulthood. Socialization is an ongoing process that must be started at an early age, and the best results occur when the dog is continually exposed throughout his life.

A common mistake made by new owners is the belief that because the dog behaves very well with the family, he will automatically behave this way with strangers. Due to his very nature, the PON is loyal to his family as the providers of his needs and because of their familiarity.

Likewise due to his nature, however, he is aloof and wary with strangers, a necessary requirement in a herding or working dog.

Good breeders understand the temperament of their PON as described in the standard.

They also realize that there is a spectrum of temperament in describing individual dogs. It is the important responsibility of new owners to do their homework on the breed and question the breeder on the specifics of the parents and pups. —R.T.

American Polish Lowland Sheepdog Club website: aponc.org

Pulik The Things That Matter

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter. —Martin Luther King

When I read the words above, it made me think about how breeders affect breed type and how changes introduced today can have a profound effect on the breed in the future. Having been active in Pulik since the early 1970s, I have seen many changes over the years.

Many are positive changes that have brought us closer to the ideals defined in the breed standard. The unique Puli coat is much more uniform today. We rarely see the silky, straight, open coats of the '70s. Most Puli coats today have good texture, with the proper double coat, and are generally clean and well groomed. We've come a long way from those early days when we struggled to find a method of keeping them clean and fresh for long weekends at dog shows. Most people today have clever ways to tie up the cords and wrap the dogs' bodies to keep them clean for these weekends. Fanciers have become quite skilled at grooming their Pulik to show them to advantage and minimize faults. Dogs suspected of having color enhancement of their coats are generally few and far between today.

Pulik today are also structurally sounder than those of 30-plus years ago. Breeders today pay more attention to the medical testing available, and we've made great strides in minimizing luxating patellas and hip dysplasia in the breed. Today a Puli can fly around the show ring with great speed and showmanship. Temperaments are also much improved, and our dogs today are well socialized and accepting of new people and different situations.

You might ask, "So what's the downside?"

The Puli standard starts out with the description *Sensibly suspicious of strangers.*

A dog content to stay in the field with his flock of sheep should never be willing to jump into a car with the first stranger that comes by. While we want our dogs to be in control in all situations, we need to remember the inherent traits the Puli was bred for.

We want our breed to be able to cover ground efficiently and to move soundly and effortlessly. However, we also call for a square dog with a short loin. We need to avoid adding that extra length to the dog to allow him to stand over more ground and cover more ground when moving. It may be flashy and showy, but these are not traits called for in the standard.

Breeders must pay strict attention to the characteristics defined in the standard. We shouldn't allow ourselves to forget the breed's original function, and we should always strive for deeper understanding of why certain characteristics were called for in the first place.

Changes that we allow to creep in can have long and lasting affect on the breed and can alter those very qualities that many have tried so hard to retain and perfect. If we remain silent about changes we see that deviate from the standard, it could well mean the beginning of the end of the breed as we know it. The Puli is a breed with a small gene pool, and each litter that we have and puppy we produce can impact the future.

—Sherry Gibson

Puli Club of America website: puli-club.org

Pyrenean Shepherds Tracking With Puppies

My experiences in doing tracking with puppies—Pyrenean Shepherds, Great Pyrenees, and a Basset Hound—have been such a source of bonding with each new canine companion that tracking now is a part of my initial training for every puppy.

The Pyrenean Shepherds who live with me earned their Tracking Dog titles at 9 and 10 months; the Great Pyrenees earned theirs at 8 and 10 months; and the Basset Hound earned

his at 9 months. Other breeds I've helped train to track as pups include Rhodesian Ridgebacks, an Australian Cattle Dog, a Bearded Collie, a standard Poodle, and a Bull Terrier. Every single one has loved the sport.

When I first started tracking with puppies, I trained on grass. The little fellows would toddle through grass stems as high as their knees to find their treats, as happy as could be. (Except for one; more about her later.) Now I start pups as well as older dogs on asphalt, so they trot through a parking lot enthusiastically searching for their tidbits.

They're born with those great noses: All we do is ask them to follow a particular scent. They get rewarded with food for staying on top of that smell. There is no punishment associated with learning to track this way. If they get off the track, they simply don't find the food. Being hungry little opportunists, they quickly learn to stick with the smell that produces the goodies.

That makes the experience hugely positive for the puppies, except that one—my Great Pyrenees girl—had very little appetite as a pup. Food on the track was no reward for her at all. A good friend and I were training together, so we experimented with hiding from our puppies. We each handled the other's pup at first, and then we asked our husbands to hide from the little guys and handled our own youngsters. We branched out to other trackers from there, and our pups loved tracking as much as the food-motivated ones. It worked well, but food is simpler for most handlers.

Because scent work is such a natural activity even for very young dogs, they learn to work cooperatively with their humans in the least stressful way possible.

Watching the puppies enjoy their first teamwork with such ease has convinced me that tracking can begin to pave the way for other, more demanding training when the pup's age is still counted in weeks.

—Kathleen Monje,
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Pyrenean Shepherd Club of America website: pyrshepclub.com

Shetland Sheepdogs Tips for Finding a Lost Sheltie

Darla Duffey and her husband, Ernest, began breeding and showing Shelties under the Fayr Wynds prefix in 1984. A year later, they founded the Jacksonville (Florida) Sheltie Rescue (JSR). But when one of the first rescue dogs they placed got away from his new owners, Darla was plunged into what has since become her real passion: helping people find lost Shelties. Over the past 20-plus years, she's become the go-to person when someone needs help recovering a lost Sheltie. She's traveled far and wide helping people track lost dogs and teaching others how to organize successful searches. She also maintains a page of search tips on the JSR website, jacksonvillesheltierescue.org/page8.htm.

Searching for any lost dog can be a grueling and stressful experience but, says Darla, lost Shelties may be the hardest dogs to recover, because they typically go into "flight mode" immediately.

It may be hard to conceive of your loving and obedient Sheltie not coming when you call, but this is normal behavior for a lost Sheltie.

"Shelties don't typically approach strangers readily anyway," she notes, "and for a Sheltie in flight mode, *everyone* is a stranger. When he spots a human or another dog, he bolts; he doesn't wait around to see if it's someone he knows. The only way you are likely to get the dog at this point is if he happens to run into a yard and gets cornered, or if he goes into a trap."

A lost Sheltie often spends his first few days hiding out, Darla says. While this means the dog may not be spotted right away, it also gives searchers a small window of opportunity to get the word out, because the dog is likely to be hiding in the same general area where he went missing. It may take several days for him to feel comfortable

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Table of Contents

AKC News

2 President's Letter • 3 Updates • 7 Times Past • 8 Dog People • 41 Secretary's Pages

BREED COLUMNS

Toys

- 9 Affenpinschers
- 10 Brussels Griffons
- 10 Cavalier King Charles Spaniels
- 11 Chinese Cresteds
- 11 Chihuahuas
- 12 English Toy Spaniels
- 12 Havanese
- 13 Italian Greyhounds
- 14 Japanese Chin
- 14 Maltese
- 15 Miniature Pinschers
- 16 Papillons
- 16 Pekingese
- 16 Pugs
- 17 Shih Tzu
- 17 Silky Terriers
- 18 Toy Fox Terriers
- 18 Yorkshire Terriers

Non-Sporting

- 19 American Eskimo Dogs
- 19 Boston Terriers
- 20 Bulldogs
- 20 Chinese Shar-Pei
- 21 Chow Chows
- 22 Dalmatians
- 22 Finnish Spitz
- 23 French Bulldogs
- 23 Keeshonden
- 24 Lhasa Apsos
- 24 Löwchen
- 25 Schipperkes
- 25 Shiba Inu
- 26 Tibetan Spaniels
- 27 Tibetan Terriers

Herding

- 27 Australian Cattle Dogs
- 28 Australian Shepherds
- 29 Bearded Collies
- 29 Beaucerons
- 29 Belgian Malinois
- 30 Belgian Sheepdogs
- 31 Belgian Tervuren
- 31 Border Collies
- 32 Bouviers des Flandres
- 32 Briards
- 33 Canaan Dogs
- 34 Cardigan Welsh Corgis
- 34 Collies
- 35 Entlebucher Mountain Dogs
- 35 German Shepherd Dogs
- 36 Norwegian Buhunds
- 36 Old English Sheepdogs
- 37 Pembroke Welsh Corgis
- 38 Polish Lowland Sheepdogs
- 38 Puli
- 39 Pyrenean Shepherds
- 39 Shetland Sheepdogs
- 40 Swedish Vallhunds

* Links to AKC Parent Clubs appear following Secretary's Pages *

BREED COLUMNS SCHEDULE

Sporting and Working
January, April, July, and October

Hound and Terrier
February, May, August, and November

Toy, Non-Sporting, and Herding
March, June, September, and December