

My job: Carefully study every application and determine if each applicant has enough breed type to be sent through to the membership for their review and voting.

Criteria:

1/ Breed type

2/ Phenotype

3/ Provenance: Historical, historical presumptions

4/ Application process: evaluations, health testing

5/ Breeder interest

6/ Membership Inclusion

Criteria key points:

1/ Breed type: The definition of breed type in relations to a land race can not be dependent on whether or not they immediately breed true due to the expected variability of type found in the native source population and the inability to breed multiple generations as our founders did, producing well over 100 puppies between 1936-1941 while culling non-conforming (to them) specimens, before accepting the first breed standard in 1942.

Breed type can not be defined as "Is this a dog I would breed to?" There are domestic Champions I would never use in my breeding program but they are no less a basenji because of it nor does it mean they are not on someone else's breeding radar screen.

Expecting native stock to look like show stock, much less produce like show stock, within the first generation(s) is unrealistic.

2/ Phenotype: Do the 2012 applicants have atypical variations? Is there anything in their phenotype which has not been seen in the domestic population? Is there anything in their offspring which has not been seen in the domestic population?

Historically domestic populations have produced too little white, too much white, odd colors (saddles, sables, piebalds, pintos, creams, dilutes), loopy/sickle tails, low set tails, longer coats, shorter legs, long backs, soft toplines, large ears, cathedral fronts, shelly ribcages, barrel chests, flat feet, round eyes, light eyes, etc.

There is no genetic test available to prove or disprove breed purity; just like the founders, one can only presume purity due to their phenotype and should be judged accordingly.

Breed type variation is important for genetic diversity - the primary goal of importing native stock.

The less tolerant we become of variation, the more our gene pool is reduced for future generations.

3/ Provenance: Presumption has been the basenji only originates and exists in a small geographical area despite vast tracts of Africa in which no one has specifically travelled while looking for basenjjs - until the early 21st century when first Veronica Tudor-Williams, then Jon Curby, Michael Work and Damara Bolte, went looking for, and found, basenjjs in other regions.

We have descriptions of basenji-type dogs throughout Africa from Western explorers/travelers such as Schweinfurth (1868-1871), Hamilton (1882), Cleote (1950) to individuals with a particular interest in the basenji such as O. Burn (Congo), VTW (Sudan) and Standifer (Liberia); I currently have on my computer a 2011 photograph of native Ethiopian children, amidst a pack

of basenjis. Historically the basenji has ranged and/or been depicted in wall paintings from as far West as Liberia, as far North as Egypt, to Sudan, which is North and East of the present day DRC, as late as the 1960s; there is no reason to presume 1) the population of basenjis has shrunk to a relatively small region of the DRC, nor 2) to presume they have not.

European dogs have historically traveled with their masters throughout Africa for hundreds of years, long before the western basenji was developed; all original founders were selected for by their phenotype; therefore all current native stock should be equally judged.

4/ Application process: Evaluations: The current process was designed to allow multiple evaluators hands on experience of the imports. Photos can make a nice dog look bad or a bad dog look nice, making the hands on observations and evaluations critical; it makes no sense to disregard such experienced evaluations and opinions and not allow any applicant which receives an average score of fair or higher to be seen and voted on by the membership.

For me, breeder judges and/or long time breeders carry more weight than all breed judges, with those who have lived closely with and/ or bred to higher percent Africans carrying the most weight due to their understanding of the whole native dog.

Health testing: Health issues can impact the breed much more negatively long term than adding a dog presumed, but not proven, to be impure. I am a firm believer that all native stock be tested to the fullest, if not at the time of the application, then before being bred, once approved. Having full health testing and disclosure is a must in foundation stock and while I would not stop a stellar application from proceeding to the membership based on inferior testing, I look more favorably on those applicants who have spent their time and money to do more testing prior to being accepted for registration.

5/ Breeder Interest: As with domestic populations, a breeder has the choice to use or not use a dog in their breeding program. If any native dog does not produce well, or worse, produces atypical traits (to mean traits not found in the source population or domestic population) they will not be well received by the fancy, will not be used and will eventually become extinct within the breed.

It is far better for the breed long term to have breeders breeding for variation.

6/ Membership Inclusion: One of the biggest issues in the 1990 acceptance process was membership complaints regarding the Board having all the power in who was accepted leaving the membership with no voice in the matter.

The Native Stock committee took membership concerns seriously and designed a process to have three independent and experienced evaluators (an all breed judge approved to judge the breed, a breeder judge and a long term breeder (greater than 15 years)) vet the applicants up close and personal, to be our hands, eyes and ears if you will; all evaluations which averaged fair or above would then be presented to the BCOA Board, and would then move forward to membership voting.

Not allowing an applicant, which has passed such a stringent process, to move into the hands of the membership implies the Board has little faith in the membership's ability to make informed and intelligent choices, leaving the Board to make my decision for me. Conclusion:

None of the breed variations found in the applicants or their offspring suggest they lack sufficient breed type. After careful consideration and long deliberations, based on the above criteria, I approve the following ballots/imports to be put forward to the BCOA membership for their final review and voting.),