

THE JEAN DILLS SYSTEM OF EVALUATING PUPPIES



First published in *SBQ* in July 1995 as part of a “Meet The Breeder” interview, Mrs. Dills’ system of evaluating a puppy has been widely used and, over time, adjusted by many breeders to generally prove accurate within their own programs. We felt it was worth publishing again in March 2001 and because we like it so much, here it is once again. She says:

“I like to emphasize that this system worked well for my own line. Other lines may show variation, so breeders

should keep records on their own line and perhaps adjust the parameters accordingly.

Once a puppy “measured in” to my specifications, we would evaluate other things such as ear, eye, tail set, angulation, temperament, etc.. In the next few months, the puppy would probably look like one thing one week and another the next, but if the proportions were correct at 6 1/2 weeks, they would be right at one year.”

Jean Dills is a well respected former breeder and owner of the well known Pickadilly Beagles, best remembered from the 60’s and 70’s. She is an AKC judge and resides in Arlington, Washington.

Create a chart by numbering down the page with the following items. Then go across the top of the page with the names of the puppies. Insert their measurements on the appropriate lines.

Measurements should be taken at 6 1/2 weeks of age.

1. PASTERN

Circumference of the pastern joint must exceed 3”.

2. HOCK

Length of hock from the top of joint to the table must be less than 3”.

3. SECOND THIGH

Length from the top of the hock joint to the stifle (knee/patella) should measure at least as long as the hock or the pup will be deficient in rear angulation. In a 15” puppy, a half inch greater difference is not too much.

4. BACK

Length from withers (top of scapulae) to base of tail (tail set) should not measure more than height at withers, and preferably less in a dog puppy.

5. FORELEG

Length from point of elbow to the table

(measuring at back of leg) should be less than half of height at this age.

6. MUZZLE

Circumference of the muzzle around the middle and the length of muzzle from stop to end of nose must be less than 1 1/2” in length and at least 6 1/2” around in a dog puppy. Markings can be very deceiving. If the puppy has the classic white muzzle and

blaze it is easy to overlook a future snipey muzzle unless you measure.

7. NECK

The length of the extended neck from the back of occiput to withers should be a minimum of 3”.

8. CHEST

Circumference of body directly behind the forelegs will vary somewhat with how fat the puppy is. 13” to 13 1/2” is about right for a 6 pound puppy.

9. HEIGHT

Measure height at the highest point of the withers standing in a natural position with forelegs perpendicular to the floor. 7 1/2” is the top limit for a future 15” dog. Pups measuring under 6 1/2” usually stay 13”.

10. WEIGHT

Puppies should be about 6 to 6 1/2 pounds if they are 7” to 7 1/2” tall.

NOTE: Since the purpose of the system is to evaluate balance, substance and proportion, measurements desired should be adjusted proportionately for a very small puppy. Overall size will affect the exact measurements desired.

Copyright 2007 and in perpetuity by Show Beagle Quarterly. No part may be reproduced without permission.

