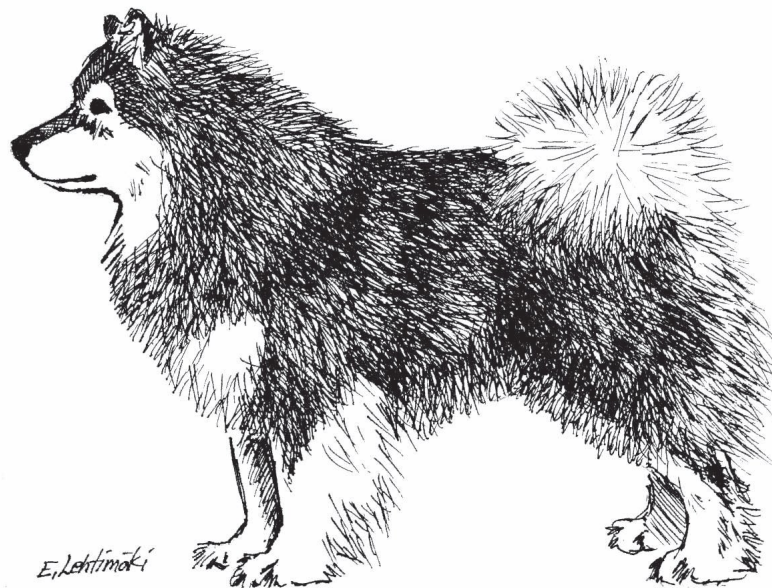


# FINNISH LAPPHUND

- breed standard
- judge's guide



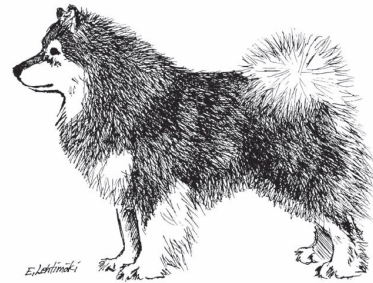
## **FINNISH LAPPHUND**

### **the Breed Standard & How to Interpret It**

the Lapphund Club of Finland

Lappalaiskoirat ry

Lapplands Hundar rf



## **FOREWORD**

The breed standard of the Finnish Lapphund has been intentionally kept somewhat open. Minor details have never played an important part in the show rings or breeding programmes, let alone when choosing a 'friend for life'. Therefore, although the type has become so established that in most cases individual dogs are easily identified as Finnish Lapphunds, there is still a great deal of variation within the breed and that is the beauty of the Finnish Lapphund.

Often, a breed standard only provides a description of a breed's anatomy, and that is also the case with that of the Finnish Lapphund - that 'certain something' that makes a Finnish Lapphund a Finnish Lapphund remains unclear. This booklet was compiled in order to guide conformation judges and breeders in the right direction. Anyone who reads this should create a mental picture of the type and correct Finnish Lapphund in their mind, as well as pay attention to those fundamental features that make a Finnish Lapphund look like a typical representative of the breed, yet allowing variety.

There are many lovely, almost perfect Finnish Lapphunds that, however, clearly are individuals when it comes to temperament and appearance. The beauty of the breed is in its uniqueness there are no two Finnish Lapphunds that are exactly alike, and this is the way it should be in the future, too.

## **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

The general appearance is the most essential section of the standard. The cynological type, proportions, and the overall picture are described in that section. Furthermore, the general appearance should be the deciding factor when a judge places a dog at a show. Even an excellent specimen of the breed may have minor faults when it comes to details, but it is the general appearance that should immediately reveal a dog's breed and gender, as well as indicate type at first glance. At the same time, the general appearance also is the most difficult feature to judge - a typey appearance cannot be fully described in words, it is just something that one has to learn to recognise.

So, the general appearance is of utmost importance in judging. In the show ring there often are dogs that admittedly are 'long-haired spitz' but not Finnish Lapphunds. Abundant coat and upright carriage together with a good enough construction can easily fool a judge into placing a dog well, even though the dog is missing that 'certain something' that makes a Finnish Lapphund a Finnish Lapphund.

There are Finnish Lapphunds that resemble Eurasiers, coloured Samoyeds, or an 'average spitz' in general. It is only the breed-specific appearance and expression, correct proportions and movement, as well as correct coat that make a Finnish Lapphund.

With respect to its size, the Finnish Lapphund is strongly built, and, what is more, the impression of strongness is accentuated by an abundant, thick, erect coat. The lavish furnishings make the head and limbs in particular appear considerably stronger than they are in reality. Furthermore, the coat makes the body look both broader and deeper – in other words rounder. Therefore it is always necessary to feel the dog manually in the show ring.

Proportions, too, can be distorted because of the coat. A heavily coated dog can easily appear low-legged. The especially abundant and long hair on the chest, and in the rear in particular make a dog appear longer than it really is. It requires a lot of practice before one is able to see the dog itself underneath the coat.

Despite the strongness, the Finnish Lapphund should express certain softness. It should never create a picture of a sharp and snappish dog. The Finnish Lapphund essence and appearance must create an image of a serene dog that has respect for people. A typical disposition is seen in a dog's carriage, tail set, movement, and expression. This humility and submissiveness is particularly characteristic of bitches.

## **PROPORTIONS**

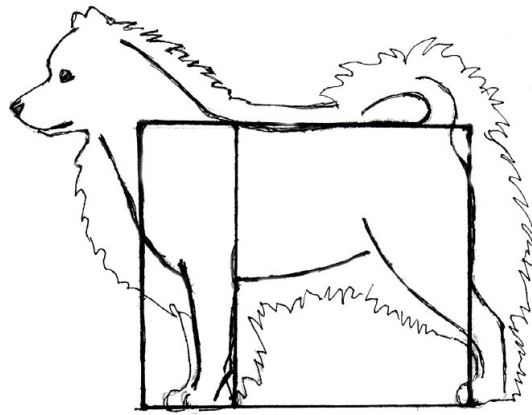
When it comes to proportions, the Finnish Lapphund is slightly longer than tall - this means by no means square proportions! Compared to many other spitz breeds, the Finnish Lapphund has a lower carriage, and it is not as alert in the show ring. These factors, combined with the abundant coat and the fact that bitches in particular tend to keep their tails down, contribute to the fact that the Finnish Lapphund acceptably, in fact desirably, appears long-bodied and low-legged rather than short-bodied and high-legged.

Whereas the Lapponian Herder represents pure trotting type, the Finnish Lapphund is a mixture of different cynological types.

Both the Finnish Lapphund and Lapponian Herder descend from the varied canine population of Lapland; the Finnish Lapphund originates from dogs that were used at the time when the reindeer were kept under constant supervision. The dogs' task was mostly to guard and keep the flock together. Later on, when the reindeer no longer were under 24-hour supervision but instead wandered around freely, it was necessary to have a dog that was able to run long distances and gather up the flock. The Lapponian Herder type was better suited for the task than the Finnish Lapphund, as more stamina was needed.

This is why the Finnish Lapphund is slightly less angulated and has a shorter body than the Lapponian Herder. However, the Finnish Lapphund still possesses features that are characteristic of a hardy dog; those characteristics were vital as the working days were long and hard.

Considering the two breeds' similar backgrounds and the several common ancestors, Lapponian Herder-like features in a Finnish Lapphund should not be regarded as major a fault as features referring to some other breeds.



*An example of correct proportions and sound construction*

**DOGS that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance**



*Very good head and bone, and even though the tail set is rather loose, it does not disturb the excellent general outline.*



*Excellent dog in general outline, though the upper arm is slightly short and upright.*



*Tipped ears, excellent type, pay attention to his very breed-typical appearance.*



*Strong male, though he should have a stronger head.*



*Very promising youngster, not in full coat yet.*



*Strong bone, excellent dog in general. Extremely good head and expression.*

**BITCHES that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance**



*Very beautiful bitch with an excellent feminine appearance.*



*Strong body, good head.*



*Strong in bone and head, still not too masculine.*



*Beautiful bitch, not too long in body, though not even a bitch should be any longer than this.*



*Well angulated, strong in bone, not in full coat.*



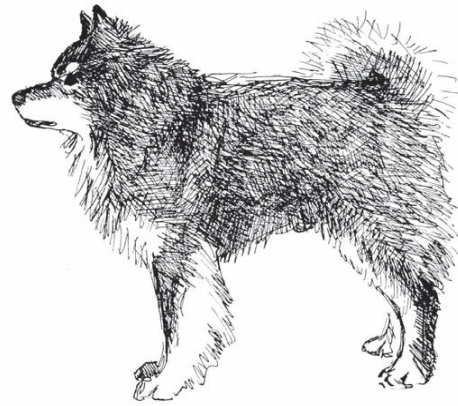
*Young bitch, very beautiful expression.*

**Finnish Lapphunds displaying faulty general appearance**



Picture 1: Short and light

Short in body, light bone and head.  
Lacks angulation, too little coat.



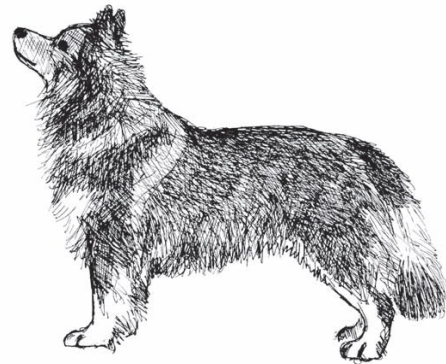
Picture 2: High-legged

Too high in leg and hock.



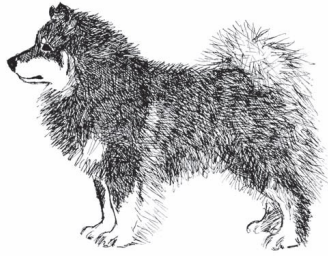
Picture 3: Heavy

Way too heavy and low-legged.

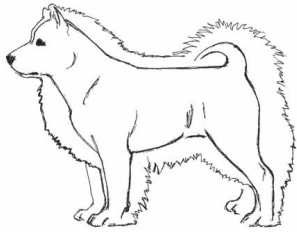


Picture 4: Long

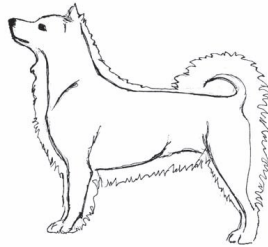
Too long in body and low in leg. Upper  
arm positioned too far in front and too  
upright.



These illustrations demonstrate how the coat makes the body appear longer. What the body length consists of is more important than the relation of the height and length: in Picture 1 the body length consists of a strong front and rear as well as a relatively short back, whereas In Picture 2 it consists of a weak front and rear combined with a long back and loin.



*Picture 1*



*Picture 2*

## **HEAD**

Head features should be strong, yet the expression should be soft. A correct 'teddy bear-like' friendly expression is attained when the skull is broad and slightly convex, the stop is clearly defined, and the muzzle is strong, broad and shorter than the skull. The muzzle tapers only slightly towards the nose and should be 'full' and well-cushioned. The jaws should be strong and broad. Special attention must be paid on the bottom jaw: it must be sufficiently strong. The juncture between muzzle and skull must be clearly marked and the zygomatic arches rather strong. The muzzle must be straight in profile, and, furthermore, the stop must be clearly defined, forming an angle with the muzzle. The frontal furrow is clearly defined, too, and must be visible through the coat.

Ears must be set rather far apart from each other, not on the top of the head too close to each other. They should be quite small in size, triangular, broad at the base and round at the top - by no means long or pointed. Furthermore, the ears must be heavily coated, so that they are protected against the cold and mosquitoes. Large, pointed or short-coated ears are a mistake.

Semi-erect ears are equally acceptable as erect ears. Drop ears, however, are faulty, though not disqualifying. What is more, odd ears (one erect, the other semi-erect) are acceptable.

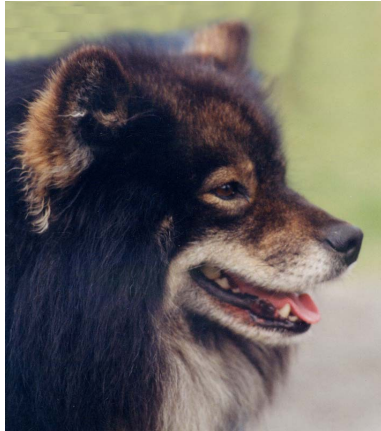
Eyes must be oval in shape and as dark as possible. Brown dogs may have lighter eyes, though not yellow. Blue eyes are disqualifying. Large round eyes occur sometimes - they are faulty.

The nose is preferably black. Brown dogs, however, always have a brown nose. Sable-coloured dogs in particular may have a light streak on the nose - it is not a mistake.



Finnish Lapphunds have a scissors bite, although a level bite is acceptable, too. A clearly overshot or undershot is a disqualifying fault. Premolars may be missing sometimes, which should always be mentioned in the written critique.

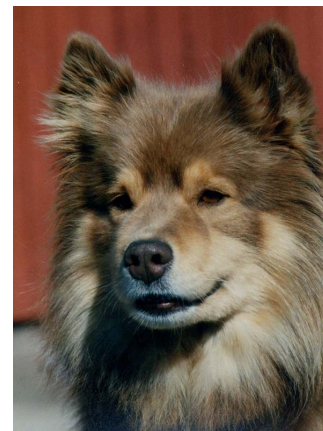
#### EXCELLENT HEADS AND EXPRESSIONS



*Excellent, strong, masculine head*



*Very good profile. Note the clearly defined stop and hairy ears.*



*Beautiful male with a soft expression. Good, well-cushioned muzzle.*



*Nice-headed young male.*



*Young male with round ears.*

**EXCELLENT HEADS AND EXPRESSIONS**



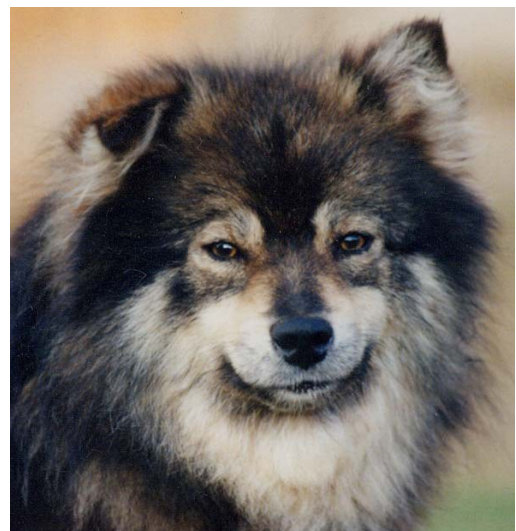
*Excellent, soft, friendly female expression.*



*Very beautiful female expression.*



*Correct tipped ears at rest.*



*Excellent feminine head. Acceptable odd ears.*

## FAULTY HEADS AND EXPRESSIONS



*Stop not clearly defined; long, thin muzzle*



*Strong head, but lacking stop and typical Finnish Lapphund expression.*



*Too large, Alsatian-like ears.*



*Drop ears; must be penalised.*

## BODY

The body is relatively sturdy, though never heavy. Withers are only slightly marked and the topline is level; by no means sloping or roached. The Finnish Lapphund often has a clearly marked anticline (dip behind the withers), and if a dog also has a lot of coat on the croup, it may create an illusion of a swayback. The loin is short, though bitches generally have a slightly longer loin than dogs. The croup is only slightly oblique, of medium length, and broad (especially on bitches). Very upright croups occur sometimes, which is why some dogs tend to keep their rear quarters underneath their body.

*This dog has a high rear end, because it has an upright croup and therefore the rear quarters are set underneath the body. Low tail set.*

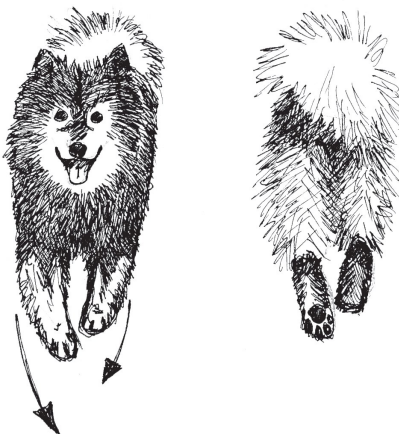


The chest is not exaggerated in any way. A broad chest resembling a barrel causes a dog to elbow out, which leads to incorrect front movement. Also, too narrow chests occur, but too broad a chest still affects a dog's action more harmfully than a slightly narrow chest. Furthermore, the chest should not be too deep either. It should almost reach the elbows, but never go below them.

## LIMBS AND MOVEMENT

Limbs are powerful and strong-boned. Judges should always feel the limbs manually, as the hair on the limbs can be surprisingly deceiving.

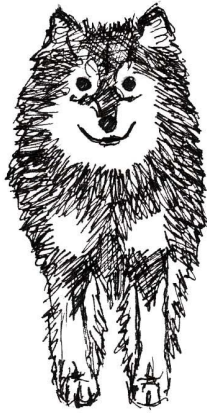
When standing, the limbs are parallel seen from the front and rear, whereas on the move ideal front action is not completely straight and parallel but instead resembles that of the wolverine. In other words, the Finnish Lapphund toes in slightly and the front quarters make an arch. The Finnish Lapphund has a tendency for single-tracking, which should not be misinterpreted as narrow movement. In addition, if the rear pasterns are heavily coated, rear movement may appear more narrow than it actually is.



*Coming: Note that front action is not completely straight and parallel.*

*Going: Note the tendency for single-tracking.*

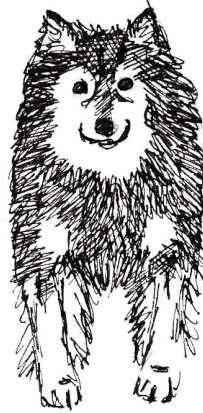
Seen from the front, the breadth of the chest is correct when there is enough room for one hand, though the size of the dog must be taken into account. Too narrow fronts occur in the breed, but there are also too broad fronts, which is why some dogs tend to elbow out on the move.



1.



2.



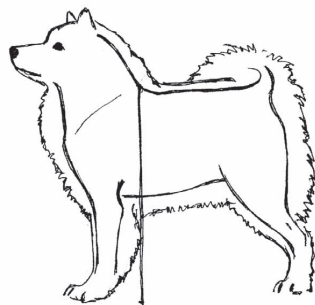
3.

1. *Correct front*
2. *Narrow chest*
3. *Broad chest*

The angulation is clearly marked, but not too strongly. Sometimes Finnish Lapphunds can be 'overangulated', however, nowadays it is more common to see dogs that have very poor, almost non-existent angulation. Especially front angulation should be paid more attention. The shoulder blade and upper arm must be equally long, and the angle that they form must be clearly marked. An often occurring mistake is a short upright upper arm, which is why the forelimbs are set too far in the front instead of being set underneath the body supporting the weight of the chest. What is more, a short upper arm leads to short and ineffective or hackneyed movement.

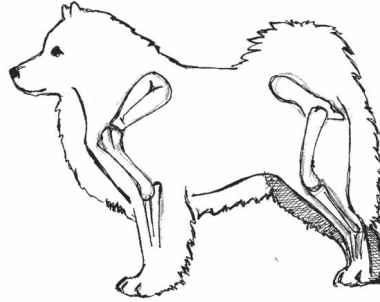
Pasterns are slightly oblique and flexible. An upright pastern cannot function properly as a 'shock absorber', and the same goes for a too much bent weak pastern.

A correctly angulated front is of utmost importance; it is the front that is strained most on the move.



*This dog has a good rear, but the upper arm is upright, which is why the forelimbs are set in front of the line going down from the withers.*

In order to achieve the proper strength on the move, a dog must have correct rear angulation - clearly marked but not exaggerated. It is a good idea to feel the hind angulation with your hands, especially on heavily-coated Finnish Lapphunds. The surprisingly long hair on the front of the thighs and on the back of the rear pasterns can be misleading (see illustration). -->



Furthermore, in order to achieve powerful, efficient movement, a dog must also have broad, muscular thighs and low hocks. There are Finnish Lapphunds with too high hocks. Seen from the rear, the pads on the hind feet must be entirely visible on the move.



*This dog has a good front, but the rear angulation is far too insufficient and the croup is too short.*

Poorly angulated, distinctly cow-hocked hind limbs are a common mistake. Such a dog moves inefficiently in the rear, and the risk for patella luxation is higher, so this fault must be penalised in the show ring.

At shows, movement is judged when the dog is trotting. The correct Finnish Lapphund movement is sound and effortless. Even though the Finnish Lapphund must be strongly built, it should never be so heavy that its movement lacks effortlessness. When you look at a Finnish Lapphund move, you should be able to imagine it working for days on end on the fells of Lapland.

When running freely, the Finnish Lapphund changes relatively easily from trot to gallop, but nevertheless it has to have a long enough step. A short-stepping dog does not possess sufficient endurance, nor is it, in all likelihood, well enough constructed in order to gallop efficiently either.



*Correct length of step*



*Short step*



*Correct side movement*

## TAIL

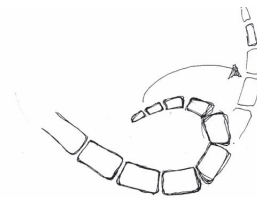
The tail is relatively high set. On the move it is curved over the back or side, whereas at rest it is often hanging down. A too tightly curved tail is not desirable on a Finnish Lapphund; instead it should be 'lively' and indicate the dog's mood, as well as balance its movement.

Especially a bitch (with a typical Finnish Lapphund temperament) is only too willing to drop her tail when standing still. If judges require that the tail be on the back at all times in the show ring, it results in favouring too dominant dogs. The tail is correctly set when you are able to bend it over the back by hand - if it is too low set, this is not possible.

If a dog is excellent in every other way, a loosely curved tail alone should not affect its judgement.

### Kinks and 'J' shaped hooks

Some Finnish Lapphunds have a 'J' shaped hook on the tip of the tail; the so-called 'herder's hook'. The tip of the tail might be curved even to a great extent, but it is always possible to straighten it by hand. A hook of this type is entirely acceptable. However, a kink, i.e. vertebrae grown together, is a disqualifying fault. A kink can appear in any part of the tail (in the spine at its worst), whereas the 'J' shaped hook is always on the tip of the tail.



'J' shaped hook: the tip of the tail is curved, but it is possible to straighten it at least to some extent.



Kink: vertebrae grown together.

## COAT

The coat is thick and profuse. The outer coat is straight and it absolutely has to be harsh so that it does not gather snow. What is more, a harsh coat does not get wet in a similar way than a soft coat; it is water-resistant. The outer coat is not shiny but instead matt. The undercoat is soft, very dense and plentiful, so that it makes the outer coat stand erect. Judges should pay attention to the undercoat to make sure that it is very profuse. The outer coat may sometimes be a bit wavy (on youngsters in particular), which is not a fault, provided that it is still harsh. Curls and soft coats do not always automatically go hand in hand; even a straight coat might be soft. A harsh, wavy coat is much better than a straight and soft one.

The outer coat should not be so long that it 'hangs'. A flat coat is faulty. The coat on the head and on the front side of the legs is clearly shorter. Male Finnish Lapphunds in particular have a distinct mane, and the limbs should be properly furnished. Furthermore, furnishings on the paws (between toes) are desirable, and shall never be trimmed. Also, the ears should be noticeably hairy.

## COLOUR

All colours are permitted, as long as the basic colour is dominant. The most usual colours are black, black and tan, brown, brown and tan, wolf sable, sable, and cream. Most Finnish Lapphunds also have white markings, but parti-colours with white as the basic colour are undesirable. What is more, brindle is not desired, nor the saddle-back colouring. These three colours must be penalised.



*Black*



*Black with spectacles*



*Black and tan*



*Brown (with or without tan marks; the nose is always brown)*



*Wolf sable*



*Cream*





*Sable*



*Sable (red; black nose)*



*This much white is still acceptable*



*Saddle-back (undesirable)*



*Black and brindle (undesirable)*



*Brindle (undesirable)*

## **SIZE**

For dogs, the ideal height at the withers is 49 cm (46 - 52 cm) and for bitches 44 cm (41 – 47 cm). The type is definitely more important than the size, and slight deviations from the heights mentioned in the standard are acceptable if the dog is typey and its sex is apparent.

## **TEMPERAMENT**

Temperament is the most essential section in the standard. A dog with a faulty construction is still a good companion, if it is good-natured.

So, what is an ideal temperament like? A Finnish Lapphund with an ideal temperament is well suited for its purpose, and is in harmony with its environment and owner.

Evaluation of the temperament is, of necessity, rather superficial in the show ring, as the time allocated to each dog is limited. The Finnish Lapphund should be calm and friendly, as well as submissive towards people. It may be a little bit distant, but never timid, although bitches may seem a little shy. Excessive sharpness and snarling are by no means acceptable features in Finnish Lapphunds, not even in males. The Finnish Lapphund should under no circumstances show any signs of aggressiveness towards people.

The need to co-operate and interact with people is characteristic of herding dogs. This can often be seen in the show ring, as many Finnish Lapphunds tend to keep contact with their handlers instead of focusing on other dogs in the ring, or outside the ring.