

The importance of maintaining the true Heritage and qualities of working breeds.

Dr Antonio Morsiani found it very important to provide the following information while participating in the breeds recovery and drafting of a breed standard. We thank him.

These days man has taken over many of the tasks once given to dogs. The Cane Corso for example rarely works with cowboys or hunts big game anymore. The St Bernard no longer needs to save victims of the snow alone, because human technical means have taken over. The northern breeds seldom pull sleds anymore and it has become the same for other breeds in other fields. Many would like to recreate conditions under which dogs could return to their original uses and be tested periodically for their functionality. Many St Bernard clubs for instance hold trials in the mountains where earlier conditions are perfectly reproduced. The same is true for many sled dogs. In a few farms of the south the Cane Corso is still working as a herding dog and more rarely hunting badgers and wild boar. The Cane Corso club should work to that end because such traditions, especially that of herding, need to be conserved, and where possible encouraged. Trials of this kind should give us directions in breeding and be extended to every working breed. With no way to test their instincts, working dogs are destined to an inevitable evolution, or at the most to the sole task of guard or defense dog. The Cane Corso for example is undoubtedly a formidable guarding or defending, but this is a far cry from the fascination of herding or hunting. Of course many working breeds have come to be used in various fields such as catastrophe, tracking, drugs, ect but this has little to do with the morphological and physiological qualities required for their original functions. Modern dogs suffer from a kind of beauty imposed by fashion, a conventional beauty. Unfortunately in English speaking countries harmonic-aesthetic-conventional beauty is preferred in dog shows. In England there are Setters with luxurious coats as large as Newfoundland's, winning at shows, these giants with heavy heads and abundant lips could never hunt. In America St Bernard's are over-angulated with a sloping croup, and they move in the ring like German Shepards, covering a lot of ground but would be useless for any work in the mountains. This direction can be found in many breeds and represents the limits of dog shows intended to be spectacles rather than zoo technical manifestations as they should be. Breeders, especially those of hunting and working dogs should react to this situation and in their breeding hold over in mind a comparison with function. The Cane Corso still has morphological and attitudinal characteristics which coincide with his antique and noble traditions. It will be the responsibility of his breeders and fans to keeping him that way without spoiling his true essence.