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# Belgian Registration Exploratory Committee Report

## Committee Members

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# Introduction

Our BSCA committee's focus was on registration options that would provide benefits to serious breeders, and most important, to the gene pools of our breeds. We expect that the proposed changes presented here will be a benefit for breeders of all breeds of Belgians, and the future of our breeds.

We tried to find a common sense way to resolve a lot of confusion on breed identity and registration in our breeds without impacting our clubs or how the breeds were currently shown within the AKC venues.

The two proposals address the realities of our breed's genetics, history, and how they are bred and registered by the rest of the world.

The first proposal would be to modify the import rule that limits imports into the US if a parent was first registered with the AKC as a different breed of Belgian, no other country's registry has the same restriction on it.

The second proposal would be to give breeders the option to register the puppies in their own litters as the Belgian breed they are born as, which is consistent with how Belgian registration is done in the rest of the world where they are one breed with varieties.

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# IMPORT RULE CHANGE

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## **Current AKC Registration policy:**

Registration of Imports (June 1995 Board meeting and February 1997 Board meeting)

It is the policy of The American Kennel Club to give full faith and credit to the certified export certificate accompanied by a complete three-generation pedigree tendered from countries with a registry on AKC's acceptable list.

If the sire or dam of an import is AKC registered, AKC registration will only be afforded to the imported offspring if the AKC breed for the AKC registered sire and/or dam is the same as the breed of the offspring. This was a result of questions pertaining to the Belgian breeds.

## **The proposed change is to eliminate the underlined portion of the import rule.**

The decision in 1997 to honor pedigrees from an approved foreign country UNLESS one of the parents was an AKC registered dog of a different variety was no doubt based on concerns about the integrity of the stud book. While this is still a valid concern, two different, but related factors may change our perspective on this decision.

First is our increased knowledge of genetics and the ability to accurately identify all imports by DNA records.

The other circumstance which has changed drastically since the 1997 decision is the degree to which we have become a global society. Virtually all the other registries in the world acknowledge the Belgian varieties as one breed. Importation of foreign dogs has drastically increased as well as the use of imported frozen semen. The following slides highlight issues with the current rule.

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Dam is a Czech  
Belgian Shepherd Tervuren



Sire is a French Belgian  
Shepherd Groenendael



Their offspring is a Belgian  
Shepherd Groenendael  
Born in CZ, imported into  
the US

Registered by the AKC  
as a Belgian Sheepdog



Dam is a Norwegian Belgian Shepherd Groenendael



Sire is an Irish Belgian Shepherd Groenendael



Offspring is a Belgian Shepherd Tervuren  
Born in Norway, imported into the US

Registered by the AKC as a Belgian Tervuren



Dam is an AKC Belgian Sheepdog exported to CZ from the US. Registered in CZ as a Belgian Shepherd Tervuren



Sire is a CZ born Belgian Shepherd Tervuren



Offspring is registered in CZ as a Belgian Shepherd Tervuren

He can NOT be AKC registered as his dam is an AKC registered Belgian Sheepdog

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# LITTER REGISTRATION RULES

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- Currently the AKC registers puppies according to the AKC registration status of the parents.
  - Due to Belgian breed genetics and how the Belgians are registered in the rest of the world it is possible to have Tervuren puppies born to two Belgian Sheepdog parents. These puppies, which look like Belgian Tervuren, are registered as AKC Belgian Sheepdogs. In virtually all other countries they would be considered Belgian Shepherds of the Tervuren variety.
  - In the US Tervuren from two Sheepdogs can be shown in AKC performance events or UKC conformation shows. Some of the top show quality Tervuren offspring from well connected breeders are exported outside the US where they may be registered, shown and bred as the variety they are. However with the current import rule their offspring can not come back into the US, thus lost to US breeders.
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Sire: French Belgian  
Shepherd Groenendael



Dam: AKC  
Belgian Sheepdog



Offspring: AKC Belgian Sheepdog



Offspring: AKC Belgian Sheepdog

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# LITTER REGISTRATION RULES

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## **Background**

As mentioned above the rest of the world recognizes the Belgian breed as one breed with varieties, Belgian Shepherds with four varieties. All other countries register Belgian puppies as the variety they phenotypically resemble.

Our proposed change recognizes the reality of the Belgian breed's genetics, history and how they are registered by the rest of the world.

Tremendous changes have been made in the field of genetics. The completion of genome mapping for canines has provided DNA-based evidence about the ancestry and relationships of various breeds and canid species. Prior to this information becoming available, theories were based on physical attributes and beliefs about areas of origin, not concrete data. We now know based on multiple studies of Belgian shepherd dogs, that this group is genetically more consistent with varieties, than they are with separate breeds.

Genetic research is also generating increasing concern about drastically shrinking gene pools and concurrent increasing homozygosity which is believed to contribute to the incidence of breed-related health problems.

Our proposal would have the following impact:

- Increase diversity in the Belgian breed's gene pools.
  - It would increase in the number of Belgian offspring that could be shown at AKC events, attain titles, and be bred in the US rather than be shown at UKC events, exported to other countries, or be sold on limited registration as pets or performance dogs.
  - It would bring AKC registration policy in closer alignment to FCI and other registries.
  - There would be no change to current AKC Belgian clubs
  - There would be no change on how the Belgian breeds are shown and bred in the US.
  - There would be no change in how they are represented in the group ring.
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# IMPACT ON OTHER BELGIAN BREEDS

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- The Belgian Tervuren would have the greatest benefit with regard to enlarging gene-pool. They could breed to a Belgian Tervuren from two Belgian Malinois and bring in a significantly different pedigree (next slide) or breed to a Belgian Tervuren from two Belgian Sheepdogs and bring in lines that maybe significantly different from lines currently available.
  - The Belgian Malinois breeders could accurately register their longhair puppies and place them in show homes to be shown and bred here in the US. Malinois can also produce wire haired offspring which could be registered as Belgian Laekenois, this would open up possibilities for the Belgian Laekenois gene pool.
  - The Belgian Laekenois have a very limited gene pool both in the US and abroad, they could utilize wire haired puppies from Belgian Malinois to expand their gene pool.
  - Reference: <http://bsca.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015Coat-colour-inheritance.pdf>
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Sire: French Belgian Shepherd Malinois



Offspring: French Belgian Shepherd Tervuren  
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Dam: French Belgian Shepherd Malinois



Bred to a Czech Belgian Tervuren female very typical Tervuren were produced, both of those pictured earned championships.

A very significant outcross.



Czech Belgian Shepherd Tervuren



Czech Belgian Shepherd Tervuren