

The Official Standard for a breed is a document which describes the ideal conformation and appearance of that breed. AKC official breed standards are written by the parent breed clubs as guides for breeders to select outstanding specimens of their particular breed in order to improve breeding stock and/or performance. New owners can also benefit from knowledge of the breed standard in evaluating their selection of a dog. AKC judges rely on breed standards in the judging process and seek to find specimens that most closely conform to the standard. The standards are published by the AKC and are the basis for breed education at all levels, novice to expert.

Standards, generally, are based on the principle that form follows function. That is, breeding and selecting for those specific traits that will best suit the function for which a particular breed was designed, be it hunting, herding, guarding, or just as a lap dog. They also should address breed type. That is, what are the characteristics, both physical and of temperament, which make this breed unique. When a standard does not address a particular characteristic of the breed, breeders can follow their personal preferences and judges often fall back on generic judging. The standard should describe the differences between their breed and the generic dog in a clear, concise and helpful manner.

The AKC permits parent clubs to alter or update their breed standards no more frequently than once every five years. The original AKC breed standard for the Vizsla was published in 1960. Revised versions were issued in 1983 and 1996. The process for modifying the Breed Standard follows VCA and AKC By-Laws. It requires:

- 1) A motion by the Board of Directors to consider amendments to the Breed Standard.
- 2) Approval of any proposed changes by the VCA Board of Directors.
- 3) Approval by the Board of Directors of AKC. AKC requires pre-approval in order to avoid conflicts later.
- 4) Publishing the proposed changes for the membership to review.
- 5) A mail ballot of the general membership is the final step in the process.

In the November/December 2001 issue of the VCA News the announcement was made that the Board of Directors was forming a new *ad hoc* Breed Standard Committee, and a call for volunteers wishing to serve on the committee was published. The Breed Standard Committee appointed by the BOD included Sylvia Kerr as Chair, Julia Bonar, Patricia Folz, Nancy Keiser, Rita Mather, Carol Phelps, and Kathy Rust.

The Committee began its deliberations in January 2003. The first business concerned items regarding proportion. These were submitted to the BOD at the 2003 BOD meeting and were approved by the BOD (Board members present – Sandy Parady, Marge Mehagian, Barbara Snyder, Kim Himmelfarb, Dave Kayser, Julia Bonar, Linda Durham, Al Lucas, Adele Neupert, Debi Oakley, Penny Rasins, Kathy Rust, Becky Smith, Lynn Worth) with no dissenting votes. At that time the BOD charged the Committee with reviewing the remainder of the Breed Standard. This information was published in the March/April 2004 issue of the VCA News and a request for input from the membership was made. Requests for input were also posted to the Vizsla Talk list. The Committee received surprisingly few comments, but considered and discussed every suggestion that was received.

The Committee continued its work and made reports to the BOD in 2004 (Board members present – Sandy Parady, Julia Bonar, Barbara Snyder, Kim Himmelfarb, Dave Kayser, Linda Durham, Kay Ingle, Linda Kelly, Al Lucas, Marge Mehagian, Adele Neupert, Debi Oakley, Kathy Rust, Lynn Worth) and 2005 (Board members present – Barbara Snyder, Julia Bonar, Marge Mehagian, Kim Himmelfarb, Dave Kayser, Kay Ingle, Linda Kelly, Al Lucas, Adele Neupert, Sandy Parady, Kathy Rust, Jack Sharkey, Mark Smith, Lynn Worth) at which time it had completed its review. It is worth noting that at the 2005 Board meeting at which the inclusion of roaning in the definition of disqualifying white was approved, over half of the Board members

were/are active field trialers - Bonar, Lucas, Kayser, Kelly, Mehagian, Sharkey, Smith, and Worth. All the committee's recommendations were approved with no negative votes, either by Committee members or BOD members. There were some individual abstentions on a few items. The final revised version of the Breed Standard was submitted to AKC for approval in 2006. AKC approval was granted and we are now at step 4 of the process. In a separate document (see "[Comparison](#)") on the VCA website, you will find the proposed revisions to the Breed Standard in tabular form in comparison to the current Breed Standard. This information is for your consideration and reflection before a mail ballot is sent out.