

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



## Extended Breed Standard of **THE LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO**

Produced by  
The Australian National Kennel Council  
FCI Breed Standard No: 298

Adopted ANKC January 2000  
Amended May 2000  
Amended January 2006

**Extended Breed Standard  
of**

# **THE LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO**



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Extended Breed Standard of  
**THE LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO**

**F.C.I. Standard No: 298 dated 5th February 1999**

**Effective in Australia from 1st January 2000**

**Country of Origin: Italy**

Translated by Antonio Morsiani, Renee Sporre-Willes, Dr J M Paschoud and Prof. R Triquet.

**NOTE:** Words placed in normal brackets (...) are as in the Standard.  
Words placed in square brackets [...] are explanations or alternative translations by ANKC.



**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

***Ancient breed of water retrieving dogs in the lowlands of Comacchio and the marshlands of Ravenna. Over the centuries, the great marshlands were drained and turned into arable land. Subsequently, the Lagotto Romagnolo changed from being a water dog to an excellent dog for searching for truffles in the flat open country and the hills of Romagna.***

The Lagotto Romagnolo is probably one of the most ancient breeds of water dog known as well as being an absolutely natural breed. Archaeological excavations in the Etruscan burial ground of Spina [close to the Comacchio region] have found hunting and fishing etchings on clay and terra-cotta pots dating to the fifth and sixth centuries, showing a curly, shaggy-haired dog extremely similar to the present day Lagotto Romagnolo.

When water dogs arrived in Spain with the Moors, they had already been known through the whole Italian peninsula for centuries, but in particular in the wet and marshy areas of Northern Italy. The Barbet reached France after the Arab invasion of Spain and most scholars agree that the Barbet was the ancestor of the Poodle. The 'Canis Aquaticus' [Water Dog] was mentioned by Linneus, the great Swedish naturalist of the eighteenth century, as having been 'widespread for long' in the Mediterranean area, and especially that of the North. Linneus' description of the dog corresponds surprisingly with that of the curly haired dog of Romagna.

Eugenio Raimondi in his book 'Delle Caccie' [About Hunting] (Venice, 1630), when discussing the water dogs that had always been popular in the Venetian lagoons wrote: *'They do not fear to bring ducks to steep rocky places and being used to their noble duty, they do not fear to wet their backs and bottom, and bring their prey back to their master to please him. They are bristly and curly-haired dogs of the same colour as the reeds'*.

Antonia Morri (Faenza 1840) in his 'Household Technological Manual of Entries, Expressions, Proverbs, Popular Sayings and Idioms of Romagna' described the 'Can Lagott' as a *'thick-furred truffle or marsh dog'* or as *'bristly-haired water or truffle dog'*. This indicates that even then, the Lagotto Romagnolo was being transformed from a water dog to a truffle-hound.

There is unquestionable evidence that the Lagotto Romagnolo was present in the lagoons of Comacchio and the marshy areas of the lowland plains of Romagna as early as 1600. The inhabitants of the flat marshlands were known as 'Lagotti' and they used small dogs with very curly hair. They also went searching for truffles with their inseparable companion, the small Lagotto Romagnolo, who also guarded the boat and house and retrieved ducks. He would dive and swim for hours at a time even in very cold weather when he may have had to break the ice. This 'amphibian' behaviour was made possible by its truly waterproof thick coat, with very close curls and abundant undercoat preventing the water from touching the skin; it was sufficient just to shake itself and the dog was perfectly dry.

When the marshes were reclaimed the Lagotto Romagnolo progressively lost its function as a water dog and gradually specialised as a truffle-hound. His great ability to search, his keen sense of smell and trainability made him very suitable for the task.

Breeding in the early days was not controlled and had always been done to achieve practical results. Consequently, it tended to be between dogs closely related by blood. But in later years dogs were used that were not related, such as pointers, poodles, etc. and this was not justified or in the interests of the breed. Therefore, in the late 1970's, a group of distinguished dog fanciers from Romagna, decided it was time to save the breed. Over twenty years seminars and meetings took place, dogs were examined, measured, tattooed and entered onto a Register with the result that the breed has evolved back again to a well defined, homogenous type. The Italian Lagotto Romagnolo Club which now has over 400 members, was formed in 1988 and paved the way for official recognition of the breed. On the 15th October 1991 the Lagotto Romagnolo became the thirteenth Italian dog breed and its numbers are estimated at between 3,000 to 3,500.

## ● GENERAL APPEARANCE

***Small to medium sized dog, well proportioned, powerfully built, of a rustic [hardy] appearance, with a dense, curly coat of woolly texture.***

***Important proportions — The length of the head 40% of the height at the withers. The dog is nearly as high as it is long. (Square)***

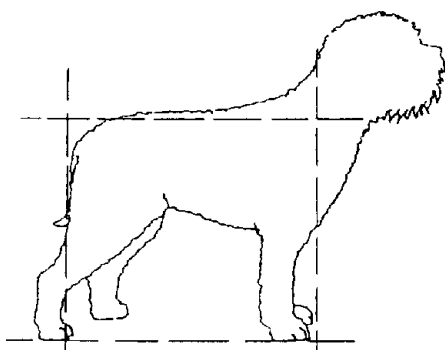
***The length of the skull should be slightly more than 50% of the total length of the head.***

***The length of the muzzle is 20% less than that of the skull (i.e. 44%:56%)***

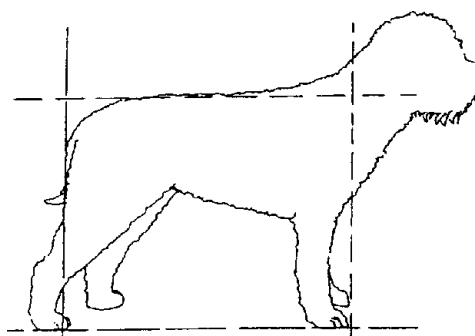
***The depth of the chest is less than 50% (about 44%) of the height at the withers.***

The immediate impression of the Lagotto Romagnolo is of his hardy, sensible appearance, followed by an impression of athletic strength and nobility in spite of his small size. Nobility (which is not his only distinction) is essential to the breed in order to express the type which is also derived from his shape, colour and bearing.

The Lagotto Romagnolo has a body to height ratio of about 85/88; a body almost as high as it is long, which tends to be contained within a square. He has moderate, harmonious and shapely body structure.



Body contained within a square  
(correct)



Body contained within a rectangle  
(faulty)

## ● CHARACTERISTICS

***[Not specified.] Classified by the FCI in Group 8, Retrievers – Flushing Dogs – Water Dogs, Section 3 – Water Dogs.***

***Utilisation – Truffle Dog.***

This small 'king of the woods' is, and should remain, a typical working dog. He is endowed with great endurance and agile, graceful movement, and the people who are not truffle searchers can also appreciate this breed for its attractive appearance and excellent temperament and companionship.

## ● TEMPERAMENT

***A natural gift for searching and its very good nose has made the breed very efficient in truffle searching. The former hunting instinct has been eliminated, hence his work is not distracted by the scent of game. The Lagotto Romagnolo is tractable, undemanding, keen, affectionate, very attached to his owner and easy to train. He is a very good companion and also an excellent watch-dog.***

Its lively intelligence, personality and sensible character make it a pleasant and often irreplaceable companion, not only for those who see dogs as workers but also those who see them as a friend and companion with whom to share everything, in good times and bad, until death us do part.

## ● HEAD AND SKULL

***Viewed from above, trapezoidal in shape [a four sided shape with no two sides parallel] and moderately broad; the upper longitudinal axes [planes] of the skull and of the muzzle diverge slightly. [Slightly down-faced].***

**Cranial region:**

**SKULL —** ***The skull is wide at the level of the zygomatic arches [cheek bones] and is as long as it is wide. Viewed from the side, from occiput to stop, the skull should be longer than the muzzle. It is slightly convex [arched] and tends to flatten out at the back skull. The rounded bones of the forehead are well developed, well defined eyebrows, pronounced forehead furrow, occipital crest short and not very developed, slight depressions above the eye sockets.***

**STOP —** ***Not too pronounced.***

**Facial region:**

**NOSE —** ***Large, with wide open and mobile nostrils. Median groove pronounced. Viewed in profile, the nose continues on the same level as the muzzle and protrudes very slightly from the front of the lips. The colour ranges from light to dark brown depending on the colour of the coat.***

**MUZZLE —** ***Fairly broad, a little shorter than the skull (ratio – skull 56%, muzzle 44%), the depth being only slightly less than the length. It is slightly ‘wedge shaped’ with a moderately flat front face. The bridge of the nose is straight.***

**LIPS —** ***The lips are not too thick; they are rather tight, so that the lower profile of the muzzle is determined by the lower jawbone. They are covered with a long and rather bristly moustache. Viewed from the front, the lips form a wide semi-circle. The colour of the edges ranges from light to dark brown.***

**CHEEKS —** ***Flat***



An observation made by all who are experienced with the Lagotto Romagnolo is that 'the head expresses the breed'. And that means that the head is fundamental in determining type. The head of the Lagotto Romagnolo is fascinating for its character, and requires absolute priority in judging type. The whole head must be symmetrical and balanced. The expression indicates dignity and intelligence.

## Position of the upper longitudinal axes of the skull and muzzle



Slightly divergent (Correct)



Much too divergent (Faulty)



Parallel (Faulty)



Convergent (Faulty)



Muzzle too short  
(Faulty)



Stop too pronounced  
(Faulty)

The head of the Lagotto Romagnolo is mesocephalic, that is the length of the skull is just slightly greater than the length of the muzzle, and the width of the skull equals its length. The skull, seen from the front is arched, in profile it is convex or curved in an open arch that is reduced in the occipital region.

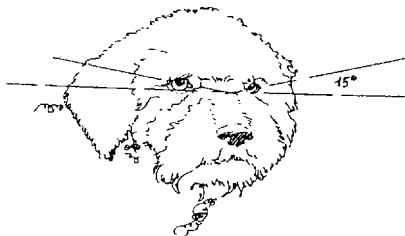
The axes of the skull and muzzle diverge slightly, therefore the muzzle is just slightly 'down faced'. The lateral faces or sides of the muzzle converge only slightly, that is they only taper slightly and form a very powerful muzzle.

Due to the width of the skull and the quite powerful muzzle, the Lagotto Romagnolo head appears to be moderately large if compared to the dog's size. The stop is not very marked, although it is evident. The lower jawbone is strong.



## • EYES

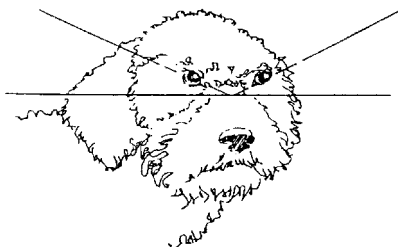
**Fairly large, rounded, filling the socket, set fairly well apart. The colour of the iris ranges from ochre to hazel and dark brown, depending on the colour of the coat. Close fitting eyelids; the colour of the eye-rims ranges from light to dark brown. Eyelashes very well developed. Look is alert, expression keen and lively.**



Placed beneath the forehead at an angle of 15-20 degrees (correct), eyes tending to be round (correct), and not deep set (correct).



Placed horizontally (0 degrees) (faulty), eyes too deep set (faulty).



Placed almost at the side of the head (more than 20 degrees past the horizontal) (faulty), and almond shaped (faulty).

## • EARS

**Medium sized in proportion to the head, triangular with rounded tips; their base is rather wide; they are set just above the zygomatic arches. Hanging at rest or slightly raised when the dog is attentive. If pulled towards the nose they should reach the muzzle at  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its length. On the ears, the hair tends to show looser curls, but remains very wavy. No short hair on the ears. The inner part of the ear-flap is also covered with hair.**



Carried and placed correctly.



Butterfly ears caused by the base of the ears being too large.



Ears with flaps drooping because of the narrow base and soft ear muscles.

## ● MOUTH

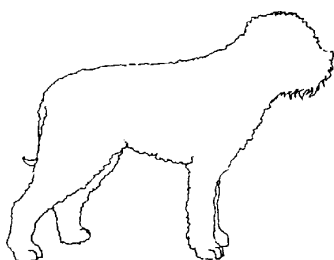
***Jaw strong with almost straight branches and a relatively large lower jaw. Complete scissor or pincer bite with white and well developed teeth. Slightly undershot mouth acceptable.***

‘Branches’ refers to the jawbones of both upper and lower jaws which should be straight.

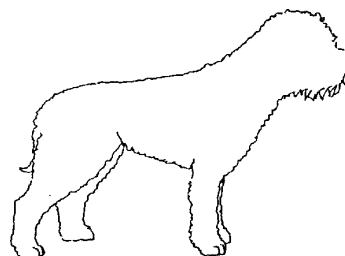
## ● NECK

***Strong, muscular, lean with oval section; well set off from the nape and absolutely free from dewlap. Topline slightly arched. In males the circumference of the neck can be twice that of its length. The length of the neck is a little less than the total length of the head.***

The neck should blend harmoniously with the withers, the forechest and the back. The length of the upper surface of the neck is measured from the occiput to the withers.



Short neck, less than 85% of the total length of the head (faulty).



Short legs; distance elbow-ground less than 55-56% of the height at the withers (faulty). Rectangular body (faulty).

## ● FOREQUARTERS

**GENERAL — Vertical, seen from the front and in profile.**

**SHOULDERS — Shoulder blades long (30% of the height at withers), well laid back (52-55 degrees), muscular, strong and closely attached to the chest, but moving freely. The angle between the shoulder blade and the upper arm ranges from 110 to 115 degrees.**

**UPPER ARM — Muscular, of fine bone structure, as long as the shoulder blade; its angle from the horizontal ranges from 58 to 60 degrees.**

**ELBOWS — Well attached to the chest wall, but not too tightly; covered with fine skin; parallel to the median sagittal [central] plane of the body as are the upper arms. The point of the elbow is located on a vertical line lowered from the back end of the scapula to the ground.**

**FOREARM — Perfectly vertical, long (36% of the height at the withers), with compact, strong bone of oval cross section.**

**WRIST (CARPUS) — Viewed from the front, in a vertical line with the forearm; fine, robust and mobile; pisiform bone markedly protruding.**

**PASTERN — Rather less thick and of finer bone compared with the forearm; mobile; seen in profile, it forms an angle of 75 to 80 degrees with the ground.**

**BODY** *Compact and strong; as long as the height at the withers.*

**TOPLINE** — *Straight from the withers to the croup.*

**WITHERS** — *They rise above the level of the croup; the highest points of the shoulder blades are not too close, but quite high set and well laid back.*

**BACK** — *Straight, very muscular.*

**LOIN** — *Short coupled, very strong, in profile slightly arched. Width is equal to or exceeds the length.*

**CROUP** — *Long, wide, muscular, slight sloping; (slope of the hip bone ranges from 25 to 30 degrees).*

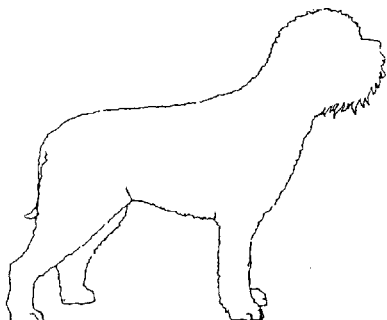
**CHEST** — *Well developed, reaching down to the elbows. Although fairly narrow in front, from the sixth rib the chest widens backwards.*

**UNDERLINE AND BELLY** — *Long sternal section in form of a straight line; the following tuck-up is only slight.*

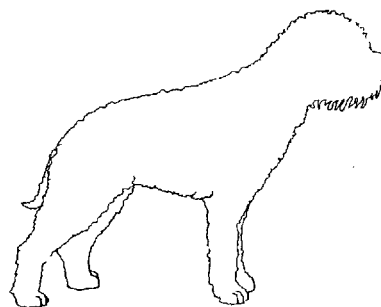


Jack (bred and owned by Luciano Landi).

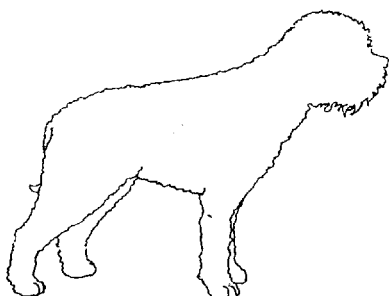
Note the body within a square and the correctly carried head.



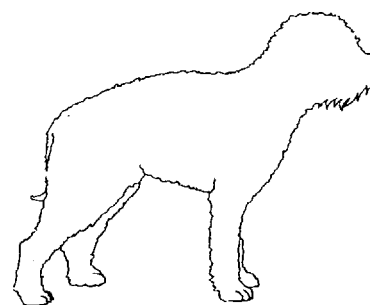
Topline level [correct] and withers slightly higher than rump [correct]  
The ideal Lagotto Romagnolo in the opinion of the author.



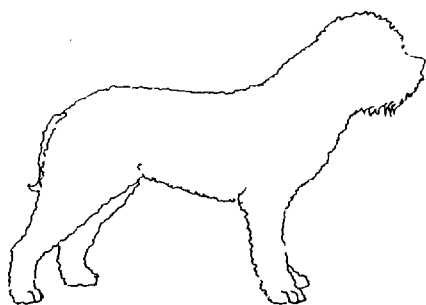
Topline too steep [faulty] and the rump too steep [faulty].



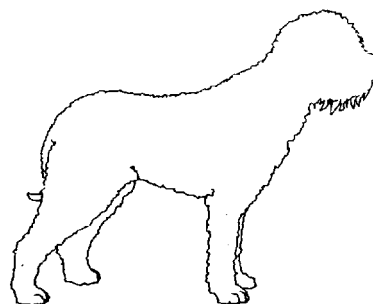
Topline too steep because the withers are too high [faulty].



Roached topline [faulty].



Rectangular body [faulty]  
too heavy [faulty], cutaway rump [faulty].



Sway back and cutaway rump [2 faults].

## • HINDQUARTERS

**General** — *Hindquarters upright, powerful, well proportioned to the size of the dog.*

**UPPER THIGH** — *Long (35% of the height at withers), with clearly separated and visible muscles. The femur forms a sharp angle of 80 degrees from the horizontal. The angle between the hip bone and the femur ranges from 105 to 110 degrees. The thigh is parallel to the median plane of the body.*

**STIFLE** — *The angle of the stifle joint ranges from 130 to 150 degrees.*

**LOWER THIGH** — *Slightly longer than the upper thigh (36% of the height at the withers), well boned and muscled, with marked muscular groove. Its angle on the horizontal ranges from 50 to 55 degrees.*

**HOCK-JOINT** — *Wide, thick, lean, with clearly defined bone; parallel to the median plane of the body; the angle between the lower thigh bone and the bones forming the hock is about 140 degrees.*

**HOCK (METATARSUS)** — *Thin, cylindrical, perpendicular to the ground.*

## **STANCE:**



Correct front



Toes in



Toes Out



Correct rear



Bow hocked



Cow hocked



Rump 'like a roof' — too high and steep

## ● FEET

**FOREFEET** — *Slightly rounded, compact, with arched and tight toes. Nails strong and curved. Pads well pigmented. Webs between the toes very well developed.*

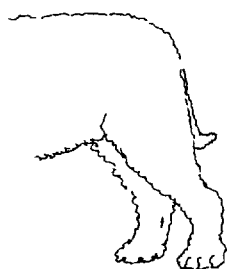
**HINDFEET** — *Slightly more oval-shaped than the forefeet and toes slightly less arched.*

The forefeet and, more moderately, the hindfeet are roundish and compact; toes are arched and held close together. The nails are strong and curved as is required by a dog which has to dig in all kinds of ground.

## ● TAIL

*Set on neither too high nor too low; tapering towards the end. When extended, it should barely reach the hocks. At rest, carried scimitar-like; when attentive, decidedly raised. When working or excited, can be carried over the back, but never curled.*

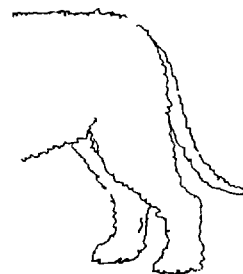
The tail must never be rolled up in a ring, although when the dog is working or excited it may be carried considerably above the back line.



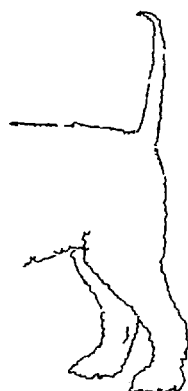
Correct



Too short [faulty]



Too long [faulty]



Hooked at the end [faulty]



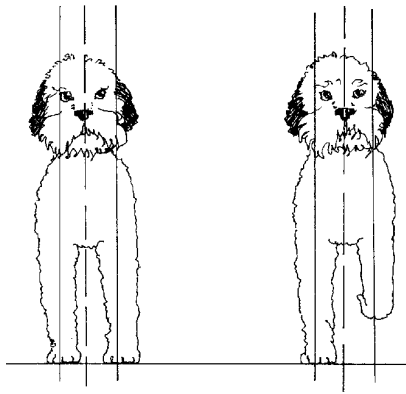
A candela (difetto)

Candle shaped [faulty]

## • **GAIT/MOVEMENT**

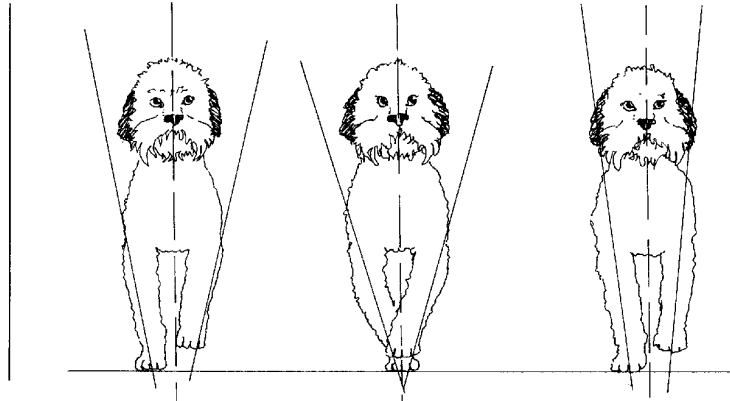
***Walk is regular, trot energetic and brisk, will gallop for short periods.***

The walk



Correct

Faults at the walk



Elbows turned out,  
steps close. Weak  
pasterns.

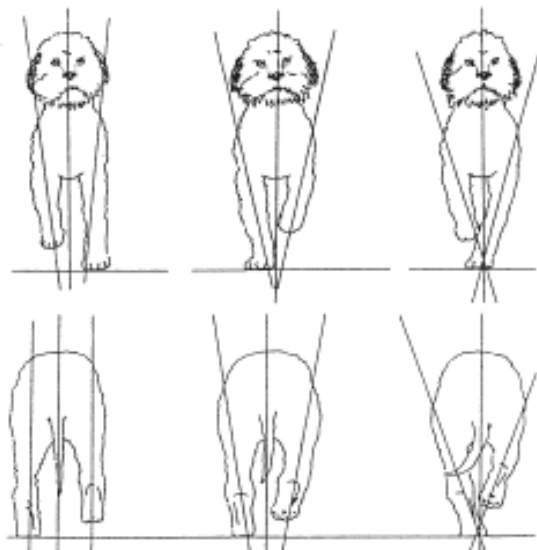
Crosses over

Steps close



The trot — Diagrams showing the moment of suspension between the two alternate diagonal feet touching the ground.

Single tracking — Showing how the legs converge further with greater speed.



## The gallop





- **COAT**

**SKIN** — *Close-fitting all over the body, without wrinkles, thin, with little sub-cutaneous tissue. Pigmentation of mucous membranes and of pads ranges from light to dark and very dark brown.*

**COAT** — *Of woolly texture, somewhat rough in surface, forming tightly curled, ring-shaped curls with the undercoat shining through. Curls must be evenly distributed all over the body, except on the head, where the curls are less tight, forming well-furnished eyebrows, whiskers and beard. Even the cheeks are covered with dense hair. The top coat and especially the undercoat are waterproof. If not clipped, the hair tends to become felted; therefore a complete clipping must be performed at least once a year. Felted topcoat and undercoat must be removed periodically.*

The skin must be tight to the body and fine, pigmented in the various shades of brown. The pads must also be pigmented in the various shades of brown. The Lagotto Romagnolo must have woolly-textured hair, semi-rough on the surface, with very close, ring shaped curls, and a marked undercoat. The curls must be evenly distributed over the whole body (fore and hind legs and tail included), except on the head, where the curls can be slightly more open. The Standard uses either of the expressions 'moustache' and 'whiskers' to refer to the same thing.

Unclipped Lagotto  
Romagnolo



- **COLOUR**

**Off-white solid colour, white with brown or orange patches, brown roan, brown solid colour (in different shades), or orange solid colour. A brown to dark brown mask acceptable.**

Every shade of brown is permitted as well as solid coloured off-white, solid coloured orange, brown roan, and white with brown or orange patches. Black is not allowed.



Int Ch Ripr Rex (owner & breeder Luciano Landi). Note type and construction.

- **SIZE** *Height at withers: Dogs from 43 to 48 cm [17 to 19 inches]  
Ideal height — 46 cm [18 inches]  
Bitches from 41 to 46 cm [16 to 18 inches]  
Ideal Height — 43 cm [17 inches]*
- **WEIGHT** *Dogs about 13 to 16 kg [about 29 to 35 lbs]  
Bitches about 11 to 14 kg [ about 24.5 to 30 lbs]*
- **FAULTS** *Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.*  
*Axes of the skull and the muzzle converging*  
*Partially depigmented nose [butterfly nose]*  
*Dishfaced*  
*Pronounced undershot mouth*  
*Strabismus [squinting or cross-eyed]*  
*Docked Tail*  
*Dewclaws*  
*Coat not curled or clipped short*  
*Black coat or black patches*  
*Oversize or undersize*
- **DISQUALIFICATIONS** *Totally depigmented nose*  
*Overshot mouth*  
*Wall-eye*  
*Corded coat*
- **NOTE** *Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.*

## The Lagotto Romagnolo at Work



Above: A Lagotto Romagnolo at work.

Left: Oliviero Zini with his jewels:  
Teresina & It Ch Tina.

Right: The Tuber magnatum Pico.

## SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS



Feminine



Masculine

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All illustrations in this Extended Standard have been taken directly from the Italian text book on the breed, *Il Lagotto Romagnolo, Storie di cani e tartufai* by Giovanni Morsiani, Copyright 1996 Gruppo Ugo Mursia Editore S.p.A., Via Tadino, 29, Milano.

Comments have been taken from the above book and from papers published by the Club Italiano Lagotto Romagnolo, written by the President Dr Giovanni Morsiani.

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*"Love at first sight!"*