



**Official Breed Standard
of the
Kennel Union of South Africa**



IRISH SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The history of the Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier has been somewhat obscured by its closeness to the other Irish Terrier breeds. The Wheaten is probably the oldest of the four breeds. Its existence for at least 200 years can be inferred from textual references to “soft-coated” dogs. The relation of the modern Irish Terrier to the Wheaten, though less well documented, appears to have been the result of deliberate breeding experiments. So the humble Wheaten probably has a fairly mixed ancestry. Despite the long history of the Wheaten, it wasn’t until the 1930's that the Soft Coated Wheaten was officially recognised by the Irish Kennel Club. The breed has grown steadily in popularity since and is now becoming common in England and the United States and well known in other countries.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

A hardy, active, short coupled dog, well built, giving the idea of strength. Not too leggy nor too low to the ground.

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT

Spirited and game. Good tempered. Most affectionate and loyal to his owners. Most intelligent. A trusty, faithful friend, defensive without aggression.

HEAD

In general, powerful without being coarse. Long in proportion to the body. Hair same colour as on body.

CRANIAL REGION

Skull flat and clean between ears; not too wide.

Stop: Defined.

FACIAL REGION

Nose: Black and well developed.

Jaws: Strong and punishing. Teeth large, regular, scissors or level bite, neither undershot nor overshot.

Cheeks: Bones not prominent.

Eyes: Dark, dark hazel, not too large, not prominent, well placed.

Ears: Small to medium, carried in front, level with skull. Dark shading on base of ear allowed, and not uncommon, accompanied by a light coloured overlay. “Rose” or “Flying” ears are objectionable.

NECK: Moderately long and strong but not throaty.

BODY: Compact and not too long.

Back: Level top line.

Loins: Short, powerful.

Chest: Deep. Ribs well sprung.

Tail: Well set, not too thick. Carried gaily. Docked at one-third the total length, or cut after the 6th (sixth) joint, assuming that this is in balance and proportion to the dog. Customarily docked

LIMBS:

Forequarters: Forelegs perfectly straight viewed from any angle. Good bone and muscle.

Shoulders: Well laid back, muscular.

Hindquarters: Well developed with powerful muscle. Stifles bent.

Thighs: Strong and muscular.

Hocks: Well let down, turned neither in nor out.

Hind dewclaws: Must be removed.

Feet: Small, not spreading. Toenails preferably black but varying colours allowed.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

Straight action fore and aft, going and coming. Elbows tucked in. Side view - free, light co-ordinated movement.

COAT

Hair: Texture soft and silky to feel and not harsh. Young dogs excluded from this. Trimming permitted.

Trimmed dogs: Coat cut close to the body at neck, chest and skull, and left especially long over eyes and under jaw. Whiskers encouraged. Profuse feathering on legs. Body coat trimmed to follow the outline of the dog. Tail trimmed close and neatly tapered.

Untrimmed dogs: The coat at its longest not to exceed 12.7 cm (5 in). Abundant and soft, wavy or loosely curled. (Abundance never interpreted as length). Under no circumstances should coat be “fluffed out” like a Poodle or an

Old English Sheepdog. Dogs shown in this condition should be heavily penalised as they give a wrong impression of type and breed. Special attention is drawn to puppy coat development. Pups are seldom born with the correct coat of maturity, care must be taken when assessing this point. They go through several changes of colour and texture before developing the adult coat. This usually occurs between 18 months and 2½ years.

Pups: Are born true to type. They come reddish, greyish and sometimes clear wheaten. The masks are generally black. Sometimes there is a black streak down the centre back or black tips to the body coat. These dark markings clear away with growth. No black is allowed at any age, with the exception of the muzzle which gradually clears, and the leathers as above (see ears).

COLOUR

Any shade from light wheaten to a golden reddish hue.

SIZE & WEIGHT

Height at the withers: Dogs - 46 - 48 cm (18 - 19 in)
Bitches somewhat less

Weight: Dogs - 15.75 - 18 kg (35 - 40 lb.)
Bitches somewhat less

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.

FAULTS

Undershot mouths. Overshot mouths. Nose any colour other than black. Overall mature coat not clear wheaten colour. Nervousness.

Viciousness.

ELIMINATING FAULTS

Yellow eyes. White coats. Brown coats. Dull, thick, woolly or cottony textured hair.

NOTE

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

FCI/03/94
(40) Gp3
FEDCO 12/95

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The publisher of this edition is the Kennel Union of Southern Africa.

28-May-04