

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ



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### **DEDICATION:**

This booklet is dedicated to Tom and Dorothy Grosart of Tall Grass Kennels, founders of the Kuvasz in Canada. Their enthusiasm, love and nurturing of the breed have been instrumental in securing the Kuvasz as a sound, vibrant breed within Canada and North America. Their knowledge and devotion to the Kuvasz is an inspiration to all who have come to know them!

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

The production of any piece of work is never done in a vacuum. This work is no exception. Several people within the Kuvasz Club of Canada have reviewed this manuscript and have made significant contributions, both in terms of content, pictures and support for this project. I wish to thank them all and in particular, Dorothy Grosart, Jan and Olga Schmidt, Kris Finbow and Hugh Anderson. Collectively they have tremendous experience with the breed, and are dedicated to preserving the true working character of the Kuvasz. They have inspired me to make this small, written contribution to promote a better understanding of our breed. To each of you, and the many others that I have consulted, I offer my sincere thanks.

# THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

## 1.0 Introduction

What is the Kuvasz? What does the breed look like? What is their temperament? What is their heritage? What kind of work were they bred for? Are they still capable working dogs? Do they make good companion and family dogs? Who should own a Kuvasz? These and other questions will be addressed throughout this paper. Read on and find out more about the beautiful Kuvasz, the armed guard of nobility, devoted companion and a respected member of the ancient livestock guarding group.

## General Characteristics

The Kuvasz (Kuvaszok, plural) is a large, white dog of great facial beauty, with luxuriant, medium-length coat and pleasing, athletic overall proportions. The thick double coat is typically quite wavy with crests and swirls, although the degree of waviness may vary considerably among individuals. The coat is thicker and longer around the neck and chest where it forms a ruff or mane, which is more prominent on the males. The back of the front legs is well “feathered” and the back of the thighs and tail are covered with thick hair 10 to 15 cm (4 to 6 inches) long. The well-plumed tail is usually carried low to the level of the hock unless excited, when the tail will curl up to the level of the loin. The colour of the coat is always white in colour with no markings and is self-cleaning, requiring minimal care, aside from brushing. The skin is darkly pigmented, with dark brown eyes, black nose, lips and pads with dark nails. The eyelids and lips are tight, without any droopiness. Triangular drop ears frame an intelligent face. The males are larger than the females and are ideally 71 - 75 cm (28-29.5 inches) at the withers and weigh 40-52 kg. Females range in size from 66 - 70 cm (26-27.5 inches) at the withers and weigh from 30 - 42 kg. Large males may occasionally reach 80 cm (31.5 inches) and tip the scales at 62 kg. In fact the Hungarian and FCI Standards call for heavier dogs, with the males ranging from 48-62 kg, and the females ranging from 37 – 50 kg.

The Kuvasz is not a massive dog, nor does it possess heavy bone and heavy muscle. The Great Pyrenees is, by comparison, a stockier and heavier dog. Rather, the Kuvasz should convey the impression of being lean and lithe, without any exaggeration, possessing steely muscle capable of great endurance and remarkable agility for such a large dog. Kuvaszok, in good condition, are able to trot for 25 to 30 kms at even speed without any effort. Appendix 1 provides a complete description of the Kuvasz, according to the Canadian Kennel Club’s official breed standard and the Hungarian/Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI) Standards.

The Kuvasz impresses the eye with strength and activity, combined with lightfootedness. Adults convey an unmistakable sense of self-confidence and regalness, or nobility of bearing. Pal Sarkany and Imre Ocsag (1987), in their book “Hungarian Dog Breeds”, state the following: “the shape of the body, the attractive, lean structure of the Kuvasz is explained by the hard work required of them all through the centuries. They had to win the fight with the wolf, so they had to excel their enemy in agility and speed”. Valerie Eastman (1993), editor of the Kuvasz Fanciers of America, states: “when I see a true Hungarian Kuvasz, I see a formidable fearless guard dog rugged as a wolf, as hard and

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beautiful as a rough diamond”. The Kuvasz is a hardy, natural breed that thrives in the cold and tolerates the heat.

### **Temperament**

The Canadian Book of the Dog (published by the Canadian Kennel Club) describe the temperament of the Kuvasz as follows: “Temperamentally, the Kuvasz is an intelligent dog with a great deal of independence of spirit. He has been used for centuries as a guardian and has very strongly developed protective instincts”. The American Kennel Club further describes the temperament of the Kuvasz as: “a spirited dog of keen intelligence, determination, courage and curiosity. Very sensitive to praise and blame. Primarily a one-family dog. Devoted, gentle and patient without being overly demonstrative. Always ready to protect loved ones to the point of self-sacrifice. Extremely strong instinct to protect children. Polite to accepted strangers, but rather suspicious and very discriminating in making new friends. Unexcelled guard, possessing ability to act on his own initiative at just the right moment without instruction. Bold, courageous and fearless. Untiring ability to work and cover rough terrain for long periods of time. Has good scent and has been used to hunt game”.

The temperament of the Kuvasz is that of the livestock guard, or flock guardian, of which he is an ancient member. This is not a dog for everyone. They need a firm, but loving owner whom has experience with dogs. Their beautiful looks and soft, gentle expression camouflages an extremely well developed guardian instinct. Their soft facial expression may look like a retriever, but a retriever the breed is not. The breed is first and foremost a guard and they have been selectively bred as such throughout the centuries and millennia of their development. Accordingly, they should be given the care and respect of a guardian. This means that you need to be aware of potentially threatening situations that could trigger the guarding instinct, rather than being surprised by your dog’s reaction to various events (e.g. the postman, delivery man, or someone shearing sheep that he has been guarding). They are however, very gentle towards their family and are affectionate and very protective of small children and animals within their family circle.

The breed is primarily a one family dog and is naturally suspicious of strangers, as befits a guardian. They are very discriminating in making friends. They will, with appropriate encouragement, accept the friends of their family and once friendship has been attained, it will never be forgotten. The nature of the Kuvasz has been well described by the Hungarian proverb: “The friend of his master is his friend - his master’s enemy is his enemy”. With a devoted guard in the home, it is advisable to bring the dog to strangers as an introduction, rather than strangers to the dog. Extensive socialization will make your dog reliable and trustworthy among non-threatening strangers. Insufficient socialization can result in aggressiveness towards strangers and create an unnecessary liability to the owners.

The Kuvasz is very intelligent and independent in spirit. As a livestock guardian, they are expected to work independent of man and must depend upon their own intelligence to deal with situations of all types. This is a definite asset for the working dog, but can be frustrating for the companion dog owner expecting the dog to fawn upon his or her every

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move. This is not a robot, and your dog will present challenges for the obedience advocate. If you want a dog that will obey your every wish, the Kuvasz may not be for you. There are several other breeds that are better candidates and will be happier in such a relationship. They are intelligent and very sensitive to praise and blame. They can be trained for a variety of tasks, but quickly bore of repetitive exercises. They do not tolerate heavy-handed training techniques, but respond well to praise. In general, praise, and encouragement, coupled with earned respect, will give you a companion of tremendous devotion.

It is believed that the protective nature of the Kuvasz is an extension of highly developed maternal or paternal instincts, formed from the development of strong “family” bonds, coupled with a strong sense of territorial defensiveness. Threats to their family, or property, will arouse well-developed protective instincts.

The Kuvasz, and other “livestock guards”, have been selectively bred for many centuries for strong defensive and protective instincts against threats, while selecting against high active aggression and prey drives that stimulate the chase and bite behaviours. The livestock guards were bred for one purpose - to protect livestock, not to herd, chase or otherwise worry, or frighten stock. They are expected to be calm around livestock and only become excited when there is a potential threat. They are courageous in the sense that they will stand up to any foe, animal or human, in the defense of their “extended family and territory”. They are not, or should not be, indiscriminately aggressive.

Herding dogs, in contrast, have highly developed prey drives that make them instinctively want to chase sheep (or other livestock) that break from the flock. The biting and seizing aspect of the prey drive has been selectively inhibited. That high prey drive makes these breeds also ideal for fetching a ball, frisbees, or other “chase” sports. Hunting breeds, retrievers, and terriers all possess high prey drives. Other working breeds, such as German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois, have a balance of high prey drive with both active (fighting drive) and reactive (defensive) aggression, making them highly suitable to Schutzhund and French Ring Sport activities, as well as police and military work. The Kuvasz’s independence, subdued prey drive, and need for bonding probably make them less suitable for these sports than the traditional personal protection dogs (Dobermans, German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, Rottweilers, etc.). However, this is conjecture, since I’m not aware of any of our breed used for such “sports”. If you are interested in these sports, I would recommend the preceding breeds, or others, over the Kuvasz or other livestock guardians. Kuvasz are not trained guards, but rather are natural guardians.

### **Suitability as a Companion Dog**

Kuvaszok can make wonderful companions for the right families. Their devotion to their family is extreme. As stated in *The New Dog Encyclopedia* (1970): “His big heart is given freely and completely to those he loves, returning to his masters undying fidelity for such affections as are tendered him. Taken away from his home - the family which he has accepted - the mature dog may have difficulty transferring his affection to others. Consequently, some have been known to die of heartbreak”. Such devotion should not be

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taken lightly, and is deserving of a family that is committed to returning the same level of devotion, guidance and affection for the lifetime of their dog.

The question is: “are you the right kind of owner”? An awareness of what the dog is and what it isn't must be understood before choosing a breed such as the Kuvasz. Be honest and introspective in terms of what you want and what you are prepared for in a dog. Any dog is a responsibility. A guarding dog is an even greater responsibility. You should be prepared to make a commitment for the lifetime of the dog.

Do you expect your dog to play with the kids for hours, playing ball and retrieving sticks, frisbees, etc.? Do you want a water dog? If yes, then the Kuvasz is not the dog for you! Kuvaszok adore their own “kids” but are not natural retrievers, nor are they water dogs. My dog might chase the ball the first time and with encouragement, bring it back to me. Throw it again and he will stand there in bewilderment and then lay down. Afterall, he retrieved it once and yet I still threw it away. Obviously, I didn't want it. If you want a dog that will retrieve and play for hours, get a retriever or a herding dog, or some other breed.

Do you have an open door policy with neighbours, friends and children coming in and out of the house and yard endlessly without supervision? Again, the Kuvasz, or perhaps any guardian breed, may not be for you. Remember, this is a guard dog and guard he will do - his property, house, family and any other animals that are part of his family. He needs to be formally introduced to casual guests that are not a part of the “family circle” and supervised until he knows that everything is all right. A dog that loves every stranger is not a guard. Accordingly, Kuvasz and other guardian breeds, are aloof and somewhat distrustful of strangers. He can't be expected to discriminate between an unwelcomed stranger and an acquaintance, unless you are there. Socialization will help, but he is and always will be, a guard. If you want a dog that will love everybody, perhaps a guarding breed is not what you really want.

If you are willing to provide a secured fenced area for your dog, socialize your dog around other people (and other dogs) from early puppyhood, satisfy its exercise needs and integrate it into all of your family life, you will have an uncommonly devoted and reliable companion. As an adult, the Kuvasz is quite reserved and dignified, being an integral part of the family but “not in your face”! You will feel his presence, but he will not be demanding, constantly seeking attention as many other breeds do. He exudes independence and self-confidence, even when in your home. He will, however, sound the alarm when anyone comes around and shows a great deal of good sense as a guardian. He does not show indiscriminate, uncontrollable aggression as do some of the personal protection dogs. He is quick to settle down once he understands there is no real threat. His protective instincts can however become aroused from a real threat (without any training) and he is well equipped to deal with any threat. The reality though, is that for many of us, real threats seldom occur. Most of the time your dog will display absolute gentleness with its family and friends and leave you wondering whether it has a protective bone in its body. That same dog can and will display man-stopping (and predator-stopping) ferocity and intensity if its extended family is seriously threatened. A good guard dog knows when to protect and when not to. Socialization will not diminish his effectiveness as a guard, but it will make a world of difference in his and your lifestyle!



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A well-socialized dog can be confidently taken anywhere, including the veterinarian, and guests will be welcomed to your home. Your dog will be a source of great pride. An unsocialized dog, in contrast, can be a liability and turn you into a hermit! This applies to virtually all breeds and is even further heightened in the guarding breeds.

### **2.0 Breeding The Kuvasz**

The Kuvasz Club of Canada welcomes new conscientious breeders and is very willing to help in an advisory capacity. There are only a handful of breeders across Canada and there is a need for more dedicated enthusiasts of the breed. There is really only one reason that one should seriously consider becoming a breeder and that is to help enhance the quality of the breed. That means striving to achieve the breed standard on conformation (see Appendix 1) and just as importantly, maintaining the true working character and sound temperament of the breed. We want breeders dedicated to maintaining the true working nature and conformation of the breed, not people that are simply attracted to its beautiful appearance, or making success in the show ring their chief aim. The Kuvasz is first and foremost a sound working guard dog and that is what we should be striving to preserve. We need to nurture the breed for its age old responsibility of guarding man and beast. That has been the role and function of the Kuvasz for millennia. We cannot allow the relatively recent invention of showdog breeding destroy the rich heritage of this noble breed to become a showy caricature of its former self.

A sound breeding program also carries great responsibilities for the maintenance of health, vigour and sound temperament within any breed. Breeders need to be aware of inheritable diseases and participate in various registries that validate the genetic soundness of breeding lines. Historically, the need for working performance was a sound basis for culling, or otherwise removing, unsound animals from the breeding pool. Breeders must now act in the best interest of the breed and be open and honest about inheritable problems and have the courage to remove these lines from breeding programs. That means following up with pups as they mature to determine their health and soundness as adults. It means putting the health and soundness of the breed first and foremost and participating in various health registries that promote the exchange of health data for breeding purposes.

At the World Congress and Seminar of Breeders of Hungarian Breeds held in Budapest in 1982, Mr. Beli Manyi, President of the Kuvasz Section of the Hungarian Kennel Club, spoke of the necessity of working together to put the breeds in their rightful situations. Mr. Manyi also said that judges must adhere to the standard. They, and breeders, must defend against letting the breed become too large or too small. They must carefully watch pigmentation, guarding against noses that change colour, or yellow eyes. They must see that coats are white and wavy, not yellow, curly or open. He went on to point out the undesirability of low earsets and high tail sets, and the necessity for correct gait and for conditioning by plenty of exercise.

“We should underline temperament”, continued Mr. Manyi. “This should be a courageous, intelligent dog which does not too easily make friends”. In Hungary it is

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conceded that the Kuvasz is courageous and not unduly friendly. He is a working guard dog. Mr. Manyi's words in 1982 ring true today.

The terms "courageous, intelligent and not unduly friendly" does not mean a trigger happy, aggressive attack dog. It does mean suspicious and discriminating in making new friends, as befits a guardian. Intelligence does mean being able to discriminate true threats from non-threats and acting accordingly, without formal instruction. Courageous means responding to a real threat with boldness and aggressiveness to the point of self-sacrifice in the defense of its charges.

One should be aware that breeding is not a money-making proposition, nor should it be entered as one. It demands time, dedication and much study. It also requires considerable financial (and emotional) investment to seek the best breeding stock for your lines. With a rare breed such as the Kuvasz, that may well mean the importing of breeding stock. In return, it can bring disappointment and heartache. There are mating fees, veterinary bills, trips to airports, letter writing, phone calls during all times of the day because of time zone differences. All of these considerations can change one's life styles.

Should the foregoing sound grim, be assured that there is a deep and lasting satisfaction in being responsible for a splendid Kuvasz that will give unexcelled protection and devoted companionship. It is deeply gratifying to receive enthusiastic letters praising the Kuvasz whose birth you planned and hearing how someone's life is richer, easier and safer because you were able to send a Kuvasz to their home. Think of the gratification of knowing that your pup fulfilled his age-old role of livestock guardian, protecting stock and property as his forbears have been doing for millennia. Consider the fact that your working dog not only protected valuable livestock for his master, but also prevented his wild canid cousins (or other predators) from being shot or poisoned. Man, livestock, dogs and predators all coexisting in a more vibrant landscape. A noble purpose that is as relevant today as it always was. Dedicated breeders can take great satisfaction in knowing that their work is preserving this age-old relationship.

Owners have obligations as well. One problem confronting breeders is to find suitable homes for their Kuvaszok. The owner must understand and appreciate the temperament and abilities of the Kuvasz and must invest some time on basic obedience. Should the prospective owners not care for an independent dog who does not fawn on strangers and takes his guarding duties seriously and sensibly, then this is not the breed for their home.

The cost of veterinary care should also be considered. The Kuvasz is typically a hardy, healthy breed, but annual inoculations and heart worm prevention are facts of life for all dogs. If your dog is truly not breeding quality, you should also neuter your pet. This will not affect your dog's ability as a companion or guard. Your dog will be wholeheartedly devoted to you and your family. In return, you should demonstrate similar devotion and care for the lifetime of your dog. Are you prepared for such a commitment?

### 3.0 Heritage and Historical Development

The Kuvasz is an ancient breed of noble heritage. According to Andras Kovacs, an authority and scholar on the breed, the Kuvasz is believed to have borrowed its name from the ancient farmers of Russia, the Chuvash, who are possible descendents of the Huns, who nurtured the Kuvasz for centuries. Kovacs suggests that “about 500-600 BC the Proto-Hungarians moved to the south to the steppes, where according to linguistic evidence, they took over animal breeding from the Chuvash people, as a high proportion of words specific to agriculture in the Hungarian language are of Chuvash origin”. He goes on to say that “on the basis of historical and linguistic evidence and simply also because of the similarity of the words "Chuvash", "Kuvasz" and "Chuvach" it may be supposed that the Kuvasz was originally "Chuvash" and, if so, bred by the Hungarians for about 2,500 years” (Kovacs 1989).

For the last millennia the Kuvasz’s development has clearly been in historical domain of Hungary (which formerly occupied a much larger territory than present) where his main duties were that of a livestock guard, protecting livestock from wolves, bears and thieves. The breed has been used in other capacities, including the hunting of big game, a war-dog, herding dog and most recently as an estate, home and property guard.

The Kuvasz can be trained for several purposes, as can many breeds, but his natural instincts remain that of the ancient livestock guardian, and that is where he excels, with little, or no formal training. His height of popularity crested under King Matthias I (1458-1490) of Hungary. The breed was held in high esteem and the King is said to have trusted his dogs more than the men that served him. He always had a dog in his company. The dogs acted as personal guardians, guarded the estate’s livestock, and were used for hunting boar, bear and wolf. Large kennels of Kuvaszok were kept at the King’s estate in Siebenbuergen. Pups were awarded as gifts to visiting dignitaries and indeed, it was during this period that the Kuvasz was regarded as the “armed guard of royalty”. In fact, the name Kuvasz was once thought to be derived from the Turkish Kawasz, meaning protector and guard of noblemen. Kuvaszok were also used as war dogs, frequently accompanying horses into battle. The breed continues to be adept at working with horses. His history in Hungary has been rich as a working dog, expanding his traditional role of flock guardian to that of protector of royalty, family companion and guardian of property.

#### ***Early History and Origins of the Kuvasz***

The breed’s history prior to the Magyars in Hungary is much more obscure. Breed historians believe his ancestry as a livestock guardian probably dates back at least some 7000 years (others suggest 11,000 years) to the dawn of civilization and agriculture, wherein the Kuvasz, or his ancestral stock, served as an effective guardian of flocks for nomadic herdsmen. Wolves and European Brown Bears, a sub-specific relative of the North American Grizzly, were the primary predators which the Kuvasz, and other

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livestock protection breeds, had to guard against. The interaction with these large predators in protecting livestock helped to mold the very character, temperament and conformation of these breeds. Only the most effective guards, that were trustworthy with livestock, would be permitted to breed. Centuries of selection under harsh conditions helped to create the noble, wonderful guards that we are nurturing today. These same selection pressures helped to create very similar breeds ranging throughout Eurasia, wherever there was a need to protect livestock. Similar breeds to the Kuvasz include: Polish Tatra, Slovakian Cuvac, Maremma-Abruzzese, Great Pyrenees and Akbash. All of these breeds had to be strong, healthy, daring and effective in protecting livestock from predators. Other breeds not resembling the Kuvasz in appearance, but very similar in function and temperament, include the Komondor (also from Hungary), the Anatolian Shepherd (from Turkey), the Shar Planinetz (from Romania), the Caucasian Ovtcharka (from Russia) and the Tibetan Mastiff.

What then, is the origin of the Kuvasz, and how did he and the other flock guardians spread across Eurasia? Some suggest that the Kuvasz is an off-shoot of the Tibetan Mastiff, originating in Tibet, while others suggest his origins to be in ancient Mesopotamia. Dr. Andras Kovacs, a veterinarian and scientist, has undertaken a scholarly review of Kuvasz history and development. He candidly rejects the theory that the Tibetan Mastiff is a progenitor of the Kuvasz. On the basis of archaeological, geographical, and cytogenetic studies of sheep and morphological evidence, he contends that the Kuvasz, and all of the livestock guardians of Eurasia, are from the same stock and arose in the Middle East, probably in the vicinity of Kurdistan. He suggests that the group of flock (i.e. livestock) guards is probably at least 11,000 years old, corresponding with the earliest evidence of domestic sheep (Kovacs 1988). They subsequently spread across Eurasia with the movement of people and their flocks.

Catherine de la Cruz (1995), a respected breeder of Great Pyrenees and devotee of livestock guarding dogs, supports the view of Dr. Andras Kovacs and suggests that the progenitor of existing livestock guarding breeds probably originated in the area of Mesopotamia, where sheep were first domesticated. That corresponds with Kurdistan and roughly includes the present areas of Turkey, Syria and Iraq. She suggests that these ancient livestock guardians spread both eastwards to Tibet (possibly giving rise to the Tibetan Mastiff) and westwards to Spain through a variety of very plausible means.

Certainly, dogs of the Kuvasz type have been used for guarding livestock of all types (sheep, goats, cattle, horses) for centuries, and indeed millennia, and were very successful in spreading throughout much of Eurasia. The dogs invariably accompanied nomadic tribesmen in search for better pastures. That process continues even today. Dogs also accompanied invading armies on their conquests, spreading throughout Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Livestock had to accompany invading armies to feed the troops and dogs were needed to both drive the stock and protect them from predators. Dogs were also trained for war duty, helping to spread various breeds across Eurasia. The Hittites of 2000-1000 BC were such a warrior nation from the Mesopotamian region and undoubtedly helped to spread livestock guards both eastward and westward. Dogs of differing types spread throughout much of Eurasia by such means. The Rottweiler, for example, reportedly accompanied Roman legions as a cattle drover during their conquest

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of northern Europe. Dogs inevitably were left behind to guard newly established settlements, effectively spreading them throughout much of Eurasia.

The famous “Silk Road” was yet another means by which livestock guards spread across vast regions of Europe and Asia. The Silk Road was used as a major trading route for the exchange of a variety of valuables, linking the wealth of the east, China and India, to the Middle East and Europe. As trade grew along this route, the movement of people, their ideas, as well as their livestock and livestock guards, would also increase. These trading routes allowed the spread of dogs and established their use throughout a vast region spreading from Spain and Portugal in the west, to Tibet in the east. The combination of nomadic lifestyles, repeated invasions of different peoples and increased trading along the Silk Road, all help to explain the appearance of several large white livestock guarding breeds that exist across Europe and western Asia.

### ***Similarities Among Flock Guardians***

There are striking similarities within the family of large white, flock guarding breeds in terms of appearance, function and temperament. Their differences, which are minor, are probably due to geographical isolation and restricted breeding (gene pool) over the centuries, which finally manifested itself in “breed standards” from various countries. Breeds very similar to the Kuvasz include the Akbash in Turkey, the Tatra in Poland, the Cuvac in Slovakia (also called Slovak Tchouvatch), the Maremma in Italy and the Great Pyrenees in France and Spain. Only serious fanciers can readily identify the differences between these breeds and the nomadic shepherd didn’t care, so long as the dog did the work. They all performed the same duties and were selected for their effectiveness as guardians, not appearance, throughout the centuries. In fact, the concept of “purebreds” is largely a British invention less than 200 years old and has only been pursued with seriousness over the last century. One must also remember that all of Slovakia was once part of Hungary for over a thousand years. The Slovakian Cuvac and Polish Tatra (Polish Owczarek Podhalanski) emerged out of the same population as the Kuvasz. Recent breed standards proposed by the various countries within the former distribution of the Kuvasz have secured slight variations of breed type. “Excellent” individuals of these breeds are now recognizably different, because of breeders fixing “type”, however medium quality specimens are still very much the same. We are, in effect, selecting for slightly different characteristics under the banner of new breed standards. Antal Kovacs, the father of Dr. Andras Kovacs, both of whom are noted authorities on the Kuvasz, saw several flock guardians in his travels through Italy, Iran and Iraq, which did not differ from the Kuvasz of Hungary.

Debates on the relative effectiveness of the working abilities of these breeds relate more to breed specific biases than reality. Many tend to think that their own breed is superior, without recognizing the common heritage that they all share. The guarding instinct has been deeply ingrained in all of these breeds through centuries and millennia of breeding. They all were, and remain, effective guardians given proper bonding and training. Maintaining the working character of our breeds is a goal well worth pursuing. The

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history of the Kuvasz, and the other livestock guards, is indeed an ancient and very noble one!

### ***Coat Colour in the Flock Guardians***

The issue of coat colour warrants some discussion. As mentioned, there are several livestock guarding breeds which are all white, or primarily white in colour. Some have conjectured that white was selected because the dogs would blend in with the sheep and would be more easily distinguished from predators by both the sheep and the shepherd. They also suggest that it would be easier for the shepherd to come to the aid of his dogs when combating wolves at night. That is, the shepherd would not inadvertently strike his own dog. Yet there are other livestock guards that are not all white, such as the Anatolian Shepherd, the Kangal Dog, Spanish Mastiff, Tibetan Mastiff, Caucasian Ovtcharka, Shar Planinetz, and Castro Laboreiro. These breeds come from regions where sheep and goats are typically colours other than white. That is, the shepherds tended to select for coat colours that conformed to the colour of the stock that the dogs were protecting. Arid regions tended to have to have sheep and goats with tawny brown, gray or black coloured coats, while regions with greater water tended to select for sheep and goats with white coats. White wool could, of course, be dyed to any colour, provided water was not a scarce resource. This very plausible explanation was put forth by Catherine de la Cruz (1995). It helps to explain the variety of coat colours among the various breeds and seems to correlate well with both the colour of the livestock that they traditionally guarded and the relative degree of moisture associated with the regions in which they were traditionally found.

### ***Recent History of the Kuvasz***

Recent history has been very hard on the breed. The breed was almost wiped out during World War II as the Nazis swept through the Hungarian countryside. The advancing German armies killed thousands of loyal guard dogs, as dogs instinctively guarded their properties from the intruders. Thousands more starved as precious food was saved for people. In the early 1950s, when Hungarian breeders attempted to salvage the breed, only twelve surviving Kuvasz could be found in the entire country. All registration records had been destroyed. A breed that had served man as a valuable guardian for millennia had almost been wiped out in one war. Further setbacks occurred during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The breed has since made a good recovery, but has never regained its popularity of pre-World War II. It still remains a rare breed in Canada and although not popular, the breed is making progress in the United States.

## 4.0 The Kuvasz as a Working Dog

The Kuvasz is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost dogs of defense. He is a sensible guard and with proper bonding is totally reliable and safe with livestock. His intelligence, independence and good sense as a guardian make him highly valued as a farm and ranch dog in the management of livestock of all types. He has been successfully used to guard sheep, cattle, horses, and even ratites, such as emus. The job of livestock guardian is his heritage. That is what he was bred for throughout the ages and it is those same qualities that make him highly valued as a family and property guardian.

Maintaining the working, guarding character of the Kuvasz is essential if we are to preserve this ancient, noble breed. The following sections will examine the need for livestock guardians in today's society and will explore the character of the Kuvasz as a fine representative of the ancient livestock guarding group.

### ***Need and Use of Livestock Guard Dogs***

The need for livestock guardians is probably as great today, at least in some regions, as it was in historic times. Certainly, the raising of sheep and goats have declined on a global basis as other fibres have become available, competing with, or replacing wool.

Nevertheless, there are still many regions, even in North America, which are still very active in livestock ranching. Only recently has the concept of using livestock guarding dogs been seriously considered as a means of reducing livestock losses to predators. It has seen much greater progress in the United States, where both the United States Department of Agriculture (Predator Control) and Hampshire College in Massachusetts, have actively researched and promoted the use of livestock guards as an important part of livestock management. The use of livestock guard dogs in Canada is significantly lagging behind the United States, yet it has equal applicability here, or anywhere else.

In North America, the primary predator in most livestock producing areas is no longer the wolf or bear. True, wolves and bears remain predators in some of the more northern and remote livestock rearing areas. Occurrences of livestock losses to these predators are relatively rare and would require special considerations. Nevertheless, livestock guarding dogs have proven quite successful against Wolves, Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Bobcat and Cougar. A minimum of two dogs, and preferably more, are needed which act as a team, or pack, when confronting such large predators. Just as with people, there is strength in numbers. However, in most of our sheep rearing areas it is coyotes, feral or stray dogs, and dog/coyote hybrids (coy-dogs) that are the primary predators. Sheep losses to these predators can be substantial and very costly.

Typically, one thinks of coyote problems as being restricted to the great sheep ranching areas of the mid-west and west, but it is also a problem in the east, including southern Ontario where coyotes are often referred to as "brush wolves". For example, losses of sheep to coyotes and dogs is a major problem in several Counties of southwestern Ontario (including Gray, Bruce and Halton, among others), evoking strong anti-predator

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sentiments among sheep farmers. The fact that feral and free ranging dogs are frequently a major problem to livestock, makes it even harder for farmers to believe that livestock guarding dogs can actually be a solution to their problems!

Calls for major culling of coyote populations through such means as increased hunting, trapping and the return of the bounty system have been made. Fortunately, more and more people are realizing that predators serve an important ecological function by suppressing populations of rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares) and deer from overgrazing their habitats and by keeping these populations healthy and fit. Further, from an ecocentric and historic perspective, predators have every right to coexist with us. That means that we must find ecologically sensitive approaches for managing predator-livestock interactions that do not automatically result in the killing of predators. We need effective techniques for discouraging predators and at the same time we must learn tolerance to coexist with them.

So then, is there a need for livestock protection dogs? Clearly, there is. Livestock protection dogs represent an ideal solution to an age-old problem. We simply need to “import” an ancient “old-world” solution to an on-going animal husbandry problem. These dogs guard both property and animals, forcibly discouraging predators from preying on such easy prey as sheep (or other livestock), thereby forcing them to utilize their natural prey-base. It would only take a few unfortunate encounters before the predators would get the message and start searching for easier prey. The very presence, or scent, of these protection dogs would probably be sufficient to discourage, or at least minimize, any further interaction. The result means fewer livestock losses, only offending animals are “targeted”, and predators and people learn to co-exist in the same environment. This is not a high-tech solution, but it is effective and is ecologically, as well as ethically, sound. We need to promote the wise use of our breed, and others, for this age-old task. We need to promote tolerance of predators and encourage ecologically sensitive approaches for managing their interactions with livestock and people.

### ***Current Use of Livestock Guarding Breeds in North America***

The use of livestock guard dogs is relatively new in North America and is still a rarity in Canada, yet it continues to thrive in parts of Europe. Romania, for example, has one of the largest bear and wolf populations in all of eastern Europe and they are also a major producer of sheep. Losses to sheep are minimal and not considered a problem, largely because of the traditional use of livestock guard dogs (Leslie et al. 1995).

The use of guard dogs in North America received a major boost in the mid 1970's when Ray and Lorna Coppinger began to seriously investigate the effectiveness of livestock guard dogs for reducing predation. They began the Livestock Guard Dog Project at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts and imported many working dogs of various breeds from Europe. They placed the dogs with ranchers, helped to develop practical training advice and monitored the effectiveness of the dogs. The dogs have proven to be very successful in reducing predation losses and consequently their program has expanded considerably. They have since formed the Livestock Guard Dog



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Association which maintains an active registry of working dogs and performance data. The Kuvasz is among the 12 breeds currently being used for such purposes. They have had such success with their program that the program has expanded internationally and they have since taken their dogs and/or information to Argentina, Namibia, Slovakia, England, Italy, Canada and Switzerland (Lorna Coppinger, pers. comm.). Their return to Europe may seem odd, but several areas of Europe have lost the traditional skills of livestock management.

The success of the Hampshire College work in the eastern United States is complemented by a similar program by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the western States. Roger Woodruff and Jeffrey Green have been conducting similar studies throughout the western and mid-western States. They now estimate that more than 50% of the sheep ranchers in the mid-west and western States are using livestock guard dogs. The dogs are not infallible, but the results have been very impressive, even on open range land. All of the breeds are effective if bonded to livestock at an early age. Although the success rate among breeds did not differ, there were however, some behavioural differences in degree of aggressiveness (or likelihood of biting) towards people or strange dogs, with the Great Pyrenees being less aggressive in these situations. Great Pyrenees also tend to mature more quickly than the other livestock guards.

Of the breeds in current use through the USDA program, the Great Pyrenees is most common (57%), followed by the Komondor (18%), the Akbash (8%) and the Anatolian Shepherd (7%) with other breeds making up the remainder (Green and Woodruff 1993). This is largely a function of availability and cost of working dogs, not ability of the breeds per se. Unfortunately the Kuvasz is poorly represented in these statistics, yet there is much anecdotal evidence demonstrating that our breed is very much the equal of any of the other guarding breeds. The breeders of the Kuvasz need to reassert their breed as a respected member of this ancient working group.

### ***Kuvaszok as Livestock Protectors***

The Kuvasz is blessed with considerable intelligence and independence of spirit and is expected to possess good sense when interpreting real threats. They are expected to think for themselves with little human contact during their working duties. They will survey their territory and watch over stock and may develop their own routines for watching over their charges. This independent trait is a great asset for the working livestock guard, but may be a source of frustration to the companion dog owner. This is an essential behavioural trait of our breed and the related livestock guarding breeds and must be preserved. This does not mean that they are not devoted to their human family. The Kuvasz forms very strong bonds with his family, yet retains a strong sense of independence and dignity.

The breed is powerfully built, fast and agile, with remarkable courage in attack. What he doesn't have in size (some of the other breeds such as the Great Pyrenees and Akbash may be a little larger), he compensates with agility, speed and daring in attack. As stated by Sarkany and Oscag (1987), Hungarian authorities on the Kuvasz: "To carry out his

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work, a Kuvasz needed a good sense of smell, powerful teeth, eagerness in attack, never fading courage and, above all, steel-like muscles....They had to win the fight with the wolf, so they had to excel their enemy in agility and speed”. Bigger does not mean better (soundness does). There are no differences in the guarding abilities of males or females, proving that size is not the key factor. Nor are there any real differences between intact versus neutered animals (Green and Woodruff 1993). In fact, there are benefits of having neutered dogs in that they are never out of commission, or distracted when the bitches come in heat, leaving the flock unattended. This has been confirmed by the studies of the USDA and Hampshire College.

So how effective is our present Kuvasz as a livestock guard? Many of us feel that the Kuvasz has retained the essential instincts and aptitudes to be a superior guard. Certainly, the breed has not been overly popularized, with all the associated health and temperament problems that inevitably occur. He remains an essentially robust, healthy, natural breed. All of the livestock guards have well developed, ancestral guarding instincts, whether they be guarding stock, people or territory. It is the view of the Kuvasz Club of Canada that working stock, show stock and breeding stock must be the same. That has been the basic tenet of Joy Levy, President of the Middle Atlantic States Komondor Club, Inc. for many years and we wholeheartedly agree. A pup of sound breeding should perform equally well on the range, as a home companion and guardian, or as a show dog (Levy 1995). Several breeders of fine working dogs do not have stock themselves, yet the pups are successfully raised as livestock guardians, while their littermates successfully fit into family life or “show” life. Catherine de la Cruz, a well respected Great Pyrenees breeder, has similar convictions and has demonstrated the full versatility of her own breed and breedings. The key is to maintain proper temperament and physical soundness. When you have that, the Kuvasz, or any of the livestock guardians, will excel at their traditional work, and apply those same well-developed instincts to the protection of your family and property.

### ***The Working Kuvasz: Anecdotal Evidence***

We have heard several stories about the Kuvasz successfully protecting sheep, ratites (emu and other large flightless birds), cattle and other farm animals from predators. He is also very adept at working with horses and was in fact historically known for both guarding and working with war horses. The Kuvasz has been a premier working dog for centuries and continues his work with little or no fanfare or acknowledgment. The following highlight just a few examples of successful Kuvaszok at work. These examples demonstrate the versatility of the Kuvasz as a livestock guardian. Kuvaszok have proven equally adept as guardians of small farms in the east, to large ranches in the west and have proven to be capable, hardy guardians of flocks in free-range conditions in semi-wilderness country. He has been used successfully against coyotes and dogs and has proven his worth against such large predators as wolves, bear (black and grizzly) and cougar. His working heritage and guardian instinct remains strong. Several of these stories were conveyed to me by Dorothy Grosart, who has contributed greatly to the Kuvasz in Canada.

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Dorothy Grosart informed me about one of her dogs that was placed as a working farm dog in northern Manitoba. This dog proved very successful in his duty of protecting against his historical adversary, the wolf. A wolf pack had moved into the area, causing local farmers considerable concern for their livestock. The dog had actually engaged the pack, while protecting the flock and a fight ensued. The dog was injured in the fight, but did recover. No animals were lost and the wolves apparently moved on, possibly frustrated by the encounter. The dog remained an effective guardian.

Dorothy also provided the following excellent example of Kuvasz "Matt" performing his age-old duty of livestock guardian on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Andre Peter Kirk. The Kirks raise sheep on their property near Powassan in northern Ontario where wolves, coyotes and black bears are natural predators. Mr. Kirk, a respected dog obedience trial judge and dog fancier, wisely chose the Kuvasz as a guardian for his flock. Kuvasz "Matt" was about two years old when he went to the farm in 1990. Matt was immediately put with the sheep and there was no problem. Matt lives with the sheep in the barn and stays with them in the field. He lies across an open gateway which connects two fields and keeps a careful watch over his charges. When he sees fit, he stretches, rises and herds the sheep into the other field and then lies down again in the gateway. Matt does not worry about the fact that he is not suppose to be a herding dog. He knows where he wants his charges to be. The Kirk's have never lost a lamb to predators since the arrival of Matt. Their neighbour, who does not use dogs, loses sheep every year.

The Kirk's also have Border Collies which are herding specialists. They claim that their Borders can accomplish in 3 minutes what would take them 45 minutes. The Border Collies do the herding, while the much larger Kuvasz provides the protection and in Matt's case, the occasional herding. This is an excellent example of working dogs performing the work for which they were created. Not only are the sheep well protected and the Kirk's investment secured, but the predators also continue to survive unpersecuted.

Dorothy provided yet another example of the Kuvasz' watchfulness and guarding ability. Some 20 years ago, a group of Kuvasz exhibitors were gathered in Calgary for a booster show. Charles Fabo, the importer and owner of the legendary Ch. Budagyongye Opal, drove three visitors to the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Cyfra. There they met Csabagyongye Betyar, a Kuvasz who was acting as a guardian of home, property and livestock. Betyar, self-taught, made daily rounds of the farm's boundaries, then took up a position on the farm balcony, or a rise at the front of the farm. From that vantage point, he kept an eye on the driveway, the highway, the fields and the livestock. He was in control and nothing escaped his observation. He could chase off stray dogs or coyotes and sound the warning of visitors approaching the house. He was quite accepting of visitors welcomed by his owners. His style of making the rounds (scent marking), and positioning himself on a vantage point to watch over his charges, property and family, characterize the essence of the working Kuvasz. They may not be busy as in highly active, but they are forever watchful, loyal and ready to protect should the need arise.

Another fine example of Kuvaszok excelling in their traditional role as livestock guardians was provided to me in a letter (dated January, 30, 1998) from Hugh Anderson of Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. He writes that the guardian

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Kuvasz is alive and well in British Columbia and is considered, together with the Great Pyrenees, to be the livestock guard of choice by some of the largest sheep operations in B.C. He went on to write: "I live on Vancouver Island in the Alberni Valley surrounded by mountains. Our family has 120 acres on the Beaufort Mountain range. We raise sheep and cattle and our area has bear, wolves and cougars, just to mention a few predators. There are wild dogs, as well as household dogs, who occasionally kill livestock. Our family had two Great Pyrenees on the farm and currently we have a 3 year old male Kuvasz (Beck) and a 2 year old female (Wea). Neither have been in our home and they are used as guardian dogs for the livestock and our property".

Mr. Anderson goes on to say that "I am a bit of a purist in that I strongly believe that a dog bred for a specific purpose should be used for that purpose and the Kuvasz, given a livestock protection role, is excellent in that role and develops into a healthy physical and mental dog. I estimate our dogs travel 10-15 miles per day, patrolling the property and investigating possible intrusions. This is important because of the size and strength of the Kuvasz and the need to work to release their tremendous energy. We have noted that our Kuvasz as they mature take their responsibility more and more serious. They do not require training to guard, they do it naturally. It would be helpful if young dogs had an older dog to follow by example, but they have the natural instinct to guard and it just takes a bit longer to assume their responsibilities".

Hugh Anderson summarized that "all and all, I find the Kuvasz a faithful friend, an excellent companion and a superb guardian. We have watched our young dogs chase bears off the property and more amazingly, not allow Turkey Buzzards to land on our property when our ewes were lambing". Mr. Anderson's dogs are CKC and AKC registered, and are fine working dogs. His male is from strong Hungarian lines and he plans to selectively breed and place his pups in good working homes. Clearly, the Kuvasz has retained his ancient working aptitudes and thanks to people like Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, the breed's working character can be tested and perpetuated.

The Kuvasz was historically used to guard against large predators such as the wolf and bear. His ability has not diminished as he continues to be an effective guardian against these large predators. Green and Woodruff (1989) described the following encounter between a Kuvasz and a Black Bear. In this case a single Kuvasz (male, 1.5 yrs.) was used for guarding 80 sheep (Minnesota). The bear apparently attacked the flock during the night. The dog fought the bear and was successful in driving the bear away from the flock. The dog was injured (several incisors were knocked out) during the fight, but the injuries were not life-threatening. One ewe was injured, but none were killed. The bear apparently moved on and the dog survived to continue his duties.

Yet another example was cited in *The Candle* (1994, vol.18), the Newsletter of the Kuvasz Fanciers of America. In this case, a single female Kuvasz was successful in eliminating sheep predation from a cougar on the farm of Evelyn Elledge of Placerville, California. The cougar had been making nightly raids killing sheep prior to the use of the Kuvasz. What is even more remarkable was the fact that the Kuvasz was rescued as an adult from an animal shelter and subsequently bonded to the sheep as an effective

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guardian. The dog was bred by Shasta Kuvaszok. This proves that even adults, not previously raised with livestock, can with nurturing, become effective livestock guardians!

In British Columbia, sheep are actually used as a silvicultural technique following large forest clear-cuts. The grazing of sheep in these fresh clear-cuts, reduces competition from forbes and herbs and other broad-leafed plants, thereby increasing the success of young conifer seedlings. These openings are attract bears seeking berries and the use of sheep also attract numerous other predators including wolves, coyotes, grizzly and black bears and cougars. The clear-cuts are often large, on open, unfenced, and rugged terrain. Similarly, the flocks are also large, each typically numbering over 1500. These flocks present a strong attraction for predators. The management of such flocks requires the need for dogs for both keeping the flock intact (herders) and for their protection. Once again, the Hungarian Kuvasz has demonstrated his superb working aptitudes as a rugged guardian in these remote semi-wilderness conditions.

Dennis Loxton, the owner of Loxton Sheep Co. Ltd, which specializes in the use of sheep for forest vegetation management, had the following to say about the use and value of dogs to his operation (Business Logger, October 1997): “We select breeds that are tough enough to survive and keep on working”. For herding dogs he prefers Australian Kelpies in addition to the Border Collie. His guardian dogs include the Great Pyrenees and the Hungarian Kuvasz. For each flock of 1500, or more sheep, he has about 5 or six herding dogs and an equivalent number of guardian dogs. Skeptics never believed that his operation would work because of the large population of bears, but his guard dogs have proven them wrong. He goes on to say: “The Great Pyrenees and the Hungarian Kuvasz are my two favourite guardian breeds. The Great Pyrenees is a bruiser. He’s a big muscular guy who stands his ground and he says: Get lost! The Hungarian Kuvasz is a faster animal, and he says: Get lost, here I come and I am going to bite you. The Kuvasz will run out and attack right now. The Pyr will stand his ground between the predator and his sheep. As a guarding dog team, together they are pretty well foolproof.” Just how successful has his guarding dogs been? In his seven years in the vegetation/sheep management business Loxton has lost only 5 out of the thousands of sheep he has managed. Those losses were on two separate occasions and to large Grizzlies that were malnourished and desperate for food. However, under most situations the dogs have proven highly effective against these large predators and act as a coordinated guarding pack to drive off the predators. The success of his operation is remarkable and it is largely attributed to the hardiness and working ability of his dogs.

Dorothy Hinshaw Patent has written an engaging children’s book chronicling the life of “Maggie, A Sheep Dog” (Patent 1986). Maggie is a Hungarian Kuvasz that dutifully performs her job of protecting the sheep of Richard and Shelley Knight on a ranch in Montana. This is an excellent book, well illustrated, showing how she goes about her duty as a flock guardian, constantly on the look-out for coyotes. It is another true example of a Kuvasz performing its traditional work and it is described in a simple, yet very effective manner suitable for children. Maggie’s brother is on the neighbouring

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ranch performing the same traditional duties. For Kuvasz fanciers, it is a nicely illustrated publication, well worth picking up.

A touching story of selfless protective behaviour was exhibited by a Kuvasz (appropriately named Matthias) owned by the Finbow family in British Columbia (Kuvasz Club of Canada Newsletter, Spring 1995). The dog saved a small child (in his family) that was in the path of a charging horse. The dog immediately charged the horse and stopped him in his tracks, saving the 3 year old boy. Neither the horse, nor the dog were injured, but a human life was saved! The action was instinctive, quick and decisive. Kris credits her Kuvasz, Matthias, with saving her son's life. She went on to say her Kuvasz had been criticized by some as being too friendly (i.e. not aloof enough) because of his happy demeanor in dog shows. Yet Matthias has proven himself to be loving, kind, intelligent and brave. "He acted on pure Kuvasz instinct, had perfect timing, tremendous aggression towards the 1000 pound charging horse and acted without thought to himself; all to protect my son" (ibid.). Matthias is a working farm dog, a family companion and a well-socialized show dog, all in one, demonstrating the versatility of the Kuvasz!!

In all but the British Columbia examples, only a single dog was used for guarding. Two or more dogs would certainly increase the odds in favour of the dogs and should be considered essential for large operations, or when dealing with large predators, as described for the B.C. operations. The bottom line is that our breed still exhibits pronounced protective and defensive behaviours that are consistent with the group of livestock guardians. At the same time they are gentle, devoted and totally reliable with stock and their human family. This is the essence of the Kuvasz. This is the working character that we should be striving to preserve in all of our breeding programs.

### ***Characteristics of an Effective Livestock Guardian***

Good livestock guardians are not hyper dogs. They are typically very calm and are quietly accepted by the stock in their charge. They do not herd or drive stock and accordingly have low "prey drive", in sharp contrast to the smaller herding breeds. They will often be seen quietly walking around the perimeter of the flock or resting from a vantage point, where they can survey the flock and territory under their charge. Their calm deportment contrasts the high activity levels of the herding dog. Their duty is simply to protect. Accordingly, they must be attentive to the flock (or herd, etc.) and not harm them. They will typically mark their territory, letting other predators know of their presence. Should some threat appear, they will sound the alarm, barking to let the intruder know that a larger and more powerful dog has staked claim to the territory. If that fails, aggression heightens with initial bluff displays followed by chasing and full blown attack. It is an effective "mark-warn-chase-attack" sequence which gives the intruder every chance to escape before any physical confrontation occurs and it has been remarkably effective throughout the millennia.

A good livestock guard is very gentle with the animals under his charge and has strong protective instincts towards all animals (livestock or people) that he has bonded to. This is believed to be an extension of extremely strong paternal and maternal instincts that

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have been selected for throughout the millennia. They frequently have very strong instincts to protect young animals (and children by extension), and there are several reports and pictures of bitches suckling young lambs or calves, or attempting to clean new-born lambs. An overly aggressive dog, or a dog which rough-houses with young stock can be a liability. Selection pressures for an effective livestock guard favours a calm, gentle dog that is attentive, reliable and protective of his extended family. Even the look of a flock-guardian's face is one of gentleness. The drop-ears and soft expression are almost puppy-like, eliciting calmness amongst the animals in their charge. Contrast this "soft" expression with the "sharp" features and erect ears of many of the herding breeds which tend to facially resemble predators. Sheep react nervously to the herding breeds, while showing calmness with the flock-guardians.

### ***Aggressiveness: An Asset or Liability?***

Much has been said about the desirability of aggressiveness (hardness or sharpness) and size in livestock guards. There continues to be debates even among Kuvasz fanciers as to the degree of aggressiveness that should be inherent in the breed. It is the contention of the Kuvasz Club of Canada that aggressiveness should only be evident when there is a real threat. An overly aggressive dog is not necessarily a more effective guardian and in fact, may be a liability to the owner. Some dogs interpret anything out of the routine as an absolute threat and expend considerable energy in investigative wanderings and aggressive gesturing. Hyper aggression towards people can be a real problem, with the dog paying the ultimate price should it become a biter. We believe that a good livestock guard should investigate anything out of the routine, but should only show aggression when confronted with a real threat. They will and should "mark" their territory, providing olfactory warnings to interlopers of their presence, but even then, they should always be attentive and near the flock, ever ready to protect should the need arise.

A few more comments on hardness or aggressiveness are warranted. Historically Kuvasz and Komondor were noted for their aggressiveness and willingness to attack and that included people (Sarcany and Oscag 1987). Dogs were used to protect against thieves and were even pressed into war duty. Today in North America, overly aggressive or sharp dogs are considered a liability and untrustworthy in most family or farm situations. Does "hardness" convey courage or simply hyper aggression? As always, it is a matter of degree. A "softer" dog, that is totally safe with stock and family, that can be aroused by a threat, is the ideal in our opinion. Courage and self-confidence, coupled with good sense in sizing up a real threat is what is needed, not a trigger-happy attack dog. Remember the North American context and anti-breed legislation! An overly aggressive dog is not necessarily a more capable protector and may be a personal liability and detract from our breed image. Sharp strains of Kuvasz do exist, "hard" dogs are often preferred in Hungary, but we prefer the softer dog which has retained good discriminatory powers for real threats. He provides all the protection of the sharper lines but without the liability! He can be a formidable guard of stock and home, but retains a sense of calmness, gentleness and self-confidence and is totally trustworthy with his extended family. In our view, that type of temperament is still consistent with true Kuvasz character and is a

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better fit for our North American culture. The Kuvasz is adapting to changing times, while still retaining true guarding character.

### ***Obtaining a Kuvasz for Livestock Protection***

Several advocates of working dogs believe that the only source of good dogs are from the parents of working dogs. They are, after all, proven performers. On the other hand, many fine livestock guardians come from breeders who do not have “stock” to work their own dogs. Yet the dog’s basic guardian instincts can be effectively channeled to guard whatever its “family” may be, be it livestock or people and property. Clearly this is a divisive controversy which needn’t take place provided we breed for correct character and sound conformation. There are many fine examples of highly successful livestock guards that have been purchased from reputable breeders whose breeding stock are not “working” dogs. This is true for Kuvasz, Komondor and Great Pyrenees, all registered dog breeds. Not all breeders live on ranches and have stock for their dogs to protect. Yet they are breeding for the correct characteristics and the dogs quickly extend their well developed guarding instincts to protect whatever they are bonded to. These breeders fundamentally believe that working stock, show stock and breeding stock **MUST BE THE SAME**. That means breeding for the total dog - structurally sound with the stamina and correct instincts to be superb, trustworthy, guardians of stock, family and property. It can be done and several breeders have proven it. However, it can also be said that not all show dog breeders are selecting for, or are interested in, true working character. Conversely, not all pups from working parents will be successful as livestock guards, any more than children are guaranteed to possess the same aptitudes and skills as their parents. What is more important, is that you understand correct temperament for the breed and visit well established kennels dedicated to preserving the working heritage of the breed. You should look for reasonable guarantees against genetic defects, and on-going commitment to their pups long after the sale. See the parents, judge their character and ask for references. Has the breeder sold pups to working homes? Have they been successful workers? Can the breeder give you reliable training advice? The rest is up to you - correctly channeling the inbred guardian instincts of your dog(s) to protect both animals and property. That also means providing guidance and basic training during the critical puppy and adolescent period.

For those of you that are convinced that pups from working stock is the only answer, I refer you to the work of Ray and Lorna Coppinger and their Livestock Guard Dog Association (Hampshire College, MA) which registers working dogs and the work of Jeffrey Green and Roger Woodruff, Livestock Guard Dog Specialists with the USDA (see Appendix for addresses).

### ***Training of the Livestock Guardian***

Some of the best advice on training livestock guards are from:



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- (a) Sims and Dawydiak (1990) in their excellent book, *Livestock Protection Dogs* (OTR Publications);
- (b) Green and Woodruff (1993) in their USDA publication, *Livestock Guarding Dogs: Protecting Sheep from Predators*;
- (c) Lorna and Ray Coppinger's *Livestock Guard Dog Association*, Hampshire College Box FC Amherst MA 01002. They have produced several publications and their association is dedicated to the registry of working dogs and provides a forum for communicating results and performance records.
- (d) Publications prepared by Jay Lorenz (1986, 1989) of the Oregon State University Extension Service on the use of livestock-guarding dogs.
- (e) Publications from the various livestock guard dog breed clubs. Besides the Kuvasz Club of Canada, valuable information and advice may be found from Komondor News, the Newsletter of the Middle Atlantic Komondor Club Inc.; Choban Chatter, the Newsletter of the Anatolian Shepherd Dogs International, Inc.; as well as Akbash Dogs International, among others.

Advice about dogs, or for that matter most issues, is not hard to find. All too frequently the advice is conflicting, representing different schools of thought and biases. One needs to have an open mind and be critical, yet respectful of the advice received. Finally, there is no substitute for good sense and experience. Having said that, I'll briefly outline two opposing schools of thought for the training of livestock guards (Webb 1991):

- (1) Introduce young pups (6-8 weeks) to the flock (usually young lambs within a pen), and withdraw human attention to ensure that the pups completely bond with the animals. The intent is to have the pups socialized upon the animals that they are expected to protect, rather than upon human companions. In this scenario, the dogs bond primarily to the livestock, and receive little human contact, outside of the master who provides basic needs (food, water).
- (2) Socialize the pup with people at an early age (6-8 weeks) so that it will be gentle and non-threatening with children and adults. At the same time, introduce the pup to gentle members of the flock (usually lambs or adults used to dogs) to extend its family circle or bonding process. The pup should still be left in the pen with stock, but the socialization process with people continues. Grooming and basic training to establish control and respect is encouraged, even though the pup spends most of the time with the animals that it will eventually protect. As the pup grows older (4 to 6 months), it is transferred to the main flock, with supervision, until reliable. The preferred outcome is that the dog will prefer to stay with the livestock that it has bonded to, but will happily greet its master, protect home and property and accept the presence of non-threatening strangers.

The former approach is often recommended, but in my view, it has definite problems. Certainly the dog will treat the animals that it has bonded to as an extended family and will provide protection as it matures. This process is often recommended for range animals which must be with livestock in remote locations for days at a time with minimal or no human contact. It is the method of choice used with great success by the Loxton

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Sheep Co. of British Columbia. Automatic feeders, or feed dropped off at strategic locations, further reduces human contact. The lack of socialization often results in very aggressive behaviour (or sometimes shyness) around people that the dog does not know. Some breeds tend to be more people aggressive than others. The Komondor, Akbash, Anatolian Shepherd and Kuvasz can all be people aggressive if insufficiently socialized. These breeds are naturally suspicious of strangers and will sound the alarm even when socialized. Aggression can be even more pronounced without socialization. The Great Pyrenees, in contrast, tends to be less people aggressive and hence perhaps more suitable for this approach. Depending upon the breed and the individual nature of the dog, a trespasser unwittingly disturbing stock could find himself confronted by an enraged dog and perhaps be bitten. During former periods of cattle rustling, and thievery, such behaviour may have been condoned, or even desired. Today, such behaviour is frequently regarded as a liability, even though the dog was simply following his guarding instincts. Other problems arise when taking the dog to the veterinarian for medical care or annual boosters. An unsocialized dog can present very nasty challenges and problems for the veterinarian and experience considerable stress and trauma from being handled.

I feel that the second approach makes far more sense for most farm and ranch conditions. The dog will naturally protect all of the animals under its charge and be far more accepting of human contact. Socialization will not diminish the guarding instinct, but it will let the dog know that not all people represent a threat. Your family will be a part of the dog's extended family and he will be gentle and protective of you, your children and the stock. On neutral territory, such as at a vet clinic, the dog will be far calmer and accepting of human contact and examination. It is, in my view, the best of both worlds! Similar views have been expressed by Ruth Webb (1991) of Anatolian Shepherd Dogs International, Inc.; Catherine de la Cruz, a Great Pyrenees breeder; and Joy Levy, President of the Middle Atlantic States Komondor Club, Inc. They have all experienced considerable success using this balanced approach for training livestock guard dogs. In fact, several have reported dogs that can do it all! These dogs work and stay with the livestock, yet are devoted to their human family and may even be groomed and shown in conformation. A temperamentally and physically sound dog, with proper socialization and training, can adapt to any situation, work, home or show! They represent the "total" dog that we are striving to preserve.

### ***Training Adults as Livestock Guards***

Dogs destined to be livestock guards should ideally be bonded to livestock from early puppyhood as described. However, this does not mean that adults, not bonded on stock as pups, cannot become effective livestock guardians. There have been several cases where mature adults have successfully bonded to livestock and have effectively carried out their guardian duties. It requires time and patience, but if you introduce the dog to the stock, the dog will often recognize the animals as part of his extended family that must be protected. Several instances have been cited of adults making a successful transition to livestock guarding with the encouragement and early supervision of the owners. I previously cited the instance of a rescued adult female Kuvasz (from an animal shelter)

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that successfully protected sheep from nightly raids by a cougar and yet another instance of an adult male that immediately took to his role of guarding sheep. Similar instances have been reported by owners of Great Pyrenees and Komondorok. These breeds are natural guardians and once they've bonded to their new family and territory, it only stands to reason that they will guard them from any intruder. It can be done, but demands patience and careful supervision at the start. All else being equal, I would still recommend starting with a pup as previously described.

### ***Successful Working Dogs: The Human Side of the Equation***

Other generic comments are worth noting on the training of livestock guards. First, is that you should love dogs and want to work with your dogs to reinforce what you expect of them. Kuvaszok are natural guardians, but like all dogs, need nurturing especially through the adolescent stage when they are most apt to get into trouble. Be firm, consistent and fair in dealing with the dog and maintain control! Walk the dog on lead around the pasture that it will be guarding so that its territory is well understood. Mend fences to discourage the dog from straying or going near roads. Encourage the dog to stay with the flock (or herd or whatever animals it is to protect) and discourage play around your home. It has a job to do! Go to the dog if you want some down-time play. Be affectionate, but reinforce that the dog should stay with the animals. Discourage rough-housing with the animals! This is most apt to occur when the dog is an adolescent and is looking for a playmate. A firm NO(!) in a disapproving voice should be sufficient, followed with careful monitoring of the situation before it develops into problem behaviour. Encourage the dog to chase stray dogs off the property and discourage play behaviour with strange dogs. In many areas the problem is stray dogs harassing livestock, rather than wild predators. Anything harassing stock should be regarded as a threat and you should encourage the young dog to give chase. Work with your dog, nurture good behaviour and reprimand poor behaviour throughout puppyhood and the adolescent period. Your dog will quickly catch on, direct his guarding instincts appropriately and will provide you with years of loyal, faithful service as an adult. Your older, experienced dog will, in turn, also help to train future young pups to fall into the appropriate guarding pattern. Conversely, a poorly trained adult will be a poor mentor for any young pups. That is all the more reason to take the time to work with your first livestock guardian! The publications by Marilyn Gribble (*The Hungarian Komondor*) and Henny Adams (*The Diary of Maggie*) provide good, practical advice on the raising of livestock guards (available through the Middle Atlantic States Komondor Club, Inc.). Although these publications concern Komondorok, their advice is equally applicable to the Kuvasz, or other livestock guardians.

The Kuvasz is slow to mature. As an adult the Kuvasz is very serious about his guarding behaviour, however it may take a year or more for the guarding behaviour to really emerge and it may take 3 years or more for the dog to fully mature. German Shepherds, in contrast, mature much more rapidly and show guarding behaviour at a much younger age. Don't expect miracles from a young dog. Have patience and your patience will be well rewarded

### ***How Many Dogs for Your Operation?***

The size of your operation, the type and intensity of predation, the nature of the grazing land and the characteristics of your livestock (naturally flock oriented, or dispersed) will all factor into the decision. You need to be fair and realistic in your expectations. Small flocks (50-100) in fenced pastureland can be effectively attended by one dog. If you have a large flock, or herd, with major predation problems, you will probably need at least two dogs and possibly several. A single dog cannot be everywhere at once, especially if the stock are not naturally flock-oriented. Large predators, or packs, present real threats and problems to a single dog. A single dog could easily be killed if out-numbered or out-powered. Several dogs, bonded together as a pack or team, will be far more successful in dealing with large predators such as bear, wolves, cougar, or even packs of coyotes or feral dogs. There is strength in numbers, and several guard dogs will be far more successful in protecting large flocks in open rangelands against large predators. Broken terrain, with plenty of shrub or forest cover for predator concealment and escape cover, will present greater problems for your dogs than wide open rangeland. Nevertheless, dogs have proven very successful under all of these conditions and more. In addition, you need to work your livestock as well and pen them or place them in the barn during adverse conditions. Your dogs will stay with the stock in virtually all cases. You and your dogs should be a team in the management of livestock.

The type of operation that you have will also influence training technique, pup selection criteria (i.e. degree of reserve or independence), and number of dogs required. In the east, where sheep and cattle are typically raised in fenced farm pastures of varying sizes, the advice previously given holds true. The dogs should naturally stay with the flock or herd and you should make strong efforts to reinforce his sense of territory by walking him around the fenced pasture and reprimanding any attempts to escape fenced areas. Open range conditions, more typical of mid-western and western Canada and United States, require very independent dogs that are strongly flock-oriented (Green and Woodruff 1993). You will need self-feeding (and water) containers that are livestock-proof, but not dog-proof! You will have to establish a feeding pattern and location. Nurturing and working with the young dog is critical for the development of a mature, independent, effective guardian. It can be done, but again requires patience and fostering of appropriate behaviour during the adolescent years.

The ideal operation works as a team on open-range conditions with a Shepherd (rancher), typically on horseback, and both herding dogs such as the Border Collie or Australian Kelpie, and livestock guardians such as the Kuvasz. The herding dogs keep the flock, or herd together and drive the animals under the direction of the shepherd. The guarding dogs serve one function only and that is to protect! They are most active at night when predators are most active. Once properly bonded and trained (desirable behaviours reinforced and undesirable ones discouraged) the role of the shepherd becomes diminished. There are several successful operations where flock and dogs are on open range for several days at a time without human presence. The dogs stay with the flock, providing continuous protection. An integrated team approach for livestock management, wherein the shepherd, or rancher, actively oversees and manages his operation in the field

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and checks his stock and dogs daily for health and injury problems seems the ideal approach. The Loxton Sheep Company in British Columbia is an excellent example and model of such an operation. Again, the older, experienced guard dogs can be invaluable for the training of future pups and adolescents, minimizing your future time investment.

The Kuvasz has proven adept at working in virtually all of the situations described, from small farm operations, where the dog is a dual purpose livestock/family (and property) guardian, to remote wilderness situations guarding large free ranging flocks against large predators. The Kuvasz is a hardy, intelligent working breed with well developed guardian instincts that can be adapted to a wide variety of circumstances. The goal of the Kuvasz Club of Canada is to preserve those characteristics within the breed.

### ***More on Owner Responsibility***

Other responsibilities associated with the use of livestock guardians include the spaying and neutering of non-breeding animals to minimize inter-male aggression and to ensure that livestock are protected year-round (dogs and bitches will be distracted from their guarding duties when the bitches are in oestrus). It also means frequent visits to check the health of your guardians and to check for any injuries which can occur on open range conditions, as your dogs fend off predators from injuring your stock. Remember, these are faithful working dogs facing hazardous, potentially life-threatening conditions every day. Your dogs will naturally protect their flock (or other animals) to the point of self-sacrifice. Accordingly, they deserve the best of care, nurturing and feed that you can give them!!

Working dogs are exposed to many more life-threatening hazards than the typical companion dog. Mortality rates of adolescents (up to 2 years) can be quite high, especially if they are not nurtured or trained, or in the company of an older experienced dog. It is up to you, the owner, to give the necessary care to ensure that they live healthy lives and positively contribute to your operation. Once through the difficult adolescent stage, your dog(s) should provide many years of devoted, reliable service. When your dog is old, give him the benefit of a comfortable retirement, either as a companion, home dog or more restricted activities with animals around the barn.

A Kuvasz, or similar breed, can be a very important part of your livestock operation! The dog will be happy performing a traditional task that his ancestors have been performing since the dawn of civilization. Your efforts will be rewarded through fewer livestock losses and the addition of a very noble and devoted member to your family and operation! Predators will coexist in a richer and healthier environment. That age-old relationship of dog serving man in the protection of people and their livestock will have finally reasserted itself. Finally, livestock guards should be just one component (albeit an important one) of your overall livestock and predator management program. Treat your dogs well and fairly and you will be rewarded with a lifetime of devoted service!

## 5.0 The Kuvasz as a Companion Dog and Property Guardian

The Kuvasz today usually finds himself in the role of family companion and self-appointed guardian of home and property. His working instinct as a guard is simply transferred to his new home. His family, including other animals within the “family”, and property, will all be protected from intruders and possible threats. It is up to you, as the owner, to direct his guardian instincts appropriately. That means early socialization with other people, both adults and children, and continuous reinforcement of that socialization throughout his life. It also means that you should formally introduce your dog to friends and newcomers every time they come to your home or come on to your property. Your dog will quickly accept close friends of the family, but will be suspicious with new people or casual acquaintances. Remember, that a guard dog that loves everybody, is of little value as a guard. All of the guardian breeds are naturally suspicious of strangers and will sound the alarm when a stranger comes to your home. They usually settle down quickly once they realize that there is no threat and that the stranger is welcomed by the family. Guarding comes natural to the Kuvasz. To expect him, or train him, not to guard is contrary to the essence of the breed!

There is a real sense of security living with a well behaved guard dog, such as the Kuvasz. Sarcany and Ocsag (1987) claim that the Kuvasz tops the list of all guard dogs because of their courage, loyalty and daring. Guarding of property, estates and homes is a natural for the breed without any special training. The breed’s devotion is extreme and they are very gentle with their family. They adore children (assuming that they have been raised, or socialized with them), love to be in their presence and are very protective of them. Once again, that protectiveness may very well mean some supervision, especially when neighbouring children are playing and rough-housing with your children. Living with a guarding dog provides tremendous rewards and security but also implies considerable responsibilities from the owners. A well secured fenced area is a must, as is socialization and basic training. You need to think of situations from your dog’s perspective that could trigger a guarding response. In some respects you need to be as protective of your dog as he is of you and your family. Don’t put your dog into a situation where arousing its protective instinct could be to the ultimate detriment of your dog.

The Kuvasz is blessed with a great deal of good sense that can be shaped through socialization and basic training. A sound Kuvasz doesn’t possess the hair-line trigger of uncontrollable aggression that some overly sharp lines of other breeds possess. However, an unsocialized, untrained Kuvasz, or a temperamentally unsound dog, could present very real aggression problems to anyone trespassing its territory. That may be natural, but it is the dog that pays the ultimate price should it bite. We can’t afford a bad reputation with mounting vicious dog legislation in many jurisdictions. Look after your dog and he will look after you.

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There is a natural range in the degree of aggressiveness within various lines of Kuvaszok. All should be effective guardians, but some lines are sharper (aggressive) than others. Choose your breeder wisely and always check out the behaviour of the parents and other breeding stock. It takes a skilled, confident and knowledgeable owner to handle a sharp dog. The calmer dog with a slower fuse is a preferable companion for most families. And remember you will still be given the protection that the Kuvasz is so noted for.

The Kuvasz is an ideal family companion provided you understand what he is and what he is not. His devotion, affection and gentleness is fanatical, while providing you with protection to the point of self-sacrifice. If you are responsible, have deep affection for dogs and experience with guarding breeds, then maybe the Kuvasz is for you. If the match is right, and you provide him the socialization, training and fenced security that he needs, you will be rewarded with a lifetime of devotion and love. We can attest to that fact.

Our Kuvasz, Shadow, has an exemplary, outstanding temperament. He is easy-going, admired by our neighbours and a friend to all of the neighbourhood children. They all seem to know Shadow, and he, in turn is always happy to greet them. Yet in spite of his happy demeanor with the neighbourhood children and neighbours, he is still an effective and sensible guard. How can this be? Is he contrary to the nature of the Kuvasz that I described? I think that there are several factors that make him the wonderful companion that he is. First, he comes from good breeding (Brantwood Kennels) where sound, stable temperament is a top priority. Second, he is not a bully or alpha by nature, but rather, gentle and easy-going, a characteristic that fitted our family situation beautifully. Third, we have had lots of experience with large guardian breeds, notably German Shepherds and have extensive training experience. That is to say, we knew the importance of socialization, of setting firm, but fair rules and how to train our dogs in a rewarding manner. We also had an older well-behaved dog that served as a good mentor, or role model, and a young child with plenty of friends to naturally help in the overall socialization process. The combination of sound breeding, selecting the right temperament for our family, and responsible ownership has resulted in a Kuvasz that is a source of great pride and a delight to showcase anywhere. So yes, the Kuvasz can be an outstanding companion.

### ***Selecting and Raising a Kuvasz as a Companion***

By now you should be fully acquainted with the breed, what it is and what it isn't and fully prepared to give your dog the care, training and love that is needed. This should be a lifetime commitment, not a spur-of-the-moment decision. It is also assumed that you have taken the time to visit reputable breeders, have seen the parents in their home environment, and have a pretty good understanding about their temperament. The Kuvasz Club of Canada and other Kuvasz breed clubs can help you to find breeders, as can the advertisements of the Annual Dogs in Canada and Dog World Magazine. Other sources include the listings from the Livestock Guard Dog Association from Hampshire College, Amherst, MA.

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There are several good publications on selecting and raising a pup which should be read prior to getting a pup. Again, the book by David E. Sims and Orysia Dawydiak (1990) on Livestock Protection Dogs - Selection, Care and Training is highly recommended. This excellent book covers several of the livestock guarding breeds, as well as how to select and train a pup for working (livestock) environments. Their comments on selecting and training a pup also have much relevance to the companion dog, particularly since they are addressing the unique qualities and temperaments of livestock guarding breeds. Another fine book is "The Art of Raising A Puppy" by The Monks of New Skete (1991). The breeder can also help to match the pup to your own family situation.

Don't be surprised if the breeder asks you many questions about how you intend to raise and train your pup. Not everyone should own a Kuvasz and a good breeder knows this and will not place a pup with people who do not understand the breed, or are not prepared to properly care for the breed. A good breeder will be evaluating you as a prospective owner, just as much as you will be evaluating the breeder. In turn, the breeder should let you see the dogs (and not just in the Kennel) and spend some time, under supervision, with them. You should ask about written health, temperament and working guarantees and references. Remember that you are purchasing a living animal and faults and health problems can occur in the finest of breedings. What is important is that the breeder will help you and back his pups from any genetic defects. Luckily, the Kuvasz is a robust and healthy breed compared to many of the highly popular breeds. That does not, however, make him immune to health or genetic problems.

The breeder will probably expect you to sign a non-breeding agreement, or contract, for most companion dogs and should encourage you to spay or neuter your dog at the appropriate age (see your veterinarian). Altering your dog will not affect his ability as a guard, or as a devoted companion. Dogs should only be bred by competent breeders and even then, only the best dogs, exemplifying true Kuvasz working character and sound conformation, should be used. Breeding should only be done, in my opinion, to maintain (or improve) the integrity of the breed, not for mere profit or sentiments. A successful breeding program demands knowledge of the breed, and a long-term commitment (financial, emotional and adequate facilities) to your dogs and the successful placement of pups.

When selecting a pup, it is probably best to avoid the most dominant (or assertive) pup or the shyest (most submissive) of the litter. Independent, dominant pups have already established themselves as the leader, or alpha, amongst their littermates. They will tend to want to assume a leadership role in their adopted family and will likely challenge their owners from time to time for the alpha position. This is perfectly natural, but can be daunting and frightening for a novice or inexperienced owner. They can be great companions and guardians with the right owner, or a nightmare for a soft, lenient owner. Leave these dominant pups to experienced guard dog owners and trainers. The overly submissive, or shy pup, on the other hand will need a great deal of confidence building and socialization to bring out his potential. There is however a difference between real shyness (which includes fearfulness) and reserve. Kuvasz are typically reserved in nature, as are most of the livestock guards. A pup that sits back at first and observes and then approaches you with confidence is showing reserve. This type of pup is quite normal and



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will likely be quite responsive to positive training techniques and with proper socialization will be an absolute pleasure to own! A pup which tries to hide, or shows fear, is shy. Shyness is not desired in the Kuvasz, or for that matter in any breed. Avoid the shy pup! Puppy behaviour will vary between these two extremes and for most owners, pups between the two extremes are probably the best choice. A knowledgeable breeder can help you select the appropriate pup for your own home environment.

Both sexes are equal companions. Many books recommend the females as being easier to train, more docile and more devoted. That however, has not been my experience. The sex of the pup matters little other than your own personal preference. Males tend to be larger, heavier and definitely masculine in appearance. The females are slighter in build, smaller and distinctly feminine. They do look different and each has its own appeal. Both sexes are excellent guards and both are very devoted, loyal companions. You can have very gentle, docile males and very stubborn, fierce females and vice versa. What is important is the temperament of the pup (degree of dominance) and the temperament of the parents. Selecting the appropriate temperament of the pup for your family is far more important in my view than the sex of the pup. Again, the breeder can help you in this regard.

### ***Outdoors or Indoors?***

Before bringing your pup home, you should decide whether your pup will be an indoor or outdoor dog. The Kuvasz is a natural outdoor breed with a coat that can withstand the severest of winters. However, he should have a well-built shelter that he can use to escape harsh conditions. It should be large enough that he can stand and comfortably lay in. The floor should be raised above the ground and well insulated with some type of bedding material (straw or cedar shavings, etc.). The kennel, or yard, should be securely fenced and the dog should not be chained or tied for long periods of time (preferably never), as this can create both frustration and bring out aggressiveness. Fresh water should always be provided, as should shade in the summer. Kuvaszok tolerate, but do not do well in the heat. Shade and an area where they can dig cool holes where they can rest is ideal. The digging behaviour during periods of heat is natural and is their way of cooling down. Providing an area where they can dig seems more reasonable than discouraging a very natural (and understandable) behaviour. If your Kuvasz is destined to be an outdoor dog, make a purposeful attempt to integrate him into your family activities and socialize him with others. Your Kuvasz cannot be a fine companion if it is continually confined to a corner of your property.

Whereas the Kuvasz is a natural outdoor dog, he is also a social being! Sharing your house with your Kuvasz is the ideal for an urban companion dog. Presumably you chose a dog because you wanted a companion, then let your dog share your house with you. A Kuvasz that shares all of its time with the family, indoors and out, will be a better companion and will truly become part of the family and will be a happier dog. It will be with you to protect you against any intruder and will provide you with an unmistakable sense of security. A dog kenneled outside cannot help you from an intruder!

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There are also some practical problems with having an outdoor dog in urban environments. The Kuvasz is generally quiet, but it will sound the alarm at any strange noise or when anyone, or a dog, walks by or steps onto his property. They are typically even more alert at night as befits a livestock guardian, forever on guard against potential predators. That behaviour may be quite fine and desirable in the country, but it is not appreciated by neighbours in urban environments. In the city, it might be better to keep your dog indoors at night where your dog can protect you. It can also prevent problems with your neighbours!

If you have two or more dogs, you may want to rotate them between being outdoors and indoors. In this way, property and home are always under guard and your dogs still get a strong sense of family bonding. Again be respectful of neighbours and monitor and correct any unnecessary barking!

### ***Training Requirements***

Training for the home companion is highly recommended and should be coupled with ongoing socialization! Positive rewards and encouragement reap highest rewards. There are several fine books on the subject such as the works of the Monks of New Skete (*The Art of Raising a Puppy; How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend*); Carol Lea Benjamin's book, *Mother Knows Best: The Natural Way to Train Your Dog*; Brian Kilcommons' *How to be Your Dog's Best Friend* and the considerable works of Ian Dunbar (*Syrius Puppy Training*). Take the time to familiarize yourself with these books and others prior to starting any formal training or selecting a professional trainer. These books also give excellent advice on raising a pup, housetraining the pup and the effective use of a "crate". Remember that your new pup is much like an adopted baby that needs reassurance and loving acceptance into its new home.

Contrary to many earlier books on dog training which recommended training at about 6 months, we recommend training from the time you first bring your puppy home. That doesn't mean formal obedience training for a young pup, but there is still a great deal that you can do. Learning the meaning of NO(!), sit, stay, down, stand, recall (Come!), and the release command, can all be accomplished with pups before the age of 6 months. This also means learning to accept a collar and a leash, which are prerequisites for training. Puppies are like babies and small children. They have short attention spans and accordingly, your training sessions should be brief at first (5 minutes at a time for an 8-10 week old pup) and gradually building as your pup's attention span increases. Always be positive, encouraging and rewarding to your pup and always end on a positive note. It should be an enjoyable, not a fearful experience for your pup! By 6 months of age your pup should be able to do all the basic exercises of companion dog (sit, down, stand, sit-stay, down-stay, recall and heel, at least on lead). Your dog may not be perfect, but should perform these exercises quite well at least under a few distractions. I know, because I have accomplished this with my own dogs, as have a great many others! Good performance under distractions and off-lead work can be formally worked upon after the magical (formerly) 6 months, as can more advanced work.

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The Kuvasz is very sensitive to praise and blame and does not perform well under traditional heavy-handed approaches which work reasonably well with other guarding breeds (Rottweilers and German Shepherds). Basic training to Companion Dog level is highly recommended. Regardless, the dog must clearly recognize you as the “alpha”. Being too soft and lenient will invite a challenge for alpha status. This is natural for dogs, particularly the dominant guarding breeds, but should be thwarted at puppyhood with assertive, but fair use of authority. This is seldom a problem with experienced dog owners/handlers but can be shocking and unnerving when a lenient novice is suddenly confronted with his pet displaying aggressive, dominant behaviour. This is why we suggest that first time owners of the breed should ideally have experience with other large guarding breeds first. It is not essential, but it frequently helps.

Being sensitive to praise and blame, a firm NO(!) is usually all that is required to stop unwanted behaviour. For a testy pup, you may have to reinforce this verbal displeasure with a shake by the scruff of the neck. Excessive force is not needed, just enough to get the message across and then let him think about it - give him the cold shoulder. Be consistent! Establish fair rules of acceptable behaviour and let your pup know when he violates those behaviours with firmness. For example, no mouthing or biting, no jumping up on people or furniture, no chewing of dangerous or valuable objects, etc. These rules and others are absolute and you must be consistent. Any behaviours that you don't want as an adult dog should not be allowed as a pup. It's common sense, but seldom followed by novices. Try to get short training sessions in two or three times a day (more if possible) and praise your dog lavishly for doing the right things! Praise should be praise. Let your dog know that you are happy with his progress but don't go to such extremes that the pup loses concentration and gets silly. Every pup responds differently.

If you can, join a puppy obedience class. These classes are great on several fronts! They help to socialize your pup on other people, different surroundings and on other dogs. An unsocialized Kuvasz will not accept strangers (human or canine) and will likely act aggressively, or even worse, become a fear-biter. Puppy classes go a long ways towards socializing your pup under supervised conditions at a critical phase in your dog's life. It also helps lay the basic foundation for training and helps to establish you as the master, the alpha of the family. They also prepare you for more formal obedience training classes. It is well worth the investment.

### ***More on Socialization***

Socializing the Kuvasz and other guarding breeds is absolutely essential if you want a well-adjusted companion. Consider the rapid development of a pup in human terms. If you were to isolate your new pup in your home or back yard with little or no exposure to the outside world for the first 6 months, it would be like isolating a child for a period of at least 5 years. How well adjusted would that child be? How would this child react to the outside world? How would the child react to school? The child would exhibit extreme fear and stunted behavioural development which might never be reversed. So why should we expect anything different for a pup? To effectively socialize your pup you have to

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expose it to different environments, including the car, and different people (adults and children) throughout his puppyhood and then reinforce it as an adult.

The first 4 months of a pup's life is critical for a dog's social development. Expose your dogs to a wide variety of positive situations (people, places, dogs, etc.) during this period, but be careful not to expose your pup to a frightening experience that may cause a lasting scare (notably during the fear period). Puppy classes are a great help. You should also invite friends and family to your home and let your pup visit them. Encourage the pup, but don't force anything on him. Let him know that friends coming over are entirely normal. Let him become friends. Likewise, walk your pup (once inoculated) in the park, etc. and talk with other people and encourage your pup to investigate. Introduce your pup to friendly dogs. Encourage supervised interaction. This will lay the foundation for a rewarding relationship and will not jeopardize your dog's ability as a guardian of home and property.

To summarize, your success in training and developing a companion that you can be proud of is dependent upon: selecting and matching the pup to your family situation; socialization, socialization and more socialization; establishing yourself and family members as the alpha in your dog's eyes; consistency in rules and training; continuous training from early puppyhood; fairness, encouragement and positive reinforcement; nurturing a respectful and loving relationship.

### ***Care and Feeding***

Frequent grooming and handling as a pup is important for control as an adult. The dog should tolerate nail clipping and ear examinations, etc. This should be done weekly, but you should go through the motions daily with your pup so that your dog will tolerate it as an adult. It not only helps you, but also the veterinarian! It is an important part of socialization. You should also make sure your dog is fully inoculated, treated for heartworm, and examined regularly for physical and health problems.

The Kuvasz has a very efficient metabolism and is not a large eater for such a large dog. He typically requires considerably less food than other breeds of comparable size. My Kuvasz, for example, has a much smaller appetite than my German Shepherds and it is also reflected in his smaller stool.

Dogs are carnivores which means that they are meat eaters. Their digestive tracts are naturally adapted to a diet of primarily meat, although some vegetable matter is quite normal, even for wild canids. High quality diets should typically use meat as the primary source of protein, rather than cereal or corn. Certainly dogs can exist on cereal-based diets, but these diets are typically less digestible. All dog foods claim to be 100% nutritionally complete, yet they are not all equal. Examine the ingredients list on the bag. Again, high quality foods will be based upon animal protein (usually poultry, turkey or lamb meat, or meal) and this should be listed as the primary ingredient on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order, such that the primary ingredient is listed first, with trace elements listed last. Typically, although not always, you get what you pay for. A high quality diet, based upon the age of the dog and energy demands of his lifestyle, is

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the key. For the first 10 months or so of his life, a high quality puppy food, fed twice per day is desired. An adult maintenance food can then be substituted and fed either once or twice a day. Working Kuvasz, or Kuvasz living in harsh environments, may be fed a higher protein “performance” diet. The older dog should be fed a “senior” diet to reduce protein intake and stress on the kidneys. This advice is not unique to the Kuvasz, and should be supplemented with advice from your veterinarian. At any rate, keep an eye on your dog, its general condition, stool and behaviour in relation with diet. Your dog’s overall condition in relation to its diet, is a good indicator of food quality. Once you find a good diet, stay with it.

Don’t kill your dog with kindness. Obesity is a major problem with companion dogs (as with their owners), reflecting over-eating and too little exercise. A Kuvasz in good health should be lean and in hard-muscle condition. The breed was not meant to be a “couch potato”. Do not overfeed your dog and maintain a regular exercise regime. Observe the condition of your dog, its muscle, coat and stool. Your dog’s overall condition will let you know whether you are feeding and exercising it appropriately.

### ***Grooming and Coat Care Requirements***

The Kuvasz coat needs minimal care aside from brushing, preferably using a pin brush. Bathing is not recommended as it destroys the unique “dirt-shedding” characteristics and protective, weather-resistant oils of the coat. Certainly the dog can be bathed, but not frequently, nor is it normally required. Most people expect that a great deal of effort is needed to keep the coat so white. They are often amazed to hear that it is self-cleaning and seldom needs bathing! Brushing however is recommended on a regular basis to keep the coat in good condition and to remove loose hair. This is especially important during the shedding season!! You should also be prepared to trim eyebrow hairs with blunt scissors. Those hairs can grow long and curl into the eyes. Otherwise, it takes little effort to maintain the coat in good condition

Teach your dog to stand on a sturdy box or table about knee high. Do not have a puppy jump up or down because of the risk to hips and joints. Once he is feeling secure on the table, brush, comb, fondle and talk to your pup. A few treats will also help. Loving, caring, fondling is also good for you. It relieves stress and deepens the bond between you and your dog. Daily short grooming sessions are preferable to long weekly ones.

The combings, which can be substantial during the shedding season, can be kept and spun. The resultant yarn makes very warm caps, vests, mitts, etc. These knitted goods are especially attractive because the undercoat fur gives an angora-like sheen to the knitted or woven product.

### ***Exercise Requirements***

The Kuvasz in proper condition should be lean and hard-muscled. The breed has amazing stamina and endurance, being capable of trotting for distances of 30 km without

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

tiring. It also exhibits amazing speed and agility when needed. Obviously, to achieve such conditioning your dog should be given the chance to run, jog and go for long walks. A working Kuvasz, gets exercise as part of its normal routine. Family companions and home guards will need supplemental exercise. If your dog is to be given the freedom to run, it should be under your supervision and in areas where the dog is not at risk to cars, etc. It also implies that you have trained your dog and have control. If your dog is not trained or will not return on command, do not let it run loose! Effective training provides your dog with greater freedom!

A fenced area is vital for the Kuvasz. It represents safety for your dog, peace of mind for you and gives your dog a sense of duty - to look after property and home. Often prospective owners say: "but we have 10, 50, or more acres, giving him plenty of running room". A Kuvasz must know his sense of property, or else he will set his own limits which could extend well beyond your own property and get him into trouble. A fenced area secures the boundary of his territory. A Kuvasz can cover distances with ease and without fences he may find the road. No dogs can cope with traffic! After road tragedies, breeders often hear: "The driver was speeding...he must have seen my dog". If the dog causes an accident, the owner can find himself financially responsible, in addition to suffering the loss of a loyal companion. Trouble often awaits dogs running free in the country. Responsible ownership demands that you have a secured place for your dog where it will not be hurt. Provide a fenced area for your dog, take the time to reinforce its sense of property and by all means train your dog.

Although the Kuvasz has great endurance and is capable of impressive speed, the breed is not hyper or overly active. The breed is very easy to live with in the home and although its presence is felt, it is never in the way or demanding. Your dog will greet you from time to time and then retire to a quiet place in the house, or to a vantage point on your property. Although large and athletic, its daily exercise requirements and demands are probably less than many of the smaller, more active herding breeds.

The Kuvasz is a robust, healthy, outdoor-type of dog that can handle all of the exercise (once in shape) that you could possibly want to give him. If you are an active outdoors type, take your dog with you! Hiking, walking, or even jogging (in cool weather) will be welcomed activities. His size and strength make him well suited to carrying his own pack (and food) if you are into backpacking, or serious hiking. Well designed dog-packs are now commercially available in outdoor stores. Even weight-pulling as a sport is quite conceivable, as is cart-pulling with appropriate harnesses. Integrate your dog into all of your activities and you will have a great companion, a natural protector and a loving, rewarding relationship!

### ***The Geriatric Dog and Owner***

One of the greatest sorrows of owning a dog, or for that matter any pet, is the fact that their lifespan is much shorter than ours. The Kuvasz, however, is relatively long-lived compared to many large breeds of dogs and can be expected to live into his early or even mid teens. Nevertheless, special care will be required throughout the later years of your

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

dog's life. Hearing and eyesight will typically become weaker and arthritis, or other joint problems, may also set in. The older dog will need more rest and should be given good shelter from the extreme heat in summer and the extreme cold in winter. This is not unique to the Kuvasz, but is true for all dogs. The time will come when you may have to consider euthanasia for an older pet that is in pain, or is succumbing to disease. Be kind to your companion, care for your dog and when needed, provide your friend an escape when its quality of life is no longer there. Death is natural and so is grieving. The magnitude of grief that we experience is simply an indication of how much we cared for and loved our pets. The circle of life will continue and we will have been enriched by experiencing it and we can take solace that we provided our canine companions with a quality life.

A sometimes overlooked, or postponed obligation of owners and breeders is to provide for their dogs in case of the legal owner's death. It is something that we often don't think about, but the consequences to your dogs can be drastic. The owner's wishes in regard to the dogs should be clearly expressed in a will and sufficient funds allotted for those wishes to be carried out. Obviously this should be discussed and agreed upon with the individuals who will become legal guardians for your dogs. The care of several Kuvaszok, or even one, cannot be lightly assigned to anyone. The foregoing may sound grim, but what could be sadder than beloved companions unprovided for and devoted friends unable to carry out your wishes. Think of your dogs as part of your family and treat them accordingly, even in the event of your death.

### **6.0 Summary**

So what is the Kuvasz? I hope that I have given you some insights into our wonderful breed and hope that I've addressed the many questions that I posed in the introduction. Is the Kuvasz for you? I've given you insights into the Kuvasz, you now have to examine yourself, your family and home. Are you the right owner? Are you prepared for the responsibility of owning one of the world's foremost guard dogs? Are you committed to the breed for its lifetime? Are you prepared for the socialization and training? If yes, then welcome to the Kuvasz. You have selected a rare, but very special breed of very ancient lineage. In return, you will be given a lifetime of love, devotion, companionship and protection!

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**Appendix 1:**  
**Official Breed Standard for the Kuvasz**  
**(Canadian Kennel Club)**

**Origin and Purpose:** A Hungarian breed whose forbears can almost certainly be traced back to the Tibetan Mastiff, the present-type Kuvasz was first recorded in Hungary in the ninth century. Since that time, they have been widely used in their native land, primarily as guardians but also for tracking, hunting, herding, and as companions.

**General Appearance:** The Kuvasz is a large working dog with a pure white, medium length wavy coat. Although strongly built, he possesses grace and lightness of foot, with no hint of bulkiness or lethargy, and is exaggerated in no aspect.

**Temperament:** Temperamentally, the Kuvasz is an intelligent dog with a great deal of independence of spirit. He has been used for centuries as a guardian and has very strongly developed protective instincts.

**Size:** The recommended sizes are: males, 28-29.5 in. (71-75cm) high at the withers with a corresponding weight of approximately 88-115 lb. (40-52 kg); females, 26-27.5 in. (66-70 cm) high at the withers with a corresponding weight of 66-93 lb. (30-42 kg).

**Coat and Colour:** The double coat is formed by a coarse outer guard coat and a thick, woolly undercoat. The texture of the guard coat is rough so that the coat readily sheds dirt and shows no tendency to mat. The length of the hair shows a definite pattern: head, ears, front of forelegs, and feet are covered with short, straight, dense hair  $\frac{3}{8}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (1-2 cm) in length. The guard coat on the body and thighs is medium length 1.5 - 4.75 in. (4-12 cm). Some coats have long, loose waves, some have smaller, tighter waves. Both are correct, as is anything between. On the adult dog, the coat must not be tightly curled nor should it lie completely flat, but the degree of waviness will vary considerably from one specimen to another. There is a ruff and mane of longer hair about the neck and chest, more prominent on the males, and feathering of 2-3.25 in. (5-8 cm) on the back of the legs. The tail is thickly covered in long wavy hair 4-6 in. (10-15 cm) in length. Puppies may have either straight or curly coats but should lose these characteristics with their first adult coat. The coat is a lustrous pure white, although ivory is permissible, but not preferred. A yellow saddle is to be severely penalized. The skin is well pigmented, preferably gray in colour. The nose, eyerims, lips and flews are black. The roof of the mouth should be dark. Pads of the feet are black or slate grey and slate-coloured nails are preferred.

**Head:** From the tip of the nose to the top of the occiput should measure slightly less than half the dog's height at the withers. Viewed from above, the head should narrow, gradually and smoothly, from ears to the nose. The skull and muzzle are of equal length and the width of the skull should be slightly less than its length. While there is a gentle and graceful arch of the forehead above the eyes, the stop should be only slightly marked.

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

A distinct furrow runs from between the eyes to the top of the occiput. The muzzle, which tapers gently from root of nose, is strongly built with a punishing bite. It is never snipey but neither should it be coarse or clumsy. Skin on the muzzle should be clean, dry and close-fitting. The lips should be tight and show no flews. The eyes should be as dark as possible, ideally coffee-black. They are almond shaped with close-fitting rims, set well apart and a trifle obliquely. The nose is of good size with well developed nostrils. The teeth are large and very strong. Dentition should be complete, and the teeth meet in a scissors bite. The Kuvasz has drop ears of a triangular shape with a gently rounded tip. Set well to the side and nearly at a level with the top of the head, the upper portion stands slightly away from the head while the lower third falls closely to the cheek. When the dog is alert he brings the whole ear slightly toward the front giving him a keen and alert appearance. The ear should be small and neat and when pulled over the face should just cover the eye.

**Neck:** The neck should be powerful, slightly arched, and of medium length. There should be no dewlap.

**Forequarters:** The shoulders are well covered with good, hard muscle. The shoulder blade and upper arm should be at right angles to each other and of good length, allowing the dog ample reach and follow through of stride. Elbows are close without being constricted and the whole foreleg should describe a straight line from shoulder to forepaw when viewed from the front. The leg should be of good, strong bone, without being coarse or clumsy. The pasterns should have ample spring and the feet should be of the type known as “cat feet”, tight and well arched with deep, resilient pads. There should not be much hair between the toes.

**Body:** The withers are prominent and slope gently into a strong, level back of medium length. The chest reaches to the elbow, with a well-developed forechest and medium spring of rib. The ribs behind the forelegs must taper inward to allow complete freedom for long, easy stride. The loin is strong and gently arched. There is a distinct but moderate tuck-up. There should be a well-formed, slightly sloping croup which is broad and well muscled.

**Hindquarters:** The hindquarters are well angulated. The angle between pelvis and upper thigh should be 90 degrees to correspond with the proper angle in the forequarters. The upper thigh itself should be of good length, creating the correct bend of stifle (110-120 degrees). The bend of the hock joint should be about 130-140 degrees with the metatarsus being short, strong, and perpendicular to the ground. Rear paws are somewhat longer than forepaws but should nevertheless be tight and well arched with deep, resilient pads. Dewclaws are undesirable and should be removed.

**Tail:** The tail is set on low, a smooth continuation of the slope of croup. The tip, when straightened, should reach the hock. The tail hangs straight down and may be slightly turned up at the tip but should not curl when dog is relaxed. When the dog is excited the tail will curl up to the level of the loin, but should not be carried over the back.

**Gait:** The trot is smooth, elastic and far-reaching, often showing a tendency for the hind foot to overreach the front. As the dog's speed increases, he will tend to single-track.

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When he is moving fast, he will carry his head low, at a level with his shoulders. The Kuvasz should move effortlessly, enabling him to travel great distances without fatigue.

**Faults:** Since the Kuvasz is a working breed any faults of soundness should be considered serious. Faults in type which should be guarded against are: too short a muzzle, apple head or bulging skull, no visible supraorbital ridge, too much stop; giving an uncharacteristic setter-like appearance, drooping haws or pendulous flews, hound ears, lying back in the ruff. Too long a neck, barrel chest, loose or sloppy shoulder assembly, yellow eyes or yellow markings, sullen appearance or distrustful expression (not to be confused with reserve), extreme nervousness, overshoot or undershoot mouth, gay tail.

**Disqualifications:** Over or undersize as follows—males, over 32 in. (81 cm) or under 25-1/2 in. (65 cm); females, over 30 in. (76 cm) or under 23-1/2 in. (60 cm). So pronounced a lack of pigmentation as to have flesh-coloured eye rims. Colour other than white.

## **The Hungarian and FCI Standard for the Kuvasz**

### **General Characteristics**

Strong, large, white, wavy coated dog. Pleasing exterior denotes nobility and strength. Body proportions are well balanced, neither lanky nor cobby. Medium boned, never course. Well muscled with dry joints. Viewed from the side the trunk and the limbs form a horizontal rectangle slightly deviated from the square. Sturdy build combined with lightfootedness allows him to move freely on strong legs.

### **Origin and Purpose**

The Kuvasz is one of the oldest Hungarian working shepherd dogs. He came to the Carpathian basin possibly with the migrant Hungarians, or with the Cumanians. The Kuvasz excels as a protection dog and is a good watchdog for property and home. He has a keen sense of smell and can be used for tracking work.

### **Disposition**

is lively but not easily excitable. His general exterior gives evidence to untiring working ability. Loyal to his owners but very discriminating with strangers. Extremely brave to the point of self sacrifice.

### **Head**

The beautiful Kuvasz head denotes harmony, strength, and intelligence. The wedge shaped head is elongated but never pointed. Skull is broad, forehead slightly rounded. The longitudinal midline of the forehead is pronounced and continues to the muzzle. Medium developed bony arches are above the eyes. Stop is gently sloping to the muzzle. Top of muzzle is straight, tapered towards the nose but is never snipey. Nose is rounded, black in color. Cheeks are wide and long, very well muscled. The full set of teeth are well developed, powerful, regular, and close in a scissors-like bite. Flews are tight, black with indented edging at the corner of the mouth. Ears are set on the same horizontal plane as the top of the head, bent at the base, close to the skull. The outer edge of the upper third stand away from the head, the inner edge lie close to the cheeks forming a rounded V-shape. When alert the ears may move slightly but never rise above the head, cast backward or fold lengthwise. Eyes are slanted, almond shaped, dark brown or black in color. Eyelids are black and tight.

### **Neck**

forms an angle of 25-30 degrees with the horizontal, medium length, well muscled and has no dewlap.

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### **Forequarters**

Position of the front legs is of medium width. Elbows neither in nor out. Long, well muscled radius support the body in a definite straight line. Muscles continue towards the foot with lean and strong tendons. Joints are dry, never loose. Pasterns form an angle of 45 degrees with the horizontal. Feet are tight, well padded cat feet, black or slate-gray in color. Very little hair between the toes, the nails are well developed, black or slate-gray.

### **Body**

Shoulders are long, withers are higher than the back. Medium long back is straight and firm, loin is short and tight. Croup is slightly sloping, broad, well muscled. The abundance of coat on the rear may give the appearance of being higher than the front. Chest is slightly rounded, deep; ribs are long, well-sprung. In profile the prosternum is ahead of the shoulders and is covered with strong muscles. Stomach is tucked up.

### **Tail**

is set low, a natural continuation of the sloping croup. It is carried low with the last vertebra reaching to the hock joint. In repose it hangs down, the end slightly lifted, not curling. In a state of excitement the tail may be elevated to the level of the loin but never curl above the back.

### **Hindquarters**

Rear limbs and the thighs are well muscled. Pelvis and the femur form an angle of 90 degrees, the femur and the tibia form an angle of 110-120 degrees (stifle angulation). Tibia and metatarsus form an angle of 130-140 degrees (hock angulation). Metatarsus is broad, dry and powerful. Hocks are perpendicular to the ground. Metatarsus is more steep than the metacarpus. Rear paws are somewhat longer than the front paws but just as tight. Dewclaws, if any, are removed. Pads are thick, nails well developed, black or slate-gray in color.

### **Size and Weight**

Height at the withers are: males: 71-76 centimeters, females: 66-70 centimeters. Relative measurement for different parts of the body is in percentage to that of the withers: length of body: 104%, depth of chest: 48%, width of chest: 27%, measurement of the girdle: 120% (also called circumference at the withers), length of head: 45% length of muzzle: 42% of the head length, length of ears: 50% of head length, weight for males: 48-62 kg, weight for females: 37-50 kg

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

### **Movement**

The walk is slow, the trot is energetic, covers ground well. The kuvasz is able to trot 25-30 km without tiring.

### **Skin and Coat**

Skin is heavily pigmented slate-gray in color. Nose, eyelids, and flews are black the foot pads are slate-gray or black. Preferred color for the roof of the mouth is black, but dark pigmentation on slate-gray foundation is accepted. Hair is medium coarse, wavy, slightly rough in texture and does not mat. Color is white. The double coat formed by medium course guard hair has a fine, downy undercoat. Head, ears, and paws are covered with 1-2 centimeter long, straight, thick hair. The hair on the front of the forelegs up to the elbows and on the hindlegs below the thighs are also covered with straight thick hair. The back of the forelegs are feathered to the pastern with hair 5-8 centimeters long. Around the neck there is a mane that extends to and covers the chest. The mane is more prominent on the male kuvasz. Body, thighs, and upper forelegs are covered with medium long (4-12 centimeters) thick, wavy coat which forms haircrests, swirls and tufts. The entire tail is covered with thick wavy coat, 10-15 centimeters.

### **Faults**

Too short or too long muzzle. Forehead more rounded. Underdeveloped bony arches above the eye. Too much stop. Loose eyelids and flews. Cast back, twisted or incorrectly folded ears. Long neck. Too wide chest. Loose shoulders. Light or pink pigmentation of the skin. Light eyes. Poor pigmentation on the nose, flews and eyelids. Roachback or swayback. Loose body structure. Yellow coat or markings. Incorrect front or rear stance. Missing, crooked or uneven teeth. Coat not wavy. Small size. Round eyes. Roman nose. Coarse head. Aggressive or shy temperament. Long body. Flat chest. Light bone structure.

### ***Disqualifications***

Upstanding ears. Overshot bite. More than 2 millimeters undershot bite. Entropion or ectropion eyelids. Very pronounced stop. Coat which mats. Short, straight, stiff, splintery coat. Open coat with very little undercoat. Limbs covered with long hair. Males smaller than 68 centimeters, females smaller than 63 centimeters. Tail raised higher than the loin or curled over the back in repose. Coat color other than white. Cryptorchidism, monorchidism.



## **Appendix 2: Selected Livestock Guard Dog Associations and Breed Clubs**

Akbash Dogs International  
Orysia Dawydiak, Registrar  
R.R. 3 Union Road  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.  
Canada C1A 7J7  
(902) 672-3036  
Publications available and excellent advice on working dogs.

American Kuvasz Association  
Rt. 1, Box 281C  
Amherst, VA 24521  
(702) 849-3007

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs International, Inc.  
Karen Sen, President  
P.O. Box 966  
Clarksville, TN 37041-0966  
(615) 647-0586  
Publication: Choban Chatter

Great Pyrenees Club of America  
Catherine de la Cruz  
Coordinator of Rescue service  
4445 B Old Gravenstein Hwy South  
Sebastopol CA 95472  
(707) 829-1655

Komondor Club of America  
Robert Willcockson, Predator Control  
Program Chairman  
802 West 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Yankton SD 57078  
(605) 665-2400

Kuvasz Club of America  
Patricia Zupan  
2706 Garfield St.  
Wall Township, NJ  
07719

## THE HUNGARIAN KUVASZ

Kuvasz Club of Canada  
Steve Hounsell, President  
2057 Harvest Drive  
Mississauga, Ontario  
Canada L4Y 1T7  
(905) 276-4462  
steve.hounsell@rogers.com  
Publication: Quarterly Newsletter

Kuvasz Fanciers of America  
Gary Eastman, President  
P.O. Box 2794  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
(916) 268-9462  
Publication: The Candle

Livestock Guard Dog Association  
Lorna Coppinger  
Hampshire College  
Box FC  
Amherst MA 01002  
(413) 582-5487  
Numerous publications available; on-going research and a registry of all livestock guarding breeds.

Middle Atlantic States Komondor Club, Inc.  
Marion J. Levy, President  
102 Russell Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
(609) 924-0199  
Publication: Komondor News and numerous excellent publications.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)  
Animal Damage Control (ADC)  
Livestock Guarding Dog Project  
Roger A. Woodruff  
720 O'leary St., NW  
Olympia WA 98502  
(360) 753-9884

USDA/APHIS/ADC  
Livestock Guarding dog Project  
Jeffrey S. Green  
12345 W. Alameda Parkway, #313

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Lakewood, CO 89228

USDA/APHIS/ADC  
Livestock Guard Dog Project  
Jay Lorenz  
Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, OR 97330 (503) 754-4531

USDA/APHIS/ADC  
Livestock Guard Dog Project  
Jim Luchsinger  
Kansas State University  
Call Hall, Room 124  
Manhattan KS 66506  
(913) 532-1549