

Chow Chow



THE ANCESTRY OF THE CHOW IS attributed to China where he was kept as a guard dog, and also used for hunting. He made his way to England sometime during the late eighteenth century. He has a unique short striding movement and a bluish-black tongue, and such is his appearance that he cannot be mistaken for any other breed. He is aloof, stand-offish, and extremely loyal to his owner, with a tendency to be a one-man dog. Not noisy, but when roused he is well able to defend home and owner.

The Rough Chow has a coat which is abundant, thick, and stands off from the body. It requires about five minutes' daily grooming to keep it in good condition. The Smooth Chow has a woolly undercoat with a short top coat of plush texture. Although red is the most popular colour for both varieties, followed by black, they can also be seen in the most lovely whole blue, or shades of fawn.

The Chow has been known in China for upwards of 2,000 years and is related to Spitz dogs of the Nordic type. Because of China's 'closed door' policy to the rest of the world Chows did not begin to appear in other countries until around 1800 and were not really noticed in Britain until the 1920s, with a number being shown at Crufts in 1925.

What about Health Issues?

You may be aware that some breeds of dog (and crossbreeds too) can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the puppy you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found on the Kennel Club's website at:

www.the Kennel Club.org.uk/doghealth

Puppy buyers should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

And what health screening is relevant for the Chow Chow?

Kennel Club Accredited Breeders must use, or are strongly recommended to use, the following screening schemes and/or advice for sires and dams:

- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia

This list is not necessarily comprehensive and you should still ask breeders and refer to breed clubs about health issues in the breed.