THE AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG
OBJECTIVES

♥ INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF /APPRECIATION FOR ACD
♥ ENHANCE LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN JUDGING THE ACD
♥ HAVE FUN
NOW FOR A TEST....
1. At birth the ACD’s color is:

   A. Light blue or light red (with or without black or dark red markings on the head) that darkens with age.

   B. The same color as the adult ACD.

   C. White, with or without black or dark red markings.

   D. None of the above.
2. The white mark usually found on the ACD’s head is called:

A. A blaze
B. A Bentley mark
C. A streak
D. A Daimler dot
3. The Four Breeds That Are Generally Believed to Have Been Crossed to Produce the ACD Are:

A. Black & Tan Kelpie; Dalmatian; Blue merle, smooth collie; Dingo

B. Black & Tan Kelpie; Border Collie; Dingo; Bull Terrier

C. Black & Tan Kelpie; Blue merle, smooth Collie; Dingo; Bull Terrier

D. Black & Tan Kelpie; Blue merle, rough Collie; Dingo; Bull Terrier
4. The coat of a blue ACD is a mixture of white and black hairs with lighter dogs having relatively more white hairs than darker dogs. How many times is the word “white” mentioned in the description of the blue ACD?

A. Zero
B. One
C. Two
D. Three
5. Correct Proportions Between Length of Body and Height at Withers Are:

A. As 10 is to 9  
B. As 11 is to 9  
C. As 9 is to 10  
D. Square
6. According to the official AKC standard for the ACD: Blue ACD’s are blue, blue speckled or blue mottle and red ACD’s are Red, Red speckled or Red mottle.

A. True
B. False
7. The ACD is a double coated dog:

A. True
B. False
8. A scissors bite and a level bite are equally acceptable in the ACD:

A. True
B. False
9. The correct ACD foot is:

A. A “cat” foot  
B. A “hare” foot  
C. Between a hare and cat foot  
D. None of the above
10. Docked tails on ACD’s are:

A. Not permitted in the conformation ring
B. Frequently found on pet ACD’s in the USA
C. Not generally found in Australia
D. Allowed by AKC in performance events
E. All of the above
F. None of the above
11. The requirements for the ACDCA Register of Merit (ROM) are:

A. Offspring including five conformation champions and five herding titleholders

B. ROM dog/bitch must have CH, HS and CD. Must have offspring with each of these titles.

C. Offspring including 10 champions of record for sires and 5 for dams.

D. None of the above
Harold Spira once wrote:

- Picture a Noah’s Ark situation
- Place an imaginary breeding pair of each one of the world’s presently recognized 300 plus breeds into a large communal enclosure
- The end result after a few generations of such hypothetical random reproductions, in my opinion, is likely to resemble an ACD in outward appearance except, perhaps, for colour
- An animal designed entirely within the concept of moderation and orientated toward exercise tolerance without physical exaggerations
The Working Australian Cattle Dog Standard
Introduction

Developed to control wild cattle in groups of several hundred on drives through inhospitable wilderness of Australia

Drives sometimes lasted weeks and crossed from the vast grazing lands of the outback, over the pass in the great dividing range, and through the streets of Sydney to the stockyards.

The wild cattle and extremely harsh conditions were such that traditional working breeds were of no use.
Crossings Begin

Smooth-coated, blue merle Scottish highland collies crossed to selected dingoes in the 1840's by drover Thomas Hall

Developed a cattle dog that combined hardiness of the dingo type, and herding abilities of the highland collie

Cross reinforced the heeling instinct of the collie and eliminated their tendency to bark at the head

About 1860 some dogs were brought to the Homebush sale yards in Sydney by butcher Alexander Davis, they "attracted much attention" and were taken by various drovers and butchers.
Even More Breeds Introduced

Two brothers, Jack and Harry Bagust, purchased some of these dogs

Continued to improve breed, introducing select Dalmatian bloodlines and later, black and tan Kelpies

Succeeded in "advancing their working ability to intelligent controllable workers whilst retaining the silent biting of the animals heels."
Intelligence

Independent thinker and once trained, capable of carrying out routine tasks without supervision.

Highly intelligent, making them self directed workers capable of complex problem solving.

Adept at picking out and punishing trouble makers, while being gentle with calves, lambs or ducks.

This rating ability makes the ACD versatile enough for different classes of cattle as well as trial or farm work with sheep, hogs and fowl.
With newborn lambs
Moving a stubborn Ram
Trainability

Can be trained to perform various functions on the farm or ranch

They possess high trainability coupled with a strong desire to please

Most Cattle Dogs can perform routine jobs after just a few exposures

A well trained Cattle Dog can replace two to three good men on horseback
Posture

Considered an upright breed

Head carried at shoulder level while working, enabling the dog to read stock and to easily slip in and heel

When confronting stubborn animals at head, some ACD’s drop to a crouch, preparing to nose bite, others raise their heads to challenge and come straight on

Most dogs will experiment with different postures or approaches to win stand-offs with stubborn stock.

ACD’s perfect combination of size, angulation, balance, agility and instinct enables him to continuously heel low and avoid being kicked.
Approach

ACD’s approach to stock is calculated and deliberate, and directed at the animal or animals to be moved. Naturally wears on larger groups of stock, but can walk straight in at the balance point on singles or smaller groups of cattle or sheep.

Whether an individual dog predominately fetches or drives is due not only to heritage, but can be affected by the dog’s age, training technique, and the livestock the dog is started on.

Cattle Dogs that fetch usually exhibit very keen natural balance.
More on Approach

Regardless of individual style, the Australian Cattle Dog is considered a close worker.

There is however variation, with some dogs working and flanking very close and others working and flanking moderately wide and closing the distance to heel.

Most can be taught to work wider if required.
Eye

ACD’s are a loose to medium eyed breed

When heading, turning or otherwise challenging stubborn livestock, some individuals exhibit moderately strong eye, but return to a looser approach once challenge is won

Loose approach enables the Cattle Dog to see and react to a herd of hundreds of cattle and give attention to just those requiring it, allowing him to work effectively, day in and day out
**Grip**

Best known as a "heeler"

Stubborn or wild stock may require forceful hard biter until trained, whereas dairy cattle may just require dog's presence.

Typical technique is for dog to time grip to occur on foot of weight bearing leg, and to duck to miss ensuing kick.

Correct "heel" is low on the leg at fetlock or coronet.

ACD should not only heel, but use force at head when turning or stopping livestock.

All gripping should be quick with an immediate release.

Gripping should be appropriate and not excessive.
The Australian Cattle Dog was developed as a silent worker.

Force barking when heading or otherwise challenging stubborn livestock is acceptable if it is not excessive.

Continuous barking, barking while working at the heels or more than just a few force barks is undesirable.

Approved by the ACDCA, 1996.
THE AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG
AKC STANDARD
General Appearance

Strong, compact, symmetrically built working dog

Able and willing to carry out tasks however arduous

Substance, power, balance and hard muscular condition convey impression of great agility, strength and endurance

Any tendency to grossness or weediness is a serious fault
Characteristics

Prime function, and one in which he has no peer, is the control and movement of cattle in both wide open and confined areas.

Always alert, extremely intelligent, watchful, courageous and trustworthy

An implicit devotion to duty making it an ideal dog
Temperament

Loyalty and protective instincts make it a self-appointed guardian to the Stockman, his herd and his property.

Naturally suspicious of strangers but must be amenable to handling, particularly in show ring.

Any feature of temperament or structure foreign to a working dog must be regarded as a serious fault.
Head and Skull

Strong, in balance with other proportions of dog, in keeping with its general conformation

Broad skull—slightly curved between ears, flattening to slight but definite stop.

Cheeks muscular, neither coarse nor prominent

Underjaw strong, deep and well developed

Foreface-broad, well filled in under eyes, tapering gradually to form medium length, deep, powerful muzzle

Skull and muzzle on parallel planes

Lips are tight and clean

Nose black
Stop: Slight but definite.

Nose: Black irrespective of dogs colour.

Cheek: Muscular, but not coarse nor prominent.

Foreface: Broad and well filled in under the eye.

Muzzle: Medium length deep and powerful.

Lips: Tight and clean.

Under Jaw: Strong, deep and well developed.

Teeth: Sound, strong and regularly spaced, gripping with a scissor like action, the lower incisors close behind and just touching the upper. Not to be undershot nor overshot.
Eyes

Oval shape, medium size
Neither prominent nor sunken
Must express alertness and intelligence
Warning or suspicious glint is characteristic when approached by strangers
Eye color, dark brown
Ears
Of moderate size, preferably small rather than large,
Broad at base--muscular, pricked
Moderately pointed--neither spoon nor bat eared
Ears set wide apart on skull, inclining outwards
Sensitive in their use, pricked when alert
Leather--thick in texture
Inside of ear fairly well furnished with hair
Mouth

Sound, strong and evenly spaced

Gripping with a scissor-bite, lower incisors close behind and just touching the upper

As the dog is required to move difficult cattle by heeling or biting, teeth which are sound and strong are very important
Neck
Extremely strong, muscular
Medium length
Broadening to blend into body
Free from throatiness
Forequarters
Shoulders strong, sloping, muscular and well angulated to upper arm
Not too closely set at point of withers
Forelegs have strong, round bone, extending to feet, straight and parallel when viewed from front
Pasterns show flexibility with slight angle to forearm when viewed from side
Although shoulders are muscular and bone strong, loaded shoulders and heavy fronts hamper correct movement and limit working ability
Forequarters
(Thoracic Limb)
Body

Length of the body from the point of the breast bone, in a straight line to the buttocks, is greater than height at withers, as 10 is to 9

Topline is level

Back strong with ribs well sprung and carried well back not barrel ribbed

Chest is deep, muscular and moderately broad

Loins broad, strong and muscular and the flanks deep.

Strongly coupled
Hindquarters
Hindquarters are broad, strong and muscular
Croup is rather long and sloping
Thighs long, broad and well developed
Stifles well turned and the hocks strong and well let down
When viewed from behind, the hind legs, from hocks to feet, are straight and placed parallel, neither close nor too wide apart
Hindquarters (Pelvic Limb)
Feet

Feet should be round

Toes short, strong, well arched and held close together

Pads are hard and deep

Nails must be short and strong
Tail

Set on of tail is moderately low, following contours of sloping croup

Length to reach approximately to hock

At rest it should hang in a very slight curve

During movement or excitement tail may be raised

Under no circumstances should any part of tail be carried past a vertical line drawn through root

Tail should carry a good brush
Gait/Movement

Action is true, free, supple and tireless

Movement of the shoulders and forelegs is in unison with the powerful thrust of hindquarters

Capability of quick, sudden movement is essential

Soundness-paramount importance

Serious faults--stiltiness, loaded or slack shoulders, straight shoulders, weakness at elbows, pasterns or feet, straight stifles, cow or bow hocks

When trotting feet tend to come closer together at ground level as speed increases, but when dog comes to rest should stand four square
Coat
Smooth, double coat with short dense undercoat and outer-coat close.
Each hair straight, hard, lying flat, so rain-resisting.
Under body, to behind the legs, coat is longer and forms mild breeching near thigh.
On head (including the inside of the ears), to the front of the legs and feet, hair is short.
Along neck--longer and thicker.
Either too long or too short-fault.
On average, hairs on the body - 2.5 to 4 cms (approx. 1-1.5 ins) in length.
**Color (Blue)**

Blue, blue-mottled, or blue speckled with or without other markings

**Permissible markings**--

Black, blue or tan markings on head, evenly distributed for preference

Forelegs-tan midway up legs, extending up the front to breast and throat, with tan on jaws

Hindquarters-tan inside hindlegs, inside thighs, showing down front of stifles, broadening out to outside of hind legs from hock to toes

Tan undercoat permissible on body providing does not show through blue outer coat

Black markings on body not desirable
Color (Red Speckle)

Should be good even red speckle all over, including the undercoat

Undercoat—neither white nor cream

With or without darker red markings on head

Even head markings are desirable

Red markings on the body are permissible but not desirable.
Size

Height:

Dogs 46-51 cms (approx. 18-20 ins) at withers

Bitches 43-48 cms (approx. 17-19 ins) at withers
Faults

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault

The seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree
Remember

The ACD is a dog without exaggeration...

Moderate, moderate, moderate

When making close calls--remember that the ACD

is a working dog, bred to herd cattle

But it is not a Cow!