

Approved by the Standards Committee
of the Russian Kennel Federation
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YAKUTIAN LAIKA

Origin: Russia

Date of publication of the official valid standard: 2005

Functionality: sled dog and hunting dog

FCI classification: Group 5 (spitz and primitive types)
Section 1 (Nordic sledge dogs)
With working trial

Background information. Yakutian Laika is an ancient indigenous breed developed by the indigenous people of the North-East of Russia of the so-called “dog river” region.

Researchers of different times (A. Middendorf, V. Seroshevski, L. Sabaneev, N. Slyunin, R. Maak, A. Shirinski-Shikhmatov, V. Johelson, Y. Pfinzenmaier, Y. Orlov, M. Dmitrieva-Sulimova, E. Shereshevski, A. Chikachev and others) described this breed under different names (Alazeya Laika, - Laika, Arctic Laika, Upper Yana Laika, Kolyma-Indigirka Laika, Omolon Laika, Omsukchan Laika, Okhotsk Laika, Polar Laika, Susuman Laika, North-East Sled Dog, Tungus Laika, Chuvychan Laika, Evenki Laika, Yakutian Laika, etc.)

The dogs living in the “dog rivers” area were mentioned in the petitions of kazak pioneers as early as 1635.

The book “North and East Tartaria” written by Dutch traveller, geographer and ethnographer Nicolas Cornelissen Witsen and published in 1692 in Amsterdam contained prints that showed travelling methods of Yakuts in wintertime. Those prints depicted the use of dogs as transport animals. It was the first picture of Yakutian dogs. The book also contained a picture of a skier being hauled by dogs, the first ever picture of skijoring.

In 1730 Vitus Jonassen Bering began his Second Kamchatka expedition. It was the first geographical expedition where dogs served as transport animals and the breeds used were the transpolar Yakutian ones.

Ivan Pavlensky in his book “Geography of the Russian Empire” published in 1843 wrote: “Dogs (Yakutian laikas) are used for delivering mail”. In winter 1839, some 20 teams (*narts*) were used for delivering loads from Yakutsk to Okhotsk and further to Kamchatka. “10 dogs are usually put in a long harness with 2 dogs in a row and the eleventh one was the leader. They carry loads weighing from 25 to 35 puds [1 pud = 16 kg] and are able to run 80 versts [1 verst = 1.067 km] a day with a loaded sled and 140 versts a day when the sled is empty”.

Professor Ivan Gorlov described traditional methods of keeping Yakutian Laikas and their functions in his book “The Survey of the Economic Condition and the Statistics of the Russian Empire” published in 1849: “Yakuts use dogs for travelling and for carrying loads. The dogs stay outside throughout the year, in summer they dig a hole in the ground in search of coolness or lay in water to save themselves from mosquitos. In winter, they shelter themselves in the snow curling up in deep snow holes and covering their face with a bushy tail”. The thing making Yakutian Laika prominent among other working breeds is the versatility of its functions throughout the history, as additionally to the use as a sled dog this breed also served for hunting, guarding and herding.

General appearance. Yakutian Laika is a strong medium-sized compact dog with moderately long legs and thick skin without signs of looseness. The coat is well developed and must be sufficient for living and working in severe Arctic conditions. Sexual dimorphism is clearly pronounced, dogs are stronger and more powerful than bitches.

Main proportions. Back length from shoulder to point of buttocks exceeds height at the withers by 10-15%.

Head length is slightly less than 40% of height at the withers.

Muzzle length is 38-40% of head length.

Foreleg length is 52-54% of height at the withers.

Behaviour/temperament. The Yakut Laika is courageous, agile, sociable and temperamental dog.

Head. Wedge-shaped, moderately pointed, proportional to body size.

Cranial region:

Skull: moderately broad, slightly rounded, with sufficiently high forehead.

Face bones: moderately pronounced.

Stop: well-pronounced.

Facial region:

Nose: large, wide nostrils, black or brown in colour.

Muzzle: well filled under the eyes, pointed, smoothly narrowing towards the nose.

Lips: dry, close fitting, well-pigmented.

Jaws/teeth: preferably a full complement of strong white teeth (42 teeth). Scissors bite or direct bite. Tight undershot bite is acceptable after 3 years of age.

Eyes: almond-shaped, set wide apart and straight, not deep set. Dark brown, blue, differently coloured eyes (a brown eye and a blue eye) or blue segments on brown iris are acceptable. Dry, close fitting eyelids matching the colour of the nose. Pale pigmented eyelids on the white background are acceptable.

Ears: triangular, set high, wide at the base, thick, pricked or half-prick, covered with thick short hair. When the dog is moving, the ears are folded against the skull.

Neck: sufficiently long, muscular, of medium set.

Trunk: strong, muscular, with rounded ribs.

Topline: straight and strong, slightly angled from moderately pronounced withers to the tail base.

Back: strong, broad, straight, muscular.

Loin: short, broad, muscular.

Croup: broad, muscular, long, rounded, almost horizontal.

Tail: highly set, carried in semi-circle on the back, covered with thick bushy coat.

Chest: broad, sufficiently long, moderately deep, round in cross-section.

Legs: strong, muscular, straight, parallel-set.

Forelegs: straight, parallel-set, strong, muscular.

Shoulder-blades: oblique, moderately long.

Shoulders: muscular, oblique, moderately long.

Elbows: closely fitting the chest, directed backwards.

Front pasterns: short, strong, almost horizontal.

Hindlegs: with strong bones and well-developed muscles. Straight and parallel when viewed from the rear.

Thighs: broad and muscular.

Stifle joints: well-pronounced.

Lower thighs: medium long, strong, with well-pronounced heel angles.

Rear pasterns: strong, upright.

Forefeet and hindfeet: arched, with tightly knit toes, tough pads and thick hair (brush) between the toes. Hindfeet are slightly larger than forefeet.

Movements: swift, bouncy. The characteristic gaits are energetic trot and gallop.

Coat: thick, shiny, straight, coarse, medium-long, with well-developed thick undercoat. Forms a collar on the neck, which is especially distinct in male animals, with thick feathering on the back side of the forelegs and on the hindlegs and some frill on the tail, the hair on the head and on the front side of the limbs is shorter.

Colour: white or particoloured of any colour (two or three colours).

Height and weight: for dogs, preferable height is 55-59 cm and optimal height is 56 cm. For bitches, preferable height is 53-57 cm and optimal height is 55 cm.

FAULTS. Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault is regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and on its ability to perform its traditional work.

SEVERE FAULTS:

- serious departure from standard proportions, short legs;
- square format;
- flat, shallow or barrel-shaped chest;
- unbalanced, sluggish movements;
- wavy, soft, too short hair, underdeveloped undercoat.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

- aggressiveness or cowardice;
- non-proportional build;
- deviation from sexual characteristics;
- overshot bite, undershot bite, misaligned jaws;
- pale pigmentation in nose, eyelids and lips;
- any monochrome colour apart from white;
- short hair;
- any departure from behaviour or proportions that influence negatively the health of the dog and its ability to perform its traditional work.

NB: male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.