

WHAT IS APTITUDE TESTING?

Aptitude testing provides dog breeders with an effective tool to determine the natural inherent mental potential of dogs used for breeding. It was developed in the 1960's for the *Svenska Brukhundklubben* (Swedish Working Dog Association) by a team of canine ethologists (ethology = the scientific study of animal behaviour) and is based on the principles of canine psychology as explained by Konrad Lorenz.

Dogs are not trained for this test - it is aimed at evaluating the inborn instincts and drives of the dog. During the test the dog must solve a number of problems and cope with stressful situations by itself, without any assistance or commands from its handler. It has already been applied to many thousands of dogs and has been proven to be a valuable indicator of the innate mental attitude, temperament and steadiness of a dog.

A Test Leader and 2 Judges assess the following attributes during the test:

- Approachability and willingness to contact and play
- Prey drive/chase response
- Attachment to pack leader (owner)
- Social fighting spirit (reactive aggression)
- Sensitivity to surprise and sudden noise
- Nervous constitution
- Toughness
- Eagerness
- Dominance
- Defensive behaviour
- Sensitivity to gunshot

To pass, the dog must obtain a minimum of (+)100 marks out of a possible range of (-)300 and (+)300, provided it does not fail in the test for steadiness to gunshot. An "Excellent" qualification is awarded to dogs which obtain at least (+)200 marks. A gun-shy dog cannot qualify, regardless of its score. Gun-shyness is an inherited trait and is a disqualification in almost all canine character tests, as it has been proven to indicate nervous instability.

The test is recognised by KUSA and the "*Apt*" or "*Apt Ex*" qualification may be added to the registered name of a dog that has passed the test.

Any dog may be entered, provided it is healthy and at least 22 months old on the day of the test. Qualifying Certificates are however only awarded to dogs registered with KUSA or canine control bodies recognised by KUSA. Should a dog fail, one retest is allowed after a waiting period of at least 3 months.

Find out more about Aptitude Testing at <http://home.mweb.co.za/ne/neff/aptitude.htm> and <http://www.kusa.co.za/> (Schedule 5F (9.1.5)).