

# Morphological characteristics of "Bracco Italiano" dog

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## ABSTRACT

The Italian Bracco is one of the oldest pointing dog breed, used for hunting ever since the Renaissance time; paintings of the 14th century show hunting sceneries with dogs similar to the present day Bracco. The breed has been officially registered by ENCI (the Italian cynological club) in 1949, when the definitive standard was established. In this work, we report the first results of a study aimed at measuring morphological traits in this breed, as a part of a more comprehensive study whose objective is to identify the characters that have the potential of being genetically improved. Body measures were taken from 121 adult (mean age  $4.09 \pm 2.64$  years) Bracco Italiano dogs (65 males and 56 females). For each animal the following biometrical measurements were considered: withers height, chest height, length of the rump (RL), iliac width of rump, chest and cannon circumference. The ratio chest/cannon circumference was calculated, as index of body compactness. The proportion rump length-withers height (RLWH) was also calculated. ANOVA was used to test the differences between males and females for morphological measurements (sex as fixed factor and age at measurement as covariate). Data were analysed by JMP software version 5.0 of SAS Inst.

Significant differences were observed between the means of females and males for withers height ( $59.0 \pm 2.95$  cm in females and  $62.1 \pm 2.73$  cm in males;  $P < 0.01$ ), chest circumference ( $71.3 \pm 5.46$  cm and  $73.9 \pm 3.97$  cm, in females and males respectively;  $P < 0.01$ ) and cannon circumference ( $12.6 \pm 0.98$  cm and  $13.6 \pm 0.90$  cm in females and males respectively;  $P < 0.05$ ). The other measurements were not different between sexes. Sexual dimorphism was evident and generally the measures coincided with what reported in the standard, except for the length of the rump, which was around  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the withers height instead of the value of  $\frac{1}{3}$  required in the standard.

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