

## Bouvier des Flandres: Fancy for Belgian Cattle Dog

The **Bouvier des Flandres** was developed in Belgium in the 19th century. This working breed was used for herding, herd-guarding, and cart pulling. He has also been used for tracking by the police and military. The **Bouvier des Flandres** stands 23.5 to 27.5 inches at the shoulder and weighs between 65 and 95 pounds. His body is large, powerful, and thick-boned. The tail is docked. The shedding coat is weather-resistant, shaggy, and somewhat harsh, with a soft undercoat. The dog has a beard, a mustache, and bushy eyebrows. He needs daily brushing to prevent matting, and should be clipped every three or four months. Show dogs must be hand-stripped to preserve the texture and luster of the coat. However, the coat can be kept in a shorter clip to reduce maintenance. The color may be black, salt-and-pepper, gray, brindle, or fawn. This **Belgian cattle dog** is strong, alert, trustworthy, easygoing but aloof, and tends to be moody and serious. Though affectionate with his owners, the Bouvier is very suspicious of strangers and will **serve well as a watchdog for your home and property**. Training can be difficult due to his stubborn, dominant nature. Passive resistance is common, and aggression is possible when the dog is annoyed or threatened. Training should be patient and firm but not overbearing. The Bouvier learns slowly and can be defiant. The "Down" and the "Come" can be the hardest commands to teach this controlling breed. The Bouvier has a high prey drive and may be very dog-aggressive. He may want to chase cars, joggers, and bikes. Though good with his own family's children, he may be intolerant of visiting children, especially if they are running around. No roughhousing or chasing should be tolerated. Spoiling can encourage dominant, controlling, nippy behavior in this breed and may promote timidity. Overbearing training techniques may elicit fear-biting. Confident, firm leadership and early socialization are crucial to successfully owning a Bouvier. He needs daily exercise and tends to bark and may be destructive and noisy if left alone too long. He is susceptible to hip dysplasia and bloat. Recommended feeding for this breed is 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cans (13.3oz) of a high-quality meaty product with biscuit added or 5 cupfuls of a complete, dry dog food. The ideal home for this breed would be a house with a fenced yard. **The owner of a Bouvier des Flandres should be a firm, strong, active leader** who desires a reserved, protective dog. Mild or nervous owners as well as the elderly and the disabled may have trouble establishing dominance over this breed. The Bouvier needs daily exercise, but should not be jogged with over long distances because of his heavy structure and predisposition to hip problems. Time to train, socialize, exercise, and groom this dog must be made available.

## About the Author

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