



## What has happened to the Pomeranian coat?

### *Has type changed in Poms?*

I think there has been a big change from the 1960/1970's to 1990. We did talk about a dainty outline. A Pom should never be heavy, and I think we have changed this ideal. We began to have more leg coat, and after this we wanted more and more, and then the Pom became heavier and chunkier. The coat changed all over the body. In the beginning, we saw that the hair of the overcoat got more and more thin and soft and then started to disappear.

Today there are dogs with no overcoat at all. These dogs only have colour left on the face and legs. In my opinion, this is bad and very wrong. A Pom should have sparkling colour! With this change of coat we now see Poms looking like small Chow Chows. A Pom should never look heavy. This "new"

look started in North America but has spread all over the world.

I think the UK, until recently, has been spared from this change of type. But sadly now it has arrived and you see more and more dogs with this heavy type and softer coat, even in the UK.

Many might think – "What has this Swedish man to say, what does he know?" I have been around Poms all my life. My grandparents founded our kennel in the early 1950's. I have now bred Poms myself for over 30 years. I visited the UK for the first time 25 years ago, and I can now see a big change, a change that makes me concerned.

I have always felt that if I needed something new for my breeding I could always go to the UK. However, I cannot find these dogs any more, or if I can find them I must search very hard. Maybe

we see these problems with a different view. We have big problems in my own country with this, but we are working hard to return to the correct type of Poms and dogs with the hard overcoat. When I see what is now also happening in the UK it makes me very sad. Dogs that we would be afraid to use are used for the future generations of Poms in the UK.

The coat is not only a problem of type – it is also a health problem. Many of the Poms with soft coats and lacking correct overcoat are at great risk to get sick and lose all coat. I cannot accept any excuses why we should breed Poms that eventually will look like naked Chinese crested dogs. What we have learn today is what we are calling Alopecia-x, but it is actually different diseases that cause Poms to lose coat. Cushing's and Thyroid are all cause of the disease, but we are talking about BSD (Black skin disease).

Today I think that we can see already if that a puppy might have a coat-problem when adult. A Pom puppy should be very ugly from 15 weeks to 7 months. The old breeders did always say that we should "put them in the closet" and take them out again when the coat started to come back. A Pom puppy should not be a ball of cotton...

Many say that Poms have lost the fantastic colour due to overcoated dogs that need excess trimming and because of that cannot show enough overcoat. Why should we breed for so much coat that we lose the characteristic of the breed?. A Pom should never look like they have been clipped and sculpted.



*Pom from the 50's at time when the dainty outline was very important. So important that the pic have been retouched - maybe something we should think about today.*



*This pic is from the early 70's, still we have the elegant and not heavy pom. Lots of coat, that is not over-shaped. This dog I would love to have today. She is the type that I think is what we should try to come back to.*



I think it is time to change these trends, trends that eventually are going to change our breed. We should really look out for this. We, who are judges, should not accept dogs that are not in really good coat condition or lack correct coat texture.

We must teach judges what is the correct coat, but this is a very hard challenge. All the Nordic countries have special information to all judges about the coat problem on Poms (it is not only Poms that are on this list, as other breeds have different matters of concern, listed in the Special Breed Specific Instructions). When a judge is going to judge Poms in Sweden, they get information sent home prior to the show they will judge with information on what to look out for. Our Swedish Kennel Club has a form that the judge must fill out when the judging is

completed. Copies of these forms are also sent to the breed club.

We see a big difference in what country the judge come from and how they deal with coat problems. Countries with big problems on Pom coats, more of their judges accept coats that are not correct.

### ***What can we do?***

I think this is a very big problem all over the world. But I can also see changes in a positive way. Just as this new look started, the change back to the original type is in progress. This is not easy, but if we all start to work back to the true type, described in the standard, we are going to see changes.

**T**hanks you so much for asking me to write about this.

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