

Get a GRIHP! Belgian Shepherd (Laekenois)

Gathered by J Uski

Breed at Glance - Belgian Shepherd (Laekenois)

One of the four variations of Belgian Shepherd. Reddish brown-sable wire/rough-haired shepherd, that has strength and elegance in one. Used as companion, herding and working dog, obedient, highly trainable and loyal guard. Laekenois has worldwide smallest population of the variations, and it has also been longest separated from other variations. Laekenois was created again in Holland after first world war, and they can take the credit of the variation. Laekenois is believed to have connections to other regional rough hair breeds like Dutch shepherd, Bouvier des Ardennes and Bouvier des Flandres (*Vlaamse koehond*)

Key Health Conditions - Belgian Shepherd (Laekenois)

- Hip and elbow dysplasia
- Eye diseases
- autoimmune diseases

Laekenois is the rarest of the variations. It has a bit more concerns with joints than other variations.

Statistics and Health Strategies

Finland

JTO: <https://jalostus.kennelliitto.fi/RotuPDF.ashx?R=15.2&T=2>

*Noted issues in health are hip and elbow dysplasia and sensitive stomach

*Laekenois has achieved most of the goals in breeding strategy, and laekenois owners are very actively testing and screening their dogs.

Breeding restrictions:

-Hips A-B

-Elbows screened

-Eyes no PRA, hereditary cataracts, geographic or total retinal dysplasia (gRD or tRD) or any form of pannus. Any milder form must be paired with healthy dog. Eye test can be max. 24 months old at the point of mating.

-Correct testicle status for males

-All breeds restriction on FKC (Finnish Kennel Club) – worst level of evaluation closes dog from breeding (Hips E, ED grade 3 and spondylosis gr 4 fi.)

Breeding recommendations:

-Age 2-8 yrs for females and over 2 years for male

-Screened spine (spondylosis and lumbosacral transitional vertebrae (LTV))

-Character test (passed) or working result

-Acceptable bite

-Tested ataxia (SDCA 1 & 2 N/N or N/C, which can be paired only to N/N)

-Show result G (Good) at least 15 months of age

-Elbow grades counted together max 2, so that none of the grades is alone 2.

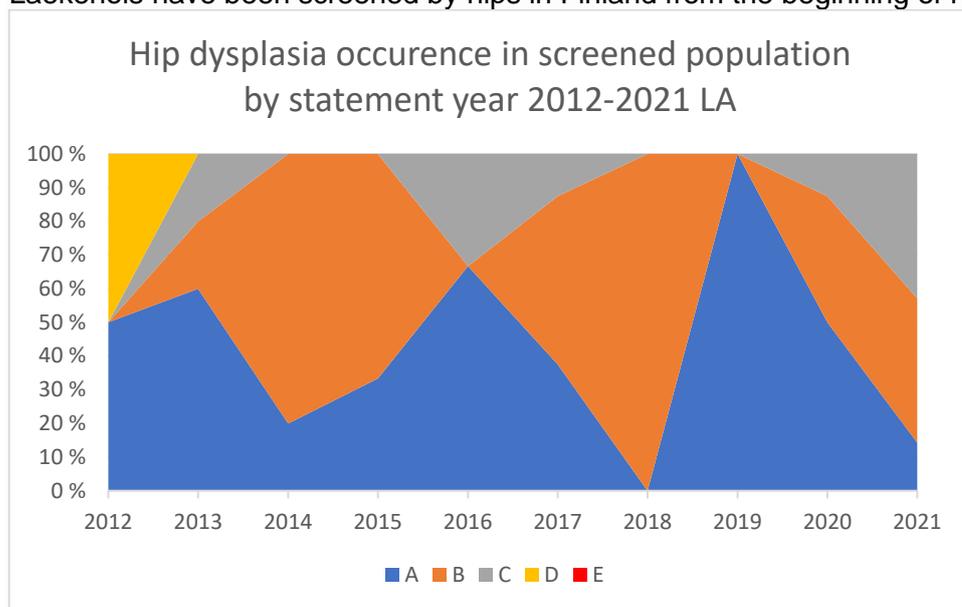
-Shoulders should be screened healthy

-Epileptic cannot be used in breeding. Combination that produced epilepsy, should not be renewed. Epileptic siblings' epilepsy status is unknown but waiting for more age is recommended and then be very careful when mating partner is chosen.

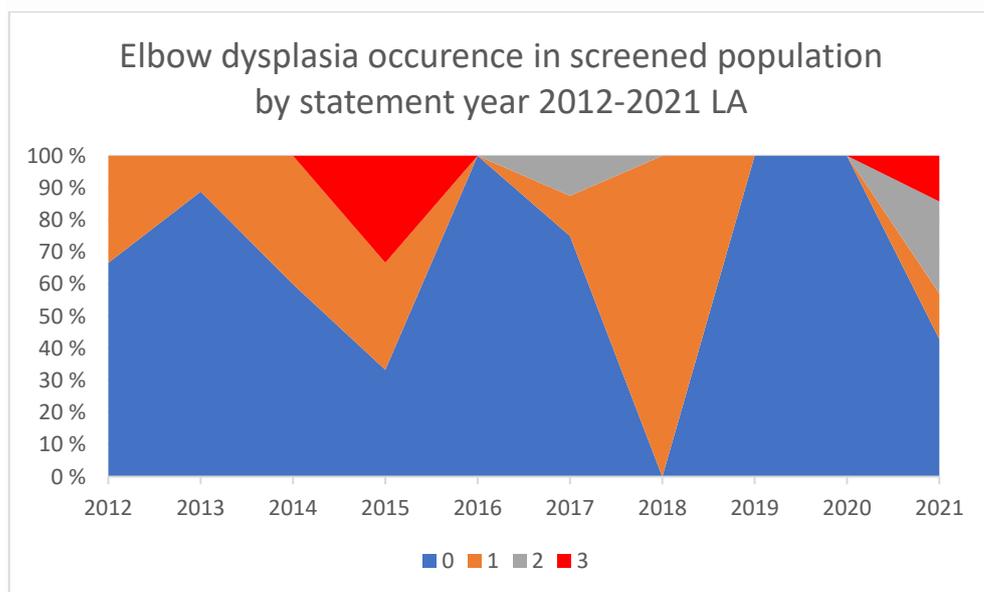
Average inbreeding in laekenois in Finland is on last period 2012-2021 between 0,00 – 8,15 %. Breeding population worldwide is very small, and it is difficult to get numbers under 3 %. 0% came in intervariety breeding malinois-laekenois. On 8 generation these is already familiar dogs for both parents.

<https://jalostus.kennelliitto.fi/frmJalostustilastot.aspx?R=15.2&Lang=en>

Laekenois have been screened by hips in Finland from the beginning of registrations.



Laekenois has a little bit weaker hip results than other variations. Total amount of screened dogs is 49, so even one dog in statistics can make a big difference. (Koiranet)



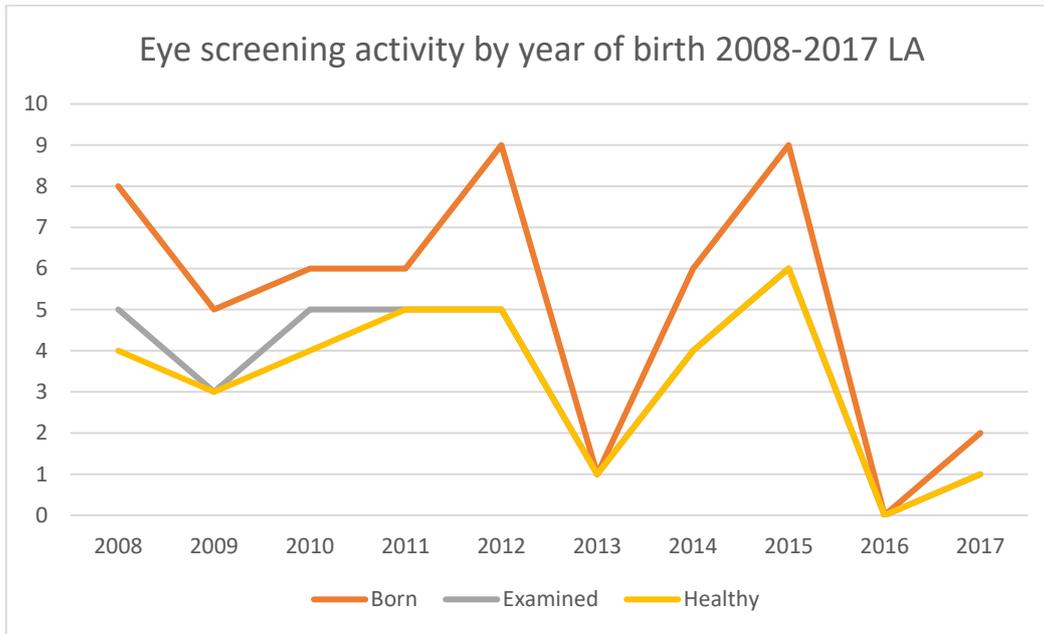
Also elbow situation in laekenois has same overall trend as in hips. Laekenois is known in discussions having more elbow dysplasia than other breeds. (Koiranet)

Laekenois has no detected spondylosis cases in screenings nor causes of death. Two dogs have been reported in health inquiry having early phase spondylosis in thorax area, both found unofficially 2 years old. Laekenois' LTV-situation is very good, only three dogs have LTV1, (screened 41) no more severe forms of LTV detected in screened population.

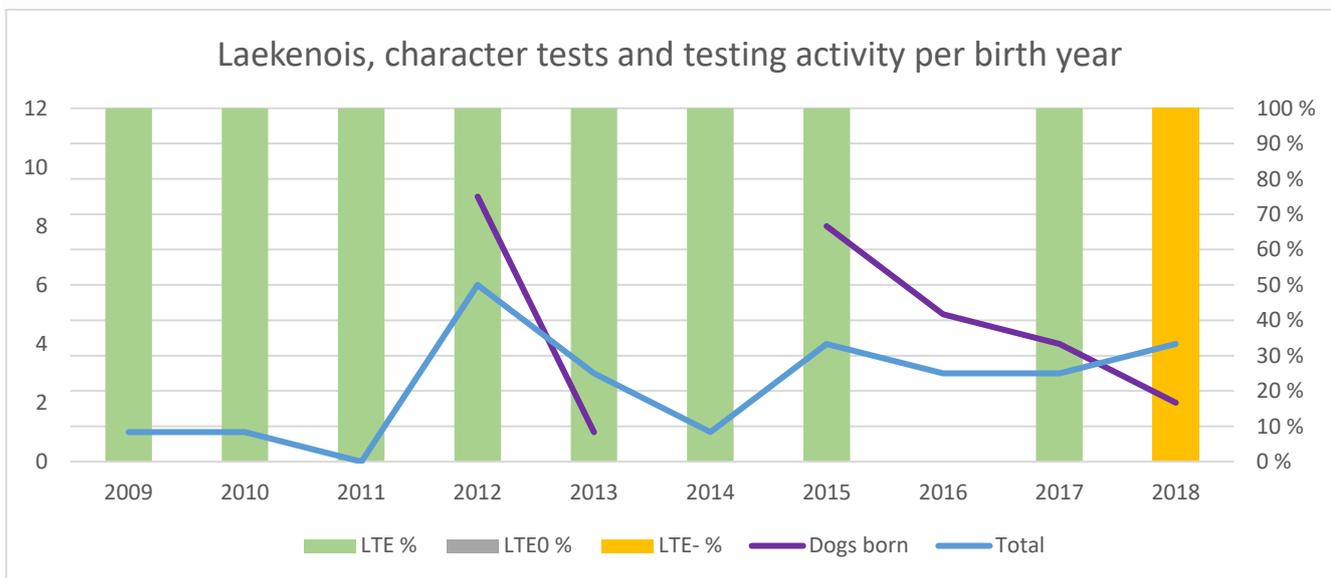
Spondylosis and LTV-screenings became recommended 2016 for Finnish Belgian shepherds in breeding recommendations. Dogs are mainly screened at age 2-3 years, when inherited spondylosis can be detected (minimum age 24 months) This doesn't tell the latter incidence for spondylosis and there has been discussion if screening at 2-3 years only is enough for this breed. LTV can be stated at 12 months old dog. (Koiranet, discussions in social media)

Eye disease findings by statement year 2012-2021

| Diagnosis | Occurrences | Koiria |
|---|-------------|--------|
| Cortical cataract, found | 1 | 1 |
| No evidence of inherited eye diseases | 67 | 44 |
| Other retinal disease, suspect | 1 | 1 |
| PRA, found | 1 | 1 |



As graphic shows, laekenois don't have issues with eyes, and mainly Finnish laekenois are eye tested. One PRA-case doesn't show in listings, dog is examined in Finland but is registered still in Sweden and lives in Åland. (Koiranet, SKL)



Testing frequency in Finland is lower than fi. in Sweden with MH, so result is only directive at its best. Main cause for not approved test is reaction to shooting (Koiranet)

Laekenois, causes of death last 10 years

| Cause of death | Average life span | Total |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Accident | 8 years 3 months | 1 |
| Age (natural or euthanasia) | 12 years 8 months | 2 |
| Endocrine disease | 4 years 3 months | 2 |
| Euthanasia due to behavioral problems | 4 years 6 months | 2 |
| Euthanasia, non-diagnosed | 14 years 4 months | 2 |
| Heart disease | 4 years 10 months | 1 |
| Immunological disease | 5 years 10 months | 3 |
| Respiratory disease | 11 years 9 months | 1 |
| Skin or ear disease | 5 years 1 months | 1 |
| Tumor, cancer | 10 years 8 months | 3 |
| Cause of death not specified | 12 years 10 months | 5 |
| Altogether | 9 years 4 months | 23 |

Laekenois statistics is very small, as is the whole population in Finland and worldwide. Unfortunately, several dogs don't have reported cause of death, but average age shows, that age could be factor in these. (Koiranet)

Sweden

RAS: <https://www.skk.se/globalassets/dokument/rasdokument/ras-belgisk-vallhund.pdf> (All variations in the same)

In RAS you can see population structure on pages 4-11 "*Population och avelstruktur*" (Population and breeding structure)

*Short period goals and breeding recommendations for all variations are

- * Increase the population size for laekenois up to at least 10 registrated dogs/year
- * For laekenois already 2 litters on same male, or one big litter can be considered as matador breeding.
- * Get more dogs to be character (MH) tested and get shot proof average over 1,5
- * Make breeders also look the family results when making breeding choices and use only ED free in breeding
- * Epilepsy awareness, not to use epilepsy producers or epileptics in breeding. Sibling can be used with caution.
- * Increase the number of conformation-evaluated dogs.

Breeding restrictions:

-Hips and elbows as in Finland HD A-B, ED screened, no other restrictions

Inbreeding in laekenois in Sweden. Value variates between single registrations a lot; 0-7,7 %. This number is still lower than values on international level. *inavelsgrad*=inbreeding degree.

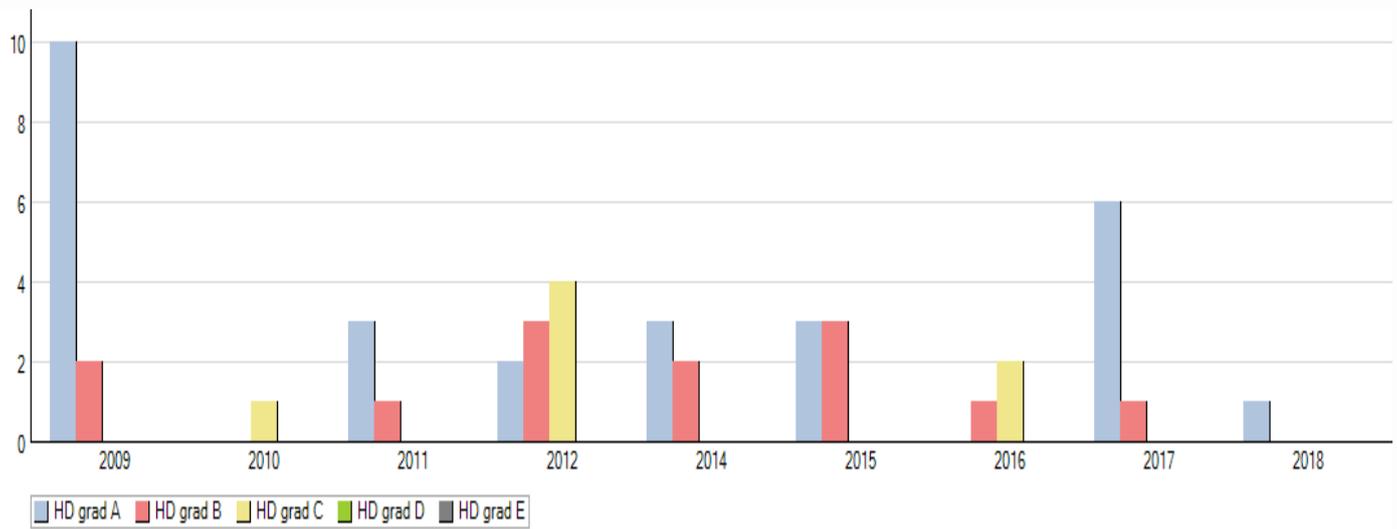
https://hundar.skk.se/avelsdata/Flikar.aspx?sida=Ras_info&id=108

Health statistics in Sweden

Overall health in groenendael population in Sweden is very good.

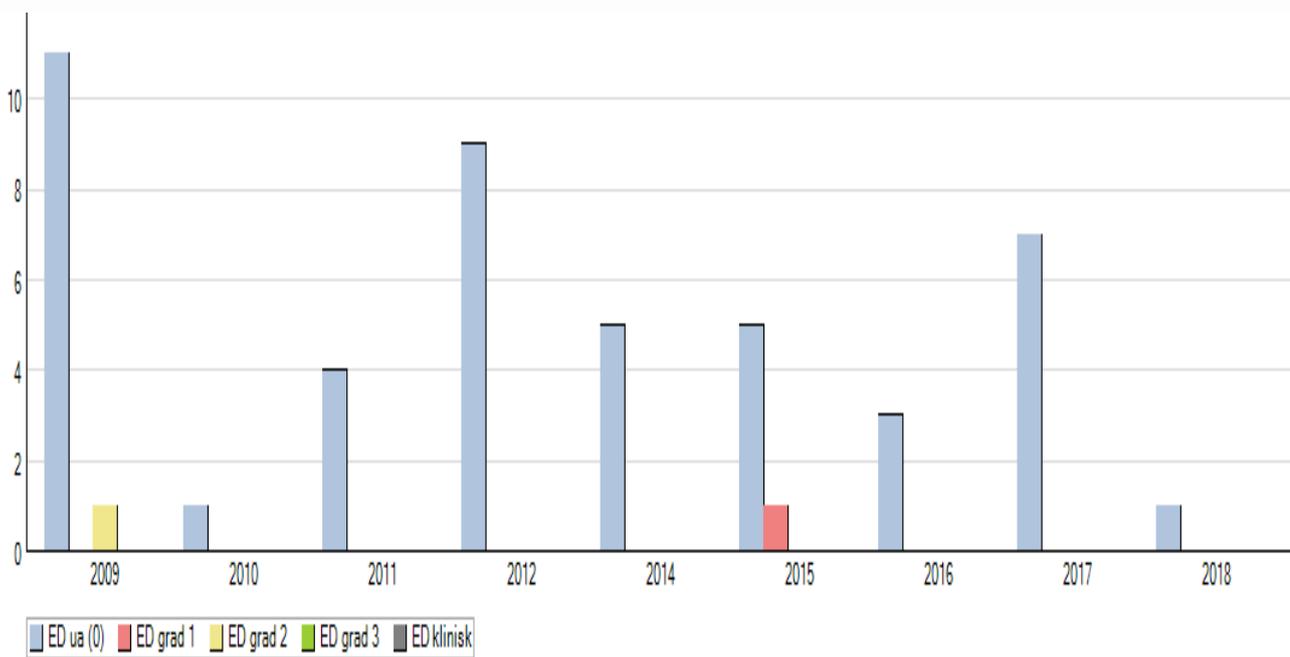
Source: https://hundar.skk.se/avelsdata/Flikar.aspx?sida=Ras_info&id=108 SKK Avelsdata

HD-statistics per birth year 2009-2018



Results seem to correlate in results in Finland.

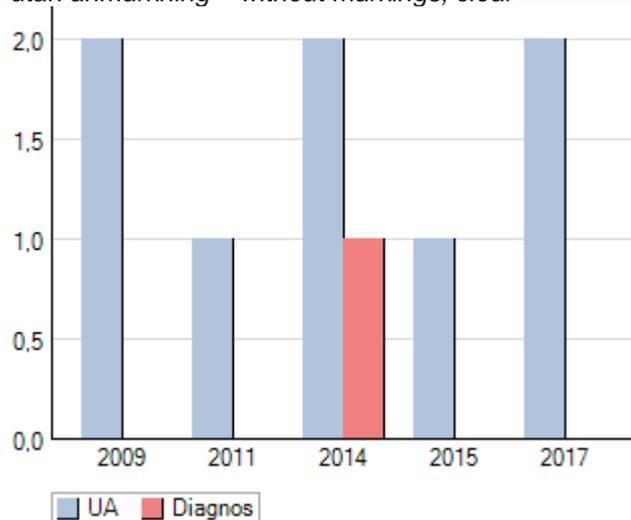
ED-statistics per birth year 2009-2018



As also in Finland, elbow dysplasia doesn't make significant effect on laekenois' health.

Eye test statistics (ECVO) by birth year 2009-2018

UA=utan anmärkning – without markings, clear



In diagnosed dogs one has reported having cataracts. In Sweden amount of eye checks is very small, so this doesn't give proper accuracy in eye disease in the total population in Sweden. The one dog with cataract was eye checked at 7 years old. (SKK Avelsdata)

MH average values in excel (Sweden)

MH description in english: <http://www.lapphund.se/mheng.htm>

Evaluation describes dogs' reactions' strength - the bigger the number, the stronger the reaction.

| Compilation per year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Amount born | 11 | 31 | 6 | 12 | 13 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 1 |
| Dogs with recognised character status | 2 | 7 | - | 4 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 8 | - |
| of wich | | | | | | | | | | |
| - males | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | - | 4 | - |
| -females | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - |
| 1a. Contact greeting | 4 | 3,3 | - | 3 | 3,1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3,4 | - |
| 1b. Contact cooperation | 3 | 3 | - | 2,5 | 2,6 | 2,5 | 2,8 | 1 | 3,1 | - |
| 1c. Contact handling | 2,5 | 2,3 | - | 2,3 | 1,9 | 2,5 | 2,5 | 1 | 2,3 | - |
| 2a. Play 1 play drive | 4 | 4 | - | 3,3 | 3,7 | 2,8 | 4 | 1 | 3,5 | - |
| 2b. Play 1 gripping | 3 | 3,5 | - | 4 | 3,3 | 2,5 | 4 | 1 | 3,6 | - |
| 2c. Play 1 grip and pull | 2,5 | 2,8 | - | 2,8 | 2 | 2,3 | 2,8 | 1 | 2,8 | - |
| 3a.1. Chasing | 3,5 | 2 | - | 2,5 | 1,6 | 2,5 | 3,3 | 1 | 2,8 | - |
| 3a.2. Chasing | 3,5 | 2,3 | - | 2,8 | 3,1 | 2,3 | 3,8 | 1 | 3,4 | - |
| 3b.1. Gripping | 2,5 | 1,3 | - | 1,3 | 1,3 | 1,8 | 3,5 | 1 | 2 | - |
| 3b.2. Gripping | 4 | 2 | - | 2 | 2,6 | 1,8 | 3,8 | 1 | 3 | - |
| 4. Activity level | 3 | 3,2 | - | 2,5 | 2,4 | 2,5 | 3,5 | 2 | 3,5 | - |
| 5a. Distance - interest | 2,5 | 2,3 | - | 2,5 | 3,1 | 2,8 | 3 | 2 | 2,6 | - |
| 5b. Distance reaction to threat/aggression | 1 | 1,2 | - | 1,3 | 1,6 | 1,3 | 2,3 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 5c. Distance - curiosity | 2,5 | 2,5 | - | 1 | 1,3 | 1 | 2,3 | 1 | 1,5 | - |
| 5d. Distance - willing to play | 3 | 3 | - | 1 | 1,7 | 1 | 2,3 | 1 | 2,5 | - |
| 5e. Distance - cooperation | 2 | 2,2 | - | 1 | 1,6 | 1 | 1,7 | 1 | 1,6 | - |
| 6a. Surprise-fear | 1 | 3,5 | - | 2,8 | 2,3 | 3,3 | 3 | 4 | 3,1 | - |
| 6b. Surprise- threat/aggression | 1 | 1 | - | 1,3 | 1,1 | 1 | 1,5 | 1 | 1,1 | - |
| 6c. Surprise- curiosity | 4,5 | 3,2 | - | 3,3 | 3,9 | 2,8 | 4,2 | 4 | 3,6 | - |
| 6d. Surprise, remaining fear | 1 | 1,7 | - | 1 | 1,6 | 1,5 | 1,7 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 6e. Surprise, remaining interest | 1,5 | 1,8 | - | 1,5 | 1,3 | 1,3 | 1,2 | 1 | 1,6 | - |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|---|
| 7a. Sound - fear | 2,5 | 2,8 | - | 3,3 | 2,7 | 2,8 | 2,7 | 2 | 2,6 | - |
| 7b. Sound - curiosity | 5 | 4 | - | 3,8 | 4,2 | 2,8 | 3,8 | 5 | 4,3 | - |
| 7c. Sound, remaining fear | 1 | 1,5 | - | 1 | 1 | 1,3 | 1,7 | 2 | 1,1 | - |
| 7d. Sound, remaining curiosity | 1,5 | 2 | - | 1,8 | 1 | 1,3 | 1,2 | 1 | 1,8 | - |
| 8a. Ghost - threat, aggression | 1 | 1,8 | - | 2,3 | 2,8 | 2,3 | 2,8 | 1 | 2,5 | - |
| 8b. Ghost - control | 2,5 | 3 | - | 4 | 4,2 | 3 | 4,5 | 3 | 3,8 | - |
| 8c. Ghost - fear | 1,5 | 4 | - | 1,8 | 2,7 | 3,3 | 3 | 4 | 2,4 | - |
| 8d. Ghost - curiosity | 3 | 2,5 | - | 3,3 | 3,8 | 2,8 | 3,5 | 2 | 3,3 | - |
| 8e. Ghost - contacting | 4 | 2,5 | - | 3,5 | 3,5 | 2,5 | 3,5 | 2 | 2,8 | - |
| 9a. Willingness to play | 3,5 | 4,2 | - | 3 | 4 | 2,5 | 3,7 | 1 | 3,1 | - |
| 9b. Willingness to grip | 3 | 3,5 | - | 3,5 | 3,8 | 2,3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | - |
| 10. Reaction to gunshots | 1 | 1,2 | - | 1 | 1,8 | 2,3 | 1 | 2 | 1,5 | - |

Norway

Norwegian breedclubs Breeding strategy RAS is from older sample and can be found in here:

<https://www.nkk.no/getfile.php/131646-1528360203/Filer/RAS/RAS/Belgisk%20f%C3%A5rehund%20RAS%20v1.pdf>

- HD A-B mandatory for full registration
- Inbreeding coefficient and matador breeding should be kept on correct level
- In health issues HC (hereditary cataract) is noted as biggest issue in eye tests.
- Epilepsy and cancers are noted. In here also gastric cancer is mentioned as rising health problem
- Hypothyreosis is mentioned mainly on malinois concern
- In summary breed is considered healthy and in breeding the entity should always be understood. Working quality of the dogs should be maintained. In conformation better fronts are needed

Laekenois is very rare in Norway and their statistics are merely a sidenote. Only one laekenois litter is bred in Norway between 2012-2021, rest are imports.

2012 – 2021 health results

HD-screened 10 laekenois with 5 x A, 2 x B, 2 x C and one D, most of the dogs are imported. (7/10)

ED-screened 8 x 0, 1 x 1, 1 x 2

One dog has eyes tested healthy, no other eye tests

Europe

Belgium

Belgium has national laws of health of the dogs, and dogs should be bred accordingly. Belgians Shepherd is guarded also by national kennel club *KMSH/SRSH* as a national breed.

For registration you need mandatory DNA parentage test according ISAG 2006 or other with same quality.

Breed club *Koninklijke Unie der Clubs voor Belgische Herdershonden vzw./ l'Union Royale des Clubs de Bergers Belges asbl. K.U.C.B.H.-U.R.C.B.B.* doesn't have breeding programs or goals and no official statistics are available.

Holland

There are two breed clubs in Holland. Registration demands are by national kennel club *Raad van Beheer (RvB)* and their breeding rules (*Verenigingsfokreglement (VFR)*) that apply to all breeds. Belgians need to have age and inbreeding demands fulfilled for registration.

Breed clubs have small differences in orientation in other health issues

| BHCN (Belgische Herder Club Nederland) | NVBH Nederlandse Vereniging voor Belgische Herdershonden) |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastric Cancer • Epilepsy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD/ED • Eye tests |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elbow Dysplasia • LTV (Extra Werwel) (extra vertebrae) • Ataxia • Degenerative myelopathy DM • MMM, Musculus masseter myositis, Kaakmyositis=jaw myositis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastric Cancer • Ataxia • Epilepsy |
|---|--|

Germany

VDH defines basic registration limits and breed clubs (4 registering clubs) define minimum requirements for health and character and organise possible evaluations.

Breed Clubs have small differences in orientation in other health issues. Hips A1-B2, ED 0-GF (Grenzfall=borderline, 1) in all clubs

| DKBS (Deutscher Klub für Belgische Schäferhunde) | BSD (Belgische Schäferhund Deutschland e.V.) | BSB (Belgische Schäferhunde Berlin e. V.) | DMC (Deutscher Malinois Club) |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database Dogbase • HD/ED • Ataxia • Epilepsy • LTV (LÜW) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No named database • If breeding committee suspects health issue in dog, they can demand checks • proved producers of health defects might get breeding restriction • Inbreeding max 25% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNA ISAG 2006 • Character test or 2 tries in BH (behaviour test) if dog doesn't pass, breeding ban. • intervariety breeding needs special permission • No own database, but links to Czech database and commercial working-dog | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club for malinois only • Mandatory LTV (LÜW) • Mandatory SDCA 1 and 2, and CJM at least on another parent must be N/N (clear) • PDF formed loadable health lists of tested dogs in HD, ED, Spine, SDCA, CJM, DM and dilution • Statistics available |

France

No breeding restrictions by national kennel club or breed club

National health statistics for all breeds here: https://www.centrale-canine.fr/sites/default/files/2021-07/Rapport%20sant%C3%A9%202021_0.pdf

Belgians mentioned in recommended DNA tests for them and amounts of tested dogs:

| Race | Maladies | | | | Période 2019-2020 | | | | Objectif | |
|-----------------------|--|-------|--------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| | Nom complet | Code | Gène | Mutation | Nbre de résultats sur la période | Résultats / Chiens confirmés | Porteurs sains | Atteints | Nbre de tests annuel | Objectif atteint en 2020 ? |
| CHIEN DE BERGER BELGE | MYELOPATHIE DEGENERATIVE | SOD1A | SOD1 | c.118G>A | 352 | 9% | 5% | 0% | 660 | Non |
| | DEGENERESCENCE SPONGIEUSE ATAXIE CEREBELLEUSE TYPE 1 | SDCA1 | KCNJ10 | c.986T>C | 335 | 9% | 6% | 0% | 440 | Non |
| | DEGENERESCENCE SPONGIEUSE ATAXIE CEREBELLEUSE TYPE 2 | SDCA2 | ATP1B2 | c.130_131ins227 | 334 | 9% | 7% | 0% | 440 | Non |

Nbre de résultats sur la période=number of tests on the period

Résultats/Chiens Confirmés=Results, confirmed dogs

Porteurs sains=healthy carriers

Atteints=affected

Nbre de tests annuel= number of yearly tests

objectif atteint en 2020= goal achieved in 2020?

Breed club has collected results of hip and elbow dysplasia on quarterly reports:

<https://www.centrale-canine.fr/club-francais-du-chien-de-berger-belge/articles/dysplasie-resultats>

Click "CLIQUEZ-ICI" to open the pdf-file

Worldwide results of ataxia and degenerative myelopathy testing:

<https://www.centrale-canine.fr/club-francais-du-chien-de-berger-belge/articles/suivi-sdca-et-md>

French club pays a lot of interest in standard and conformation. Here is a link to comments and clarifications of the structure:

<https://www.centrale-canine.fr/sites/default/files/2021-06/COMMENTAIRES%20DU%20STANDARD.pdf> (In French only)

Multiple drawings and pictures of correct and incorrect type and structure.