

Who am I?

By Scarlett Sanders (Foxhunt White Shepherds)

Often I have puppy buyers come to me confused asking; "What is the difference between a White Shepherd, White German Shepherd Dog, Berger Blanc Suisse & a Swiss White Shepherd?" Well, that's a very good question. I guess that depends on who you ask & what Country you are from, but here are the facts & our philosophy...

The BBS (Berger Blanc Suisse), SWS (Swiss White Shepherd), WS (White Shepherd) & WGSD (German Shepherd Dog, color white) are all by DNA the same dog. There are some BBS & SWS's that have more angles than others, there are those WS that have more angles than others & the same goes for the WGSD. If I were to take several photos of several of these white dogs from each breed name anyone would mix them up, as they are all the same breed. The standards & pedigrees are even pretty close.



Typical American White Shepherds

There are some who want breed separation in the US from the WS & WGSD. Then there are a handful of those who also want breed separation between the WS, WGSD, BBS & the SWS. The realistic view is that they are all the same dog, simply differing on names depending on which Country & registry you are using. If you read the FCI standard of the BBS & SWS it states that these dogs originated from the US & Canada.

However, in Europe there was no such a breed of dog as a GSD color white, so it was much easier for the European Countries to get the white dogs registered as a new breed in their Countries. While here in the US it is much more political as the AKC does recognize the white dogs as a GSD though they are a disqualifying color of the GSD breed & therefore disqualified from the AKC breed ring. This is due to the Parent Club of the GSD, the German

Shepherd Dog Club of America (GSDCA), they own the AKC GSD breed & the AKC GSD breed standard here in the US. They will not allow the white dogs to split from the GSD breed, at least not until all of the white dogs come together as a single unit wanting separation from the GSD.

However, in UKC the white dogs have been given the opportunity to split from the GSD breed if they so desire. All imported BBS & SWS's are UKC registered as a WS. Leaving the white dogs with many slightly different breed standards & breed names.

However, through DNA they are still all the same breed of dog. For example, one of my American bred WS Foxhunt dogs was recently taken over to Europe, shown so that a qualified FCI Judge could say "yes, that dog fits the standard of the BBS" and was then granted registration as a FCI BBS. How could this be if they are not the same breed & they are so differently structured?

If you look at the pedigrees of the American bred WS & WGSD they are mostly the same lines crossed back & fourth, with the exception of those white dogs who have colored GSD's in their pedigrees.

There are some breeders here in the US that are trying to split the WS, WGSD, BBS & SWS into separate breeds. Some have basically imported BBS/SWS breeding programs to the US. & some of these breeders are going as far as to call the BBS & SWS a "rare breed" so they can charge phenomenal prices for their puppies.

Our philosophy here at Foxhunt and I believe I speak for other concerned breeders as well, is that the health of the white dogs is much more important than the politics of a breed name & while it is our deepest desire to see the white dogs (all of them) split from the GSD breed & to be recognized on their own merits, as their own breed, to split the white dogs apart from one another is not in their best interest where health is concerned. To continue to split the white dogs from one another cuts the breeds diversity. How many times can we diminish the diversity & still breed healthy dogs? I think most people have at least a simple understanding of genetics so this should be a very simple question for anyone. If we continue to keep breeding back to the same lines over & over how long can we expect the white dogs will survive & be healthy? Isn't the health & welfare of the white dogs here in the US the most important issue at hand? As a puppy buyer, which would you be more interested in, the politics of a breed name or having a healthy dog to love for many happy years?

There is more controversy pertaining to these magnificent dogs than any other breed in the history of dogs. I believe this is partly due to the wonderful passion the breeders have for these white dogs & while I realize there are others with different philosophies pertaining to this controversy, this is ours. So... Who am I... only the most fantastic & versatile dog the world over!