



Dear Readers,

For decades, the German Shepherd has been present in specialised dog training and, in addition to its original activity of herding sheep, it is used in many other fields. In each of the jobs they do, they are not only good, but outstanding. The term *Arbeitshund* encompasses a broader range of activities than *Gebrauchshund*. Both terms are loosely translated as 'working dog', though *Gebrauchshund* implies that the dog is meant to be 'used', while *Arbeitshund* implies that the dog performs any kind of 'work'. Working dogs in the sense of *Arbeitshund* include all fields of activity with working tests, such as herding dogs, rescue dogs, tracking dogs, guide dogs, assistance dogs etc. A working dog in this sense is therefore a dog that is regularly used to carry out specific tasks for humans in everyday life. When used as working dogs, the natural potential that our breed brings with it is used in the best possible way, and their individual disposition is further developed in breeding.

Contemporary pedigree dog breeding presents us with completely new challenges. Very few dogs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are still used for their original tasks. Analysts estimate the number of actual working/specialised dogs to be less than 1 per cent of dogs in Germany. The German Shepherd is a herding and driving dog; that is its original purpose. Even today, our breed is generally expected to be trainable for its original use. Formally, we must help to preserve the inner and outer characteristics of the German Shepherd breed within the scope of the approved breed standard. In other words, our main task is to breed, train, judge and evaluate dogs according to the breed standard and to consider them as potential breeding dogs for future generations. However, this must never be at the expense of the dogs' health and wellbeing. 'Dogs must always be fit for the function for which they were originally meant, developed and bred for' – this is what the FCI Basic Statement for Show Judges says.

The term 'specialised dogs' commonly refers exclusively to working dogs that support people in their work: dogs 'with a job of their own', so to speak. However, all these assistants for humans have one thing in common: they serve us in everyday life, and for their different fields of application, they need to fulfil specific requirements concerning their physique (strength, size, agility), their character (strong drive and/or stimulus resistance) and their training.

The required character and physical qualities depend on the dog's purpose. Today's 'specialised dogs' must be seen in the context of a social change from a traditional form or culture to more modern structures in a given social environment. Since time immemorial, domestic dogs have accompanied changes in the structure of society through all periods and adapted to the needs of people. Through this process, new areas of action for working dogs have arisen, and they continue to do so today.

Today, there are at least 17 possible specialisations in specialised dog training. Besides the widely known sniffer dogs for narcotics, explosives, weapons and tobacco, there are even dogs that have the gift of recognising certain amounts of cash but do not indicate smaller amounts.

Current estimates speak of around 5,000 dogs who earn their living every day in Germany as helpers on four paws. With their infallible sense of smell, they put the police, fire brigade and rescue service on the trail of missing or buried persons. They uncover criminal racketeering when they sniff out drugs or smuggled cash. They are everyday specialists in their fields and have one thing in common: the breed standard.

Yours truly,

Andreas Quint  
SV Officer for Specialised Dog Training