

## Editorial

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Dear Readers,



Specialised dogs are dogs that help people with their work or in everyday life: 'dogs with jobs', so to speak. The systematics of working dog breeds needs to be viewed in connection with social change on the one hand and breeding itself on the other. Historically, the main focus of working dog breeding has been purpose-based. Dogs had tasks to perform for humans, for which they were specially bred. The dogs that were most suitable for the application in question were used for breeding. This means that historically, breeding was primarily aimed at a purpose, and appearance was less obvious.

This resulted in a division into breeds: that is, dogs that were bred for the same purpose. These breeds were allocated to groups: for example, our breed as a representative of the group of herding and cattle dogs. Each group had a specific purpose and was combined among the groups as a pedigree dog. The problem with this historical classification is that in the course of pedigree dog breeding, both the original purpose of a breed and its external appearance have changed.

Our *Canis lupus familiaris* is now more than ever a house dog and is mainly kept in the private environment as a family dog or as a working dog. Service dogs also live today mainly as 'privately-kept service dogs' in the family environments of their handlers. The term working dog is now closely associated with socialised dogs, i. e. dogs that are used to living with people in human society and are accordingly adapted and socialised. The areas of application for working dogs are now more diverse than ever. On the one hand, dogs are indispensable helpers for certain professional groups. On the other hand, they are also indispensable helpers in everyday life, including in the private lives of many people with restricted mobility. In the area of specialised dog training, three clusters have developed: search dogs, sniffer dogs and assistance dogs.

It is our job to develop specialised and modern training methods for these areas. These methods should strengthen the skills of professional specialised dogs. In working dog breeding, they should use dogs that are most suitable for the purpose in question in order to breed future specialised dog candidates equipped with certain skills.

All specialised dog training must meet the requirements of the German Animal Welfare Act, out of respect for the dog. Any training in contravention of modern and animal welfare-friendly methods is unacceptable. These are our friends and helpers for certain everyday tasks in society, and we want to treat them with respect.

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