

Meet the Breed

The **Appenzeller Sennenhund** hails from the Appenzell region of Switzerland. “Sennenhund” refers to “Senn” herders of Switzerland. An Appenzell Cattle Dog was first described in a book as a “high-pitch, barking, short haired, med size, multicolour of a quite even Spitz type, used partly to guard the homestead, partly to herd cattle.”

The Appenzeller is a medium sized breed of dog and one of the four regional breeds of Sennenhund type dogs; originally kept primarily as a cattle herding dog and a flock guardian. The breed was also used as a draft dog and general farm dog. Appenzellers are known for their affinity to herd and guard and their tenacity for the task at hand.

General Appearance

The Appenzeller is a medium sized herding dog, of strong, mollosser-like build, well balanced, agile, and deft. He has a distinctive tri-colour coat and a cheeky expression.

Appenzellers have been recognized in Europe for over 100 years. The Havana Brown as a colour has been recognized internationally since 1983.



The Breed Standard

The Appenzeller's appearance is both classic and distinctive. Known for its striking tricolour coat, tenacious work ethic, and lively personality, the Appenzeller remains a hidden gem in North America, with a small but passionate following of breeders and owners dedicated to promoting and preserving this remarkable breed.



Black Tri-Colour and Havana brown are accepted colours for the Appenzeller

Striking appearance aside, the Appenzeller is defined by its spirited personality. This is not a breed for the casual or first-time dog owner; its high energy and herding instincts require experienced handlers who can provide consistent training and ample physical and mental activity. This is a highly intelligent and very "trainable" breed, that is confident and has a natural drive to guard and protect. For those prepared to meet its needs, the Appenzeller offers unmatched loyalty, intelligence, and a deep bond with its human family.



The Appenzeller is highly intelligent and needs a "job" to do. They excel in a variety of dog sports.

Appenzellers in North America: A Growing Community

Although there have been Appenzellers in the United States and Canada since the 1950s, the breed remains exceedingly rare in North America. Even with a studbook established in 1990, now maintained by the Appenzell Mountain Dog Club of America (AMDCA), the population is small in the US, and maintaining the breed's quality and standards is challenging. Each new import is chosen with the utmost care, and

breeders strive to adhere to European guidelines, often foregoing breeding if a dog does not meet these high standards. In Canada, a studbook was only just established this year. On the plus side, the Appenzeller became a listed breed with the CKC in 2023, which is good news for Appenzeller fanciers on both sides of the border.

Appenzeller breeders in North America face the dual challenge of increasing the population while preserving the breed's traditional qualities; potential breeding dogs undergo rigorous health testing to ensure that only healthy, well-tempered, and physically sound Appenzellers contribute to the gene pool. For dedicated breeders, finding suitable, unrelated mates within the small population is difficult. Yet this commitment to quality over quantity is a testament to the breed's strong foundation and the passion of its fancier. And now, adding in the new rule by the US. Centers for Disease Control serious limits the movement of dogs younger than six months of age into the country from anywhere in the world.

Breeding and Owning an Appenzeller

For those that know and love the breed there are both challenges and rewards. Owning an Appenzeller requires a deep commitment to this high-energy dog that thrives not only on human interaction but plenty of mental and physical stimulation. Ideal homes are those with a large yard or property, and owners who understand and are prepared for the demands of a working breed; early socialization is paramount, and consistent training for life... "A busy Appenzeller is a happy Appenzeller." With the right balance of training and environment, the Appenzeller shines in almost any dog sport that is presented to them, from the show ring to the agility ring, herding, obedience, scent work and SAR. Their desire to "work" is inherent in their nature, no matter how large or small the task as long as it's with their person. While reserved and wary of strangers, Appenzellers are completely devoted to their family. It is worth the time and energy to have an Appenzeller as loyal companion and excellent working partner.



**The versatile
Appenzeller is up for
any task.**

Growing a Future for the Appenzeller

Appenzeller fanciers in North America hope to see this remarkable breed gain a foothold. By sharing the breed's story, enthusiasts aim to inspire others to take an interest in the Appenzeller and consider bringing one into their homes. Whether as a companion, working partner, or show dog, the Appenzeller has much to offer for those willing to take on the responsibilities that come with it.



The Appenzeller Sennenhund is not only one of the rarest breeds in North America but also one of the most rewarding for dedicated owners. Its heritage, personality, and versatility make it a breed worth preserving and promoting. With increased awareness and continued commitment to quality breeding, the future of the Appenzeller in North America shows promise. For those interested in a breed that combines history, heart, true loyalty and high energy, the Appenzeller just might be the perfect choice!

