

BOUVIER DES FLANDRES



THE BOUVIER DES FLANDRES IS ALMOST LITERALLY A WORKHORSE OF A DOG. In eighteenth-century Flanders (a region of Belgium and northeastern France) horses were primarily owned by the upper classes, and farmers used dogs for a variety of chores, such as pulling carts and churning milk. □ All cattle dogs were called *bouviere* (cowherds), and each region stuck its own tag on the dog to identify its origin; hence, the Bouvier des Flandres. In fact, most early breeders of the dog were farmers or butchers, and the Bouvier didn't develop uniform characteristics until the nineteenth century, when veterinarians noticed discrepancies among dogs of the type and began documenting desired traits. □ In the twentieth century, the breed began its famous assignment as an international courier to the French Resistance in northern Europe. Its dark coloring, speed, and intelligence aided its undercover efforts, but the Nazis caught on to the ruse and began shooting Bouviers on sight. Few of these dogs survived World War II; many of those that did were recruited by police departments for their superior sensory abilities.

