

BLACK MOUTH CURS

In Australia
BY TROY CRITTLE

In August 2011 my cousin Baden and I imported four Black Mouth Curs from southern Texas into Australia. Our dogs are the first Black Mouth Curs in Australia. This is the story of how and why we chose the Black Mouth Cur and an update on how they are settling in to Australian conditions.

Why import another breed?

I had been thinking about importing dogs from the USA for quite a while and I settled on the Black Mouth Cur as breed of choice in about 2003. In 2005 my wife and I travelled to the USA to pick out some Black Mouth Curs but hurricane Katrina had other ideas. With all communications out in the deep south our contacts disappeared so at the last moment we headed to Canada and played tourist. After we got back the Aussie dollar dropped to about 60 cents and our project became unaffordable and went on hold for a while.

About Easter 2008 Baden and I, who was managing a property in central Queensland, were talking about dogs over a beer. The Aussie dollar was climbing and it was one of those "now or never" moments. We decided to do it and it was full steam ahead.



Our current stud dog Crush from Wrights Curs in Dryden Texas.



Baden left Troy Right with dogs from left Connie, Crush and Drift, all dogs are 11 months old in the photo and are ten days out of quarantine.

Within 12 months we had purchased pups and organised transport, it was all happening. I would work my dogs on pigs and Baden would use his to muster and work cattle.

Black Mouth Curs have been known as a breed since about 1900 but were probably bred as a type of dog long before that. In comparison Kelpies have been around since the 1870's and the Australian Cattle Dog since about 1880. There are several types and strains of Black Mouth Cur including Howard, Carnathan and Ladner. There are many other local lines that have never been named. Some lines like the Ladner specialise in treeing small game and others specialise in working cattle.

Black Mouth Curs are a very popular breed in Texas, they are quite versatile but are mainly used for mustering cattle and hunting pigs. The Black Mouth Curs we decided to import are all based on the

Weatherfords Ben bloodline. This bloodline originated in eastern and central Texas and goes back to one outstanding dog called Weatherfords Ben. We imported one male (Crush) from Randy Wright (who owned Weatherfords Ben) in Dryden, Texas and three females (Rose, Connie and Drift) from David Thoms in Three Rivers, Texas. Both Randy and David are cattlemen and work their curs on Brahman cattle in the Texas brush country. They use their curs to find, stop and muster rough cattle in some very rocky and scrubby country. Both men also sell pups for hunting pigs, bloodtrailing wounded deer and even treeing problem bears.

We owe a huge debt to David Thoms who looked after all four of our dogs for eleven months and went through all the exportation requirements for us. David absolutely lives and breathes Black Mouth Curs and we couldn't have done this without him.



Connie at 11 months straight out of quarantine.



Connie bailing the third pig shes ever seen.

So where are we up to?

I picked up our dogs from quarantine at Eastern Creek in Sydney in mid August 2011. After giving them a week to settle in at home in Tamworth I packed up and headed up to Badens at Springsure. Rose was joined to a dog of David Thoms called Trigger before she left Texas so she stayed home to have our first litter. Our dogs had all been started on cattle by David Thoms and they were keen to work straight out of the crate. The first time that we let them go we thought they would never stop running, quarantine must have been very boring for them. Straight away we were impressed with their herding instinct on cattle. They work very naturally and have great stamina. While I was there we took the curs pig hunting with us. They took to it like they had done it all there lives. Connie was the standout, stopping and bailing the first pig that she had ever seen. The Black Mouth Curs saw about 5-6 pigs each over the week that I was there and they really got into it. Since that time Baden has mainly worked his curs on cattle but gets out for the occasional hunt when he gets time, including catching a 120kg boar on Boxing Day 2011.

Baden has Crush, Connie and Drift at Springsure and I have Rose with me in Tamworth. As of winter 2012 Rose and Connie have had one litter of pups each and Drift has just had her second litter. We have

kept pups from each litter and our two oldest litters are working pigs for me and cattle for Baden. Between both of us we have kept eight pups across three litters. Busy days ahead.

I am working two pups on pigs at the moment, Muesli is from Roses litter by David Thoms Trigger and Randy is from Drifts first litter with Crush. Both pups are bailing and starting to find pigs. Muesli has a light very wiry build and has a slightly darker coat colour. She is quite intense and loves to work. On pigs she stops them well and naturally goes to the front. She is very busy at the bail and has a low back and forth kind of style. She is amazingly athletic. If a pig breaks she will nip the rear end to stop it and when the pig turns she jumps back and bails.



Rose on her first hunt

Randy is a big pup and two months younger than Muesli. He is a more classic yellow colour and has a more laid back attitude. He started naturally on pigs and has a busy but slightly wider bailing style than Muesli. At eight months and after three hunting trips he is already a member of the team. He has found his own pigs off the quad bike and he already works scent longer and deeper than my main dog. He out found my main dog twice on his first hunting trip. He will mature into a very nice dog and we have high hopes for him. If he continues to impress Randy will be used as a stud dog in the future.

Our pups are all working better than expected and at the moment we have some of Connie's pups to get started and assessed. Over the next year or so we will have some new litters but we will mainly concentrate on working and hunting our current pups and young dogs.

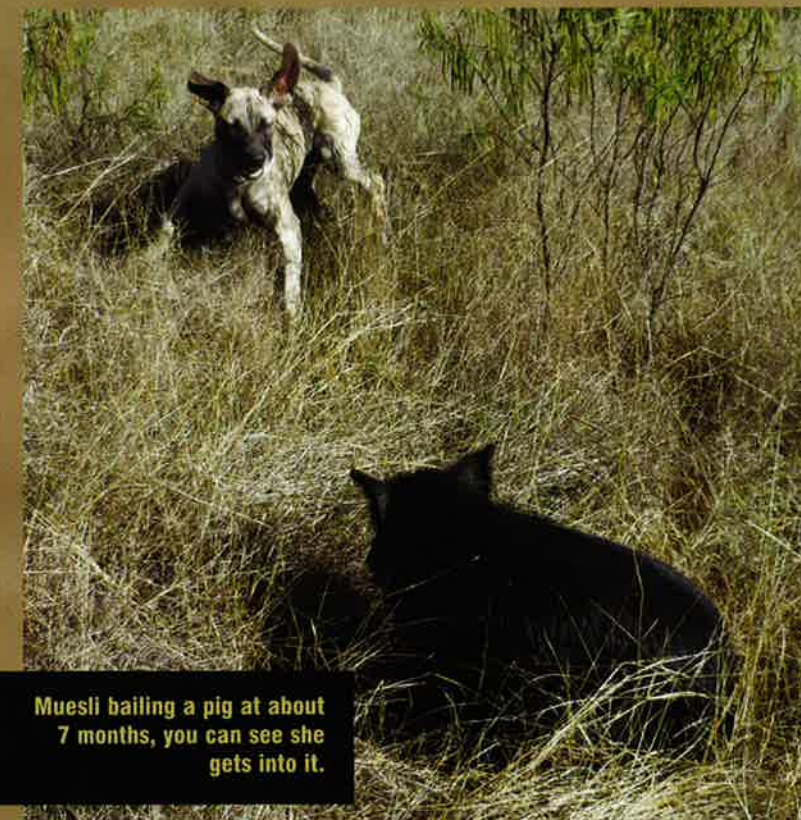


Randy at eight months. He is Crush X Drift



Drift, she is Thoms Colorado X Thoms Gato

Dogs on arrival in Tamworth left to right. Rose, Connie, Drift and Crush.



Muesli bailing a pig at about 7 months, you can see she gets into it.

So what are Black Mouth Curs really like?

The most common question I get asked is "How far do they hunt"? Its early days yet so I can't tell you that my Black Mouth Curs pups are pulling of 3km ute finds. They are only pups. What I can tell you is that they are very active workers and they love to hunt and find pigs. I have had pig dogs most of my life and I couldn't be happier with my pups hunting ability. After only a handful of hunts each both of my pups are starting to find on their own. Our Black Mouth Curs are all bailers on pigs but they will hold with a lugging dog. Muesli will hold sows on her own when I get to the bail.

Black Mouth Curs are dogs that need a job to do and need physical and mental stimulation. I currently run my dogs about 30 km per week beside my pushbike and they do this with ease. The Black Mouth Curs nose is good to very good. Randy has one of the best tracking noses that I've seen on a young dog. They will hunt to a medium range if I am walk hunting and they will go a long way to find the critter on the end of the scent. Tracking collars are essential on Black Mouth Curs. Badens grown dogs will find cattle 1-2 kms away on ground scent and they will find them on wind scent to a shorter distance.

Probably the first thing that we noticed about the Black Mouth Curs was their stamina. They can run forever, they have a broad deep chest and have a tight cut flank. They all have great muscle definition, even the females. They have very close tough feet and hardly ever seem to get footsore. They have good heat tolerance and they have been bred for this trait for a long time. They have a busy, curious nature and can be quite protective of their yard. I find them very intelligent (sometimes too intelligent). They are independent and can be stubborn as young dogs. We find that pups start working at 4-6 months of age, with the females maturing quicker and starting earlier than the males.

The Details

We have Black Mouth Cur pups available to working homes in 2012. Our pups are vaccinated, microchipped and come with papers from the Foundation Black Mouth Cur Breeders Association Inc. in Texas. We offer a replacement guarantee with our pups (subject to conditions).

For more information visit:

<http://blackmouthcursaustralia.com>

or contact blackmouthcursaustralia@gmail.com

The Facts;

Black Mouth Curs are a medium sized dog (males 25-27kg, females 18-22kg).

The most common colour is yellow with a black mask.

Black Mouth Curs have excellent stamina and have been bred for heat tolerance.

Black Mouth Curs originate from the southern parts of the USA, particularly eastern Texas and southern Louisiana.

Black Mouth Curs are finder, bailers on pigs.

Although Black Mouth Curs are most commonly used for pig hunting and working cattle they are a versatile breed and are used for many tasks.

Contact blackmouthcursaustralia@gmail.com for more information



Leaving Tamworth for Springsure with the Black Mouth Curs.