

FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)

13, Place Albert 1er, B - 6530 Thuin (Belgique), tel : ++32.71.59.12.38, Internet : <https://www.fci.be>

LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO: REGULATIONS OF THE FCI **INTERNATIONAL TRUFFLE SEARCH TRIALS AND** **INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP**

Preface

The introduction of criteria based on work aptitudes in the selection of the Lagotto Romagnolo represents a fundamental step for the protection of this breed that has unique characteristics in the world's dog scene.

The aptitude for truffle searching, progressively refined over the last century, has been one of the fundamental elements that have allowed the breed to be saved from almost certain extinction following the disappearance of its working environment and therefore of its original function.

For these reasons, it is believed that selection must operate to keep together in our dogs the morphological qualities with functional aptitudes. The working trials must have the function of highlighting the qualities that best contribute to making a good truffle dog. The set-up methods and the judging criteria must be oriented so that a good, well-trained truffle dog can take part in these trials without the need for specific preparation.

STANDARD OF WORK

Gait and bearing

The gait of the Lagotto Romagnolo, when at work, is characterised by a loose, perky and lively trot which highlights the joy experienced by the dog in carrying out its search for the truffle. Short stretches of gallop are admissible at the start of the work round, when moving back towards terrain already inspected and during transfers; pace walking is permitted during verification phases.

The gait will have to adapt to the nature of the terrain, expanding or narrowing the action radius to achieve useful work; action must be continuous, greedy, careful and diligent.

The bearing of the head is directly related to the gait and speed of the dog. During the faster phases of the search the head is slightly raised but with the nose-muzzle (nose/snout) generally inclined towards the ground; during verification time at pace the head is steadily lowered until the nose-muzzle (nose/snout) rests on the ground. If there is a particularly strong emanation the Lagotto may raise its head considerably so that it can be guided by the wind towards the emanation itself "Tirata di Naso" (it can, quite literally, be guided by its nose).

The tail may be brought into line with the spinal column or may be higher but must not roll up over its back or least of all under his abdomen. When trotting the tail moves cheerfully, often with fast, sweeping lateral movements. The Lagotto wags and uses its tail to inform its handler of the presence of a truffle by accentuating this movement. It is important that the Lagotto's tail expresses cheerfulness, playfulness and willingness to work.

The Search

The searching action should be eager, avid and determined, expressing intuition and initiative. The search should be performed along diagonal lines with frequent changes of direction, crisscrossing the terrain to be inspected in a thorough, detailed fashion.

The Lagotto must demonstrate intelligence, concentration and a refined sense of smell and adapt the speed and action radius of its search to ambient conditions. The dog must establish a balance between coverage of the terrain, sustained gait and highly accurate analysis which allows even the most difficult digs to be carried out. This may occur even within a range of some tens of meters from the handler.

When the Lagotto enters the field of a slight, possible emanation it slows down to pace and moves towards the presumed origin, gradually moving its nose closer to the ground and accentuating movement of the tail. The dog may also stop, take a few deep breaths and make slight scratching movements. If the initial impression is not confirmed the dog immediately resumes its standard gait showing its useful sense of discernment. If, instead, the presence of a truffle is confirmed the Lagotto will start scratching decisively.

If, during the search, the Lagotto finds a zone of emanation which gives the immediate certainty of the presence of a truffle, it will move towards the emanation decisively and start scratching and digging without hesitation.

When it perceives an emanation carried by the wind it will head towards the digging point even when it is some distance away: it may slow down, stop and breathe in with its head raised high, facing the wind so as to get a better idea as to the point of origin of the emanation.

The Lagotto is characterized by an absolute and extremely natural relationship with the handler. Despite showing significant autonomy and initiative in the search, the dog is always attentive to the handler's instructions, when necessary, ready to return or redirect the search in the indicated direction.

The cheerful, open and hard-working character of the Lagotto and its natural willingness to work ensure that it is not easily distracted from its task by any external stimuli.

The Lagotto is also totally disinterested in the presence and smell of game. A fleeting interest may be aroused by a chance encounter, but the dog is nevertheless ready to recommence its search for truffles at the handler's command.

Digging ("Forata")

Once the digging point ("forata") has been identified the Lagotto must carry out a decisive digging action and may pause to make checks by sniffing the sides and bottom of the hole: doing this will help the dog determine the exact location of the truffle and allow him to direct the digging action accordingly. The search may even be directed outside the hole if the dog believes that the truffle has already been pulled out by the digging action.

Digging may be interrupted by the handler and should be restarted promptly as requested. The behaviour of the Lagotto during the work at the digging point should be such as to allow the handler to rescue and pick up the truffle.

Art. 1

Purpose

The Lagotto Romagnolo working trials are intended to evaluate dogs for their aptitude for truffle searching, highlighting, for selection purposes, the dogs that have distinguished themselves for natural qualities, working method and ability to understand the typical training of the breed.

Organisational set-up rules

The International Truffle Searching Trials for the Lagotto Romagnolo, under recognition by the FCI, are organised by the specialised breed associations, breed clubs and the structures delegated to represent the national canine organisation (NCO – FCI Member / Contract Partner) at regional, provincial and territorial level, only if recognised by the NCO).

The association or structure that wishes to organise an international trial, with an FCI Certificate of Aptitude for the International Working Championship (FCI-CACIT), must request the patronage of the FCI in good time through the NCO of its country. In order for the FCI-CACIT to be recognised, the NCO must also assign the Certificate of Aptitude for the Working Championship (CAC) in the trials.

Registration and admission to trials

Only Lagotto Romagnolo dogs registered in the stud books recognised by the FCI can compete in trials, without considering the nationality or residence of the owner or handler. Dogs that are not vaccinated according to international protocols, aggressive dogs, those affected by contagious diseases, females in heat, monorchid, cryptorchid or affected by testicular atrophy and those owned or managed by people who are part of banned societies by the NCO of their country will not be admitted. Any dog that tests positive for doping will be eliminated and those responsible will be reported to the competent authority. The qualification booklet is required (if required in the country of origin). Participation may be limited on the basis of merit titles provided that these limitations are announced in advance. The organiser may set a maximum number of dogs registered for the trial provided that these limitations are announced in advance. Participation may not be limited based on the sex and age of the dog, provided that it is over 15 months.

Registrations must be received by the established date and will be considered valid only if accompanied by the requested entry fee. After the closing of registrations, set by the organising association and announced in advance, no more registrations will be accepted.

No registration fee will be refunded unless the withdrawal is reported before the closing of registrations. Any withdrawal of the dog, either before or during the trial, does not entail the refund of the organisational contribution, except in the case of female dogs in heat, upon presentation of a veterinary medical certificate attesting to this. For reasons of *force majeure*, the trials may be cancelled and the registration fees will remain with the organiser to cover the expenses already incurred.

By sending the registration, the owner and the handler declare that they know and accept the FCI International Rules of the Lagotto Romagnolo Working Trials.

Art. 2

Types of trials

The trials can be carried out on all species of truffles in the periods possibly foreseen at national level.

The following types of trials are recognised:

- 1) Type A: trials of truffle searching in natural truffle grounds with assignment of the CAC-which allows access to the Special trials.
- 2) Type B: Special trials of truffle searching in natural truffle grounds with assignment of the FCI-CACIT

The Type A trials must be carried out in truffle grounds, in production for the type of truffle object of the trial. Based on seasonal conditions, enrichment of the soil is permitted, in times before the start of the trial and never during rounds, with truffles of the same species in order to increase the chances of encounter and standardize all the space available to the competitors. Separate trials may be planned for males and females.

The Special trials of type B must be carried out in truffle grounds in production for the type of truffle object of the trial, exclusively with the truffle naturally present on the ground at that given moment. Access to these trials is permitted only to subjects who have already obtained at least one CAC or a reserve CAC in the Type A trials, males and females together. The Type B trial grounds will be the subject of proposals and authorised by the NCO of the country in which it is intended to be carried out.

Art. 3

The jury - Staff accompanying the jury

Only qualified judges whose names appear on the list of judges for this discipline in the country in which they reside and who have obtained the necessary ratification from the NCO of their country are authorised to judge the FCI International Truffle Searching Trials for the Lagotto Romagnolo. A judge cannot enter a dog in the trial in which he is present as a member of the jury. He cannot judge any dog of which he is the owner, co-owner, breeder or trainer, unless he has alienated the dog at least 6 months before the trial in which he is judging; the same applies to dogs belonging to his family members or to people who live under the same roof. The trials will be judged by an expert judge (Type A trials) or by a multiple jury. The multiple jury is mandatory in the Type B trials and in the Pair trials even if these are divided into heats. The multiple juries will always be composed of a set of three judges. The following may be admitted into the jury: the delegate of the NCO, the aspiring judges for the completion of the assistantships of their training course authorised by the NCO, the leader and any other persons authorised by the delegate and the organising association to assist in the management of the event. The organisation must facilitate, as much as possible, the visibility of the trials by the public.

Compatibly with the nature of the terrain, the spectators, possibly divided so as to form small groups, will be able to follow the jury according to its instructions, in perfect silence and without disturbing the competitors in any way. The jury has the right, at its incontestable discretion, to not allow the public to follow rounds.

Art. 4

Batteries and draws – general rules

Depending on the number of registered competitors, it is possible to divide the dogs competing in the trial into batteries, provided that the number of rounds, in relation to the dogs actually present, is higher than twelve. In any case, each trial or battery cannot engage the jury for more than sixteen rounds. In the case of division, however, each battery cannot include less than six dogs. In the composition of the batteries, the organisers may determine in advance whether to possibly include in the same battery the dogs presented by the same handler or whether to leave the order of the draws between the batteries to chance. The composition of the pairs, if foreseen, will be done by drawing lots, possibly avoiding putting dogs of the same handler in the same pair. The order of the rounds of each battery will be decided by drawing lots. In the case of division into batteries, the juries and the grounds will be assigned to them by drawing lots on the same day of the trial, at the presence of the delegate and the handlers who wish to attend. For trials lasting more than one day, the draws must be made only for the first day of the trial, for the following days the rotation mechanism of the grounds and judges will take over.

Art. 5

Assignment of the terrain - behaviour of the handlers

The handlers must be present at the roll call at the place and time established, under penalty of exclusion, and must comply with the instructions of the jury. The waiting handlers are required to fully respect the trial field. It is forbidden to release the dogs outside the designated areas that will be made available by the Organisers, under penalty of exclusion from the trial. The handlers, when called, must present themselves to the judges with the dog on a leash, without coercive or dressage instruments or devices of any kind, including a collar. The judges will indicate the terrain to be explored and only at the judge's command will the handlers leave their dog. The handlers, whether they compete alone or in pairs, must remain in contact with the jury to follow any instructions. The dog should preferably be driven with gestures; too frequent recalls, whether by voice or whistle, will be penalized. In the paired rounds, the handler must not disturb the other competitor by calling or in any other way. The handler is required to carefully close the holes opened by his dog, under penalty of disqualification. At the request of the judge, the handler will call his dog and bring it back on a leash to the jury to await instructions. At the end of the time assigned for each round, the judge will announce that the time of the round is expired and the handler must promptly call and tie the dog. The dog that at the end of the round avoids the repeated calls of the handler will be considered "out of hand". Any incorrectness or mistreatment by the handler towards his dog will result in immediate exclusion from the trial. Before the start of the round, the judge has the right to verify the identification code of each dog but must compulsorily verify, at the end of the round, the identification codes of the qualified dogs.

Art. 6

Rounds - Duration of rounds - Completions - Recall rounds - Single and pair rounds

Rounds are normally carried out individually; the organisation may provide for pair rounds specifying for which trials. Rounds will normally last 10 minutes for Type A trials and 15 minutes for Type B trials. The organising committee, based on the type of trial, terrain and the number of participants, may define, in agreement with the jury, longer times for rounds up to double. The first round for each competitor must have a duration equal to the time foreseen for the specific trial. In the event that pair rounds are foreseen, at the end of the first round of all competitors, the dogs that, through no fault of their own, have had to interrupt their round before the end of the time available to them will be called to the ground for the completions of the round. The duration of the completion will be equal to the time not used in the interrupted round. Dogs that have not been eliminated and have not made a valid digging may be subjected to one or more recalls. The duration of the recall is at the discretion of the judge and must be such as to offer the possibility of achieving the purpose that determined the recall itself.

Recalled dogs must in any case be stopped after the first valid digging. Each dog must have an area of virgin terrain available and may carry out part of the round on terrain already searched by other dogs. The judges must ensure at all times and to the extent possible that each competitor carries out his work in the best conditions.

Art. 7

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation will take into consideration the following parameters:

- **WILL:** the Lagotto must show an avid, continuous and determined action, its own initiative and not repeatedly stimulated by the handler's encouragement, good determination in tackling any difficult terrain.
- **SEARCH:** the search will adapt to the type of environment, with a radius large enough to allow a good amount of ground to be covered and at the same time it must be extremely careful and diligent in order to analyse well the entire area involved, carrying out effective work. The gait will progressively reduce in the phases of verification or in the areas indicated by the handler; the dog must carry out the work mainly in front of the handler and must not be distracted by game emanations or by improper emanations.
- **GAIT:** optimal is a perky and lively trot that denotes the dog's joy in carrying out its work, stretches of gallop are permitted at the beginning of the round and when returning to already inspected ground. Pace is permitted during the inspection phases.
- **OLFACTORY SKILLS:** the ability to resolve an emanation by decisively going to the digging point, and in the "Tirata di Naso" (sniffing) on the emanation of ripe truffles carried by the wind will be evaluated.
- **CONNECTION:** in the context of an autonomous and determined action, the dog must show excellent connection with the handler without showing fear. If requested, it must direct the search in the direction indicated and return promptly to the call, unless it is about to dig.

- **HOLE:** the judges will not consider only the number of valid digging but above all their quality. The digging action must be decisive and if interrupted by the handler, it must resume when requested. Stopping the digging on command and/or any bringing the truffle back will be assessed positively. The action of the Lagotto during the digging must be such as to allow the handler to rescue the truffle.

Art. 8

The errors – The first minute

Defects and errors that lead to penalisation and possibly elimination are:

- lack of initiative and discontinuity in action.
- messy and inconclusive search.
- style and method of work not in accordance with the breed.
- abandonment of the digging point.
- more than two empty digging.
- serious lack of obedience and out of the way.
- lack of stamina.
- insistently seeing of game emanations and possible full chasing of it.
- disturbance of the partner of the pair and/or insistent reference phases.
- fear of shots and noises, shyness and aggression.

It is up to the judge to objectively evaluate the seriousness of an error made by the dog, considering the different circumstances that caused it. Any error made in the first minute of the turn or during the first minute of the recall turn does not lead to elimination.

Art. 9

Qualifications - Obligation of a useful digging for qualified dogs

The judgment is expressed with the assignment of qualifications. Once the test is ended, the jury must immediately draw up the ranking limited to the first 3 qualified subjects. In any case, a report will be drawn up for all the dogs presented. The first place in the ranking cannot be assigned to a dog that has achieved a qualification lower than V.G. and in this case the 1st place will be reserved. To be qualified, a dog must have made at least one useful digging on the truffle object of the test. The qualifications will be assigned based on the following criteria:

Excellent: to the dog that has demonstrated to possess to the highest degree all the stylistic qualities and natural qualities that characterise the breed. Furthermore, the dog qualified as excellent must not have shown defects and must not have incurred serious errors, proving to be an exceptional subject and capable of carrying out the work prescribed by the Standard of Work to perfection.

Very Good: to a dog that has done an excellent job demonstrating that it possesses to a notable degree the qualities and qualities peculiar to the breed. The qualification V.G. must also be assigned to the dog that would have deserved, for the work done and the qualities highlighted, the qualification of excellent, but that fell in errors, such that it cannot obtain the higher qualification.

Good: to a dog that demonstrates that it possesses to a good extent the characteristics of the breed and does a good job without serious errors or making slight defects.

Fairly Good: to a dog that appears to possess sufficient natural qualities and that has done a fair amount of work such as to make it worthy of a qualification.

Art. 10

Eliminated dogs and not qualified dogs

The dog that has made errors that lead to its elimination or that has been withdrawn at the request of the handler will be defined in the judge's report with the term "Eliminated". The dog that at the end of the round will not be qualified due to failure to find truffles will be defined with the term "Not Qualified". The delegate of the NCO and the organising committee are required to transcribe the above definitions in the qualification booklet (if present).

Art.11

The FCI-CACIT and relative Reserve at stake in Type B trials

The FCI-CACIT and the Reserve FCI-CACIT are awarded only in Type B trials. In international trials the FCI-CACIT is at stake if at least 6 dogs are entered and physically present and when males and females compete together. The judging criteria on the basis of which the FCI-CACIT is awarded are identical to those on the basis of which the CAC is assigned, therefore, in FCI international trials with a multiple jury, the assignment of the FCI-CACIT will be carried out at the same time as the assignment of the CAC, except for cases in which the development of the trial requires the formation of batteries. In FCI international trials where performance requires the formation of batteries, only one FCI-CACIT may be awarded. If there are two or more winning dogs in the battery that have obtained the CAC, they will be subjected to a barrage judged by a jury, composed of three expert judges qualified for the FCI-CACIT, drawn by lot from among those already composing the juries, for the possible assignment of the FCI-CACIT and the Reserve FCI-CACIT. During the barrage, it is essential that the dog provides a performance of an adequate level, even if in that round it does not have the opportunity to conclude a valid digging. The judges must consider the severity that the FCI expects from them when it comes to proposing subjects for the FCI-CACIT or the Reserve FCI-CACIT.

Art. 12

The announcement of the results - The Report

At the end of the trial, the judge, directly on the field, will proceed to read the qualifications and the ranking. The technical report must, unless there are particular needs, always be illustrated at the end of the event at the meeting point at the time of the awards ceremony. The proposals for the assignment of FCI-CACIT and Reserve FCI-CACIT issued by the judges are sent to the FCI Head Office via the NCO of the organising country.

Art. 13

Title of FCI International Truffle Searching Champion for the Lagotto Romagnolo

To obtain the title of FCI International Truffle Searching Champion, a Lagotto Romagnolo must have obtained:

- Two Certificates of Aptitude for the FCI International Working Championship (FCI-CACIT) awarded by two different juries composed of three different judges, at FCI international competitions organised by two different NCO in two different countries.
- At the age of at least 15 months in an international show recognised by the FCI, regardless of the number of participants, at least the qualification "Very Good" or, in countries where this qualification is not provided for, a second prize, in working, intermediate or open class.

Art. 14

Disputes

For all disputes, the possible NCO Regulations (even if more restrictive than the FCI Regulations) of the organising country, in force at that time, are applicable, provided that they do not contradict the Regulations of the FCI.

Art. 15

Translations

In case of difficulty of interpretation, the original English text will be valid.

These regulations were approved by the FCI General Committee, May 2025, in Budapest. They are effective from 1st July 2025.