

## **ABOUT ALASKAN MALAMUTES**

- Alaskan malamutes are snow dogs, originally used in cold northern climates for pulling heavy loads on sleds through the snow. Nowadays, they are also kept as family pets in many parts of the world.
- They are pack animals and often work as part of a large team of dogs.
- From an early age, malamutes are often taught to wear a harness so they get accustomed to the feel of it when they later pull sleds, which should not occur before they reach one year old.
- Malamutes are comfortable at very cold temperatures, even as low as minus 30 or minus 40 degrees centigrade. They nearly always sleep outside, even in very cold or blizzard conditions.
- Consequently, these dogs are not so comfortable in warm weather, and need to be hosed down with water to keep cool in summer and allowed to remain in a shady spot.
- Water is extremely important and malamutes need large quantities every day. Water is actually more essential to them than food!
- They have very slow digestive systems, only needing food twice a day, and never within one hour of exercising.
- They have a 'double coat', which is how they keep so warm. The outer coat will shed a couple of times a year, producing a veritable snow storm of fur for a few weeks, as one coat is effectively lost while the new one grows.
- Malamutes have often taken the top prize at Crufts' Dog Show, winning the Working Dog Category. (Timber has won at Crufts and other dog shows.)
- They have a tremendously loud 'wolf howl' and often produce a 'dawn chorus' when in packs, which is quite deafening!
- They are big, strong dogs that need firm handling and training.
- They like nothing better than to run and play in the snow, with plenty of space to run off their energy and vitality. A large garden is a must if you are to look after these dogs properly.
- As with most large dogs, they only live to about 11 or 12 years.
- They are loyal and loving, but as a pack animal, they can easily be re-homed, becoming very attached to their new owner (or new pack) very quickly.