

New Dog Breed To Debut At National Dog Show On Thanksgiving Day

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NBC on-air commentator Mary Carillo shows off the Danish-Swedish Farm Dog in advance of this year's Thanksgiving Day broadcast of the National Dog Show.
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Though most Americans have never seen a Danish-Swedish farmdog, that will change for people who watch the National Dog Show on Thanksgiving.

David Frei, co-host of the National Dog Show, is excited for dog lovers to meet the new breed during the show, which airs on NBC right after the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

“We are their national television debut,” he said. “They’re an outgoing, friendly, happy dog.”

Frei, who co-hosts the National Dog Show alongside “Seinfeld” actor John O’Hurley, enjoyed meeting a couple of Danish-Swedish farmdogs named Hazy and Red in September. The breed — which the American Kennel Club (AKC) officially recognized as its 202nd dog breed earlier this year — impressed him at a dinner meeting.

“They were fun to be around,” he said. “It was a well-mannered dog in a big New York restaurant.”



The Danish-Swedish farmdog will debut at the National Dog Show, which airs on NBC from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. in all time zones on Thanksgiving.

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The small working dogs were bred to hunt rodents on farms in Denmark and Sweden, and because of their natural intelligence and cuteness, also performed in circus acts. Fittingly, the AKC's breed standard describes the ideal Danish-Swedish farmdog as "a small, compact, lively, smooth coated and slightly rectangular dog" that is "not to appear refined or elegant."

A "New" Dog Breed

"Like I say all the time, we call them new breeds, but they're not new breeds. They've been around for a long time," Frei said. "The Danish-Swedish farmdog is a bit of an exception to that because they were nearing extinction back around the turn of the 20th century."

Industrialization had caused a decrease in need for the canine farm helpers as people moved to cities for work, but determined breeders worked in the 1900s to "get their numbers back up," according to Frei. Eventually some moved with their dogs to the U.S., where the Danish-Swedish farmdog garnered enough representation in different parts of the country to merit recognition by the AKC and eligibility for conformation events like the National Dog Show.

Still, there are only around 400 Danish-Swedish farmdogs in America, making it unlikely to see one at the local dog park.



The Danish-Swedish farmdog will debut at the National Dog Show, which takes place at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pennsylvania, on November 15-16, 2025. The show will air on NBC on Thanksgiving after the Macy's Thanksgi ... More
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While Danish-Swedish farmdogs might look like terriers at first glance, they're actually members of the working group. The new dog breed will compete against 28 other breeds in the group, including the Saint Bernard, Rottweiler, Siberian husky, boxer, Alaskan malamute, Doberman pinscher and giant schnauzer.

The winning dog from each of the seven groups — herding, hound, terrier, sporting, non-sporting, working and toy — advances to “Best in Show” to determine the top dog.

Over 20 million people watch the National Dog Show each Thanksgiving, to Frei's delight.

“It's a family holiday,” he said. “People are gathered, two or three or four generations, waiting for the turkey to come out. And in the meantime, they're going to argue over which dog is best.”

One of Frei's favorite aspects of the National Dog Show is the chance to describe distinctive traits of each breed. He hopes people of all ages will enjoy meeting the Danish-Swedish farmdog and cheering for their favorite dog breeds — and that they'll be able to fend off football fans with the mantra “Dogs 'til two.”

“If you want to watch the dog show, hold onto the remote,” he said with a laugh. “Don't let the football people get it.”