Jack and I wanted to let you know that we enjoyed having everyone here for the clinic. We hope you learned many useful things.

The training philosophy Jack has developed is a product of working thousands of dogs on stock over a lifetime. It is far from simple because you need to understand and read not only stock but dogs as well. You need to learn to read their body language and decipher their intent, concerns, insecurities, strengths and challenges… Then know not only What to do to best help them be successful but How to do that. Communication through movements, tone, intention, pressure, release ect between Jack and the dog is such that the dogs understand. Most understand very quickly. He speaks dog, I still have a foreign accent. lol

Even with nearly 10 years working with Jack I don't move as well, read dogs as well and do not have the timing down to send the correct messages like he can. I hesitate, don't move as confidently, which causes the dogs to question me and themselves. The method/philosophy makes sense to me but repeating it is an entirely different ball game. I concentrate while watching Jack to try to see what he sees and the way he helps the dogs or corrects them but I still miss many small details.

I attempt to gain a step or two forward each clinic – if I do that I am pleased. I have discovered you only learn what you are ready to learn. Small steps forward on this journey will get you closer to building a good team between you and your dog to work livestock.

The other major lesson I have learned in the last 17 years working with stock dogs is the more natural and correct instincts that comes built into the dog the easier it is and the more successful you will be.

The dogs I have now are 1000 times better than the dogs I had at the beginning and even 10 years ago. I have gone through many dog, many lines of dogs, searching for ones that not only have great instincts to work and read stock but suit my work and my disposition. Some dogs were too pushy for me to enjoy some to laid back some just didn't have the right instincts. I have spent Years trying and failing with dogs that were never going to be what I needed. These dogs had some working ability but my lack of experience and their shortcoming

made it 100 times harder. I discovered it is far better for them to go to a different home where they can use their skill set, even if it is warming the couch.

It is unfair of me to ask dogs to do work they are ill equipped to handle. We both ended the training sessions frustrated. Some have gone to compete in agility, become goose dogs, running partners and pets … they have great homes with people who adore them.

I have learned that dogs that are less talented require the handler to pick up the slack being that much better. The handler needs to place the dog in the right spots at the right time, read the livestock and anticipate their movements. A talented dog does all that for you. Oh there is still plenty to work on with talented dogs, mostly on my part building that relationship - knowing when and where to correct, when to encourage rather than correct, timing, tone, positioning – the list goes on. I am continually reminded I am the weak link in the partnership. With each dog there is something different to learn because the dogs are all individuals. That requires us to continually grow and learn.

All the dogs I have now suit me and my work. They each have useful skills but none of them are perfect, each has strengths and challenges. With each new dog or new litter I am always striving to get one step better. Add skills and potential to the litter by selective breeding and using what I know of the line to train in a way that helps them with the challenges in that line. I am continually striving for the best well rounded natural dogs to suit working with folks that are primarily livestock producers, not herding dog trainers. Even so we need to be able to read stock to work them well, we need to be able to read dogs to use them in livestock work.

Not all 'herding' dogs- even from the same litter- have the built-in talent that enables them to work livestock well. Training can not – will not make up for instinct and drive to work stock if it's not there. Took me a long time to learn that, yes I am stubborn. This clinic, more than any previous clinic I have seen, made it very obvious which dogs WANTED to work and which dogs didn't – which had the talent to work stock built in.

My best advise would be if you are serious about using a stock dog to help you accomplish your goals in your livestock operations to invest in a dog that has the

instincts and talents to be an asset to you and your operation then follow through with training that is needed to be the best possible team. This will give you the best chance of success and make your investments of time, effort and money worthwhile. Having the most talented in the world will not help if you are asking him the incorrect things, in the wrong places and not correcting his and your mistakes. I wish I would have had someone give me that advise early in this journey. You will make mistakes, you may unknowing cause habits in you and your dog that will need to be fixed but if you really watch your dogs you will see where they need some help. The good ones will teach you things about stock you didn't know. You are not going to take drive, talent and instinct away from the dog unless you use mechanical training aids.

This SARE grant was written for continuing the work we began this week. There will be 2 other workshops – one spring APRIL, another fall 2018. Hopefully you can work them into your schedule. In addition, assistance with questions and or video critique is available. If you email me I will do my best. Videos do not allow the people who are viewing them to Feel the dog and its intention so they are a poor substitute to being there but hopefully will help between clinics. Some find just hanging out for a couple hours when I have chores that require some sorting of sheep and moving groups to new pasture very eye opening. If anyone wants to come down to spend some time let me know, I work dogs daily and will train as long as the footing is safe to do so and the weather is not to cold or hot for the dogs and stock.

Some of you are aware I do some freelance writing in several agricultural magazines. I plan to write an article in the next month about the clinic to hopefully spark interest in the upcoming clinics. If you are inspired to write a paragraph or two about the clinic: what you learned, why it was advantageous to attend, how you plan to use what you learned at home with your stock…Please email them to me so I am able to include some quotes in the article. I also have a blog that I would enjoy you participating in…if you have a question or topic you would like to discuss that might be a good place to do so. In addition, I have a working stock dog forum that I set up several years. It is not active now but we revitalize it and have discussions there also. If those appeal to you let me know. Sometimes simply discussing a problem leads new thoughts or a new way to approach it that is helpful.