



STOCK DOG SUCCESS

CLEARFIELD STOCKDOGS

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ABSTRACT

Stock dogs can be a huge benefit on Livestock operations if producers choose the right dog to fit themselves, the job, and their operation.

The Keys to Stock Dog Success are

- A Dog with Instinct
- The Right Training
- Allow the dog to use it's Mind
- Commitment
- Respect
- Trust
- Good Stockmanship

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HERDING TERMS

GATHER - To bring the livestock to the handler. This is instinctual in Border Collies. It consists of three parts: **OUTRUN**< **LIFT**< **FETCH**

OUTRUN - The first part of a gather. The dog runs out looking for stock to the left or right of the handler and getting behind the stock at an appropriate distance so the stock is not upset/ doesn't bolt.

LIFT - The moment the stock begins to move from where they were standing. This is the first 'communication' between the dog and stock and where they size each other up. This 'meeting' sets the tone for all that follows. The dog should approach the sheep calm & confidence.

FETCH - This is movement of the sheep toward the handler. The dog should bring stock calmly and nice even pace.

DRIVE - The dog moves the stock in any direction away from handler, ideally in a more or less straight line.

WEAR - Wear is used to mean two different things. One is when the dog is keeping the stock bunched and moving toward the handler and the handler is also walking. The other is used to describe when the dog is going back and forth behind a large group of stock to keep them in a group and moving forward.

FLANK - The movement of the dog around the stock to the left or right. A flank should not make the stock move. Flank- to turn off line and move around stock.

COME BYE/ Go Bye – Clockwise movement

AWAY TO ME/ WAY TO ME/ WAY - Counterclockwise

TERMS DESCRIBING HOW DOGS WORK

SQUARE FLANK - The dog turns squarely off the stock releasing some pressure because he turns his head away from stock. **Out** and **Keep** are often used for commands

(**OUT** – move wider clockwise **KEEP** – move wider counterclockwise)

INSIDE FLANK - When the dog is asked for an inside flank he comes between the handler and the stock. This is mostly used to get ready for driving the stock away from the handler.

TIGHT FLANK/SLICING - When the dog does not keep appropriate distance off the stock and his closeness and speed upset the stock as he is flanking.

COVERED - A dog has covered his stock when the dog has gone far enough around to have affected all the animals in the pasture or has the group of animals you want. A dog that does not cover can potentially leave animals behind or split them off.

COVER- to bring stock **under control**

SHED – Dog comes through group of sheep, sorting off and keeping control of the ones you want.

FEEL/ STOCK SENSE – The ability to understand what pressure to use to move stock and how to apply it. Ex: Dogs work Mama cows and baby calves differently from hair sheep.

BALANCE- Dog Positions himself where he needs to be to get job done. Young dogs naturally balance stock to you. As you move around, stock dog is opposite you holding stock to you or keeping stock in a group headed where you want them. Pressure from various places/reasons can change where dog is. Balance isn't necessarily at 12 O'clock.

POWER- Relates to the confidence a dog has. A powerful dog can move stock by slowly and calmly walking toward sheep. He may grip appropriately if needed, but may not need to grip at all.

PRESENCE-Is the ability to move stock by just being there-

EYE- Some dogs move stock with a hard-fixed stare and crouching body position, seems predatory. Head lower than shoulders.

--Tense eye vs relaxed eye

--STYLE - Has “eye”, often much “eye.”

-- PLAIN- a dog with no eye is hard to balance sometimes.

UPRIGHT – Dog without eye that works standing tall

PUSH/ PUSHY- Desire to come forward into stock and move them on quickly.

KEEN – Wanting to work

GRIP – Many dogs grip out of insecurity or fear. Need to look at entire dog disposition and body language to know if fear, pressure, insecurity, confidence... bite is often appropriate on nose or heal, bite then release. But they should not hang on.

COURAGE- To keep coming into stock even though it is tough.

SEARCHING CAST-- To run out and search using eyes, nose, ears for stock, casting ever wider. Natural ability bred in, cannot really be taught.

LINE- The ability to walk behind stock in a straight-line pushing stock forward, driving, without flipping back and forth (wearing) behind unless there are stragglers.

WISDOM- Comes from instinct and experience – ability to reading stock and troubleshooting problems without commands.

PRESSURE—Can work in many ways. Can be from the dog on stock. It can be from us to our dog. It can be from us to the stock or from the stock to the dog.

ALLOW YOUR DOGS TO THINK AND ACT!!!

COMMANDS

Here- come to me, straight

Stand

Lie Down

Walk up

That'll do- come off the stock, stop working

Leave it- Leave that alone

Come Bye- Circle (flank) clockwise

 Come Out- Square flank clockwise

Away- Circle counter clockwise

 Keep- Square flanks counter clockwise

Steady- maintain pace slowly, stay on that line/direction

Time – take time, Slow down

Steady/ Easy – can mean same thing as “Time”

Shhhhhh - the shh means go, hurry - encouragement

There- you are in right place

These- This/ This One- these specific sheep or one. As in these sheep are the ones to work or separate out.

Look- Look for more stock

Look Back – Turn back for more stock

Wait- stay close to me, OR behind me. (Heel)

CORRECTION / GIVE / PRESSURE

What is a GOOD CORRECTION? = It Causes dog to think!

- Dog chooses different option
- Makes dog not want to repeat behavior
- **NOT a command** like lie down, flank ect

What is an INEFFECTIVE COORECTION?

- Does not change behavior
- Dog repeats behavior right away
- Dog does not GIVE

Forward (in toward dog) to correct = Pressure

- Pressure for correction is NOT to keep dog correct!

Release pressure/ Move Away from dog/

- Give dog his sheep if /when he is right
- Release when asking for a response, i.e. handler backs up while asking for a down

Reward = working sheep

- Therefore when wrong – can't simply ignore wrong allowing dog to work sheep

GIVE – the dog gives ground, or acknowledges correction or adjusts to suit stock

Must see and understand Give to understand working stock

KEYS POINTS TO TRAINING

ENCOURAGEMENT vs PRAISE

Encouragement and Praise are very different

When and why to use encouragement

Need to understand Correction, Obedience vs Instinct, Respect, Trust, and Consistency to work dogs well

Understand when to Correct vs when to Help

If dogs doesn't understand or has not been taught something you need to help him understand and reward his Try

Help in understand by changing your position or walking him through wanted action...

Obedience can involve Making the dog right which you want to avoid

A dog working from Instinct allowing him to Think and make choices will result in a dog working with and for you

COMMUNICATION – more than words

Feel, Movement, Position, Intention, Timing, Sounds

1. FEEL

Dogs know when you are confident about what you are asking and wanting. If you are nervous, it makes them nervous & uncertain.

2. TIMING IS CRITICAL

- Only have 3 seconds to correct
- May need to Follow correction with encouragement, especially important for sensitive dogs

TRAINING TIPS

1. Movement / Body Position – You –Dog- Sheep

- **Body Position affects dog**
- **Blocking dog**

2. USE APPROPRIATE STOCK FOR TRAINING

- Taking into consideration AGE of dog
- Level of Skill
- Your Training Experience

3. Helpful to have when training young dogs

- Round Pen / Corral –
Sheep and dog proof
60 ft across is a good size
- A woven wire fence that gives a little
- Quiet/Dog Broke Stock
Ie -stock that move nicely away from dog's pressure
- Long line and Gloves- may not be needed, depends on you and the dog
- Patience
- Sense of humor
- Mentor

Remember

- Don't progress to next step in training until foundation is solid
 - If problems occur go back a step/ go smaller
 - Your position and dogs position and stock all matter
 - Control of stock
 - Build Confidence, have fun! Dogs needs to enjoy working also!
 - Few commands and don't repeat - soft, nice voice.
 - Positive tones/ encourage when dog is right!
 - Correction is a hard voice, deep growl
 - What you say should sound like what you want, ie "Lie down" should be said slower and deliberate, not fast and high pitched.
 - ASK by stepping away, releasing pressure
 - CORRECT by voice first then if Needed step in applying pressure
 - Pressure at shoulder pushes dogs out
 - Pressure at hip speeds dogs up
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Getting started—the basics

*Every dog is different, they need to be trained different.
But there are some general things that everyone needs to
do start....*

1. Teach pup his name and recall
2. Teach Respect and how to be Corrected – you must be fair and consistent
3. Walk with pup off leash through pasture with him staying with you – not going to stock
 - start with leash /long line if needed
4. Watch pup for signs he is ready to begin training
 - sustained interest in stock
 - mentally and physically mature enough
4. Allow pup to think and use instinct
 - Actions much be his choice – correct for wrong choice
5. Start pup in corral/ round pen with appropriate stock
 - Keep sessions short
 - Always try to build confidence in you and within the dog himself
 - Help him when stuck
 - Teamwork
 - Perfect recall on stock
 - Movement of the stock will kick in his instinct /makes pup want to go to stock and control that movement
6. Balancing / Stopping behind stock/ Calling off

- Do all this in small space first before going bigger so you are able to help the dog
- Get a stop – lie down or stand - when ask for it
- Release pressure – back up – when asking for a lie down
- Only go forward to correct
- **Do Not stop pup just once and make pup leave pen/stock**

He will begin to associate coming to you with the fun ending. This leads to him avoiding stopping and coming. Call off multiple times and send him back to stock.

- **Teach him to stay with you till asked to work**
- **Ask for a stop On Balance first – where sheep will not run/ can not escape. Off balance work comes later. If you stop him in the wrong place allowing sheep to ‘escape’ he will not trust you and not want to lie down.**
- **Can’t discipline a young dog for your Mistakes**

Allow mistakes and then correct – that is how everyone learns even your dog!

7. Do not use commands for the correction. ie Don’t use “lie down” as a correction / use “Ah”, “Hey”, ect.
8. Let pup mature
9. Outrun- short distance at first - correct if tight –you walk around, follow his tail to open up / give the dog sheep
10. Put on **Stop** in corral -Put on **Flanks/sides-Feel-Off balance-**
11. Drive-ways to teach:
 - Driving on fenceline

- Walk with dog – triangle sheep at tip you and dog on either point, fade in and out
- Long line
- Increase distance slowly

12. Tough to train on stock that does not move from dog-ie. stock that stands and faces dog, stomps or fights. Tough to train on stock that just runs. Will be nearly impossible for inexperienced trainer with this type of stock.

Dogs do not read our minds so we need to ask for what we want

A training plan for success

- Short sessions - -. Being greedy /wanting too much to fast WILL get you in trouble. Recognize when your dog is DONE before he is stressed
- Work/training should increase confidence – in both you and your dog – if it isn't change is needed
- Don't make issue of a problem/ think of different approach
- Work with dog's instinct
- Call dog off sheep and to you multiple times before you stop session
- Learning takes time – for you and dog
- If you are angry, put dog up
- Dogs deserve respect and good care
- Stock deserves respect and good care
- Correct with AH, HEY ect not with a Command – lie down, flank command ect
- Pick breeds and individual dogs that suit you and your situation
- Let dog mature – WAIT on The DOG – GET HELP from an experienced handler sooner rather than later
- Don't ask or expect things beyond your dog's scope or education

- Every dog is Not the same- different personality, different strengths and challenges
- Learn what a good correction is
- Be firm but fair when correcting
- Look to see if dog is accepting a correction
- There is no perfect dog
- Training has many approaches and philosophies - pick one that suits you and your dog
- Dogs will Tell You What They NEED and the type of training that works best
- Say what you mean and mean what you say—BE CONSISTENT
- Look to yourself when dog is wrong asking what YOU did to cause him to be wrong

MOST IMPORTANT – ASKING WHY

WHY did the dog....

Why did the stock...

Why did I...

WHY did the trainer...

What is a herding dog?

Breeds/Breeding

- There are many breeds, types of stockdogs. Each designed with a specific purpose. Choose one that suits you and your operation.
- The most important thing when choosing a dog is watch the parents/siblings work. NOT EVERY DOG CAN DO THIS JOB.

Choosing the right tool for the job: A good stockmen/breeder is thinking of the future generations that will need to use the dogs. Improving the line and providing good useful dogs should be the goal

It's always best to start with a trained dog with experience so they can teach you.

Pups: It's best not to let pups run loose all the time. They should be kept so they are safe and not watching stock all the time. Don't allow pup/dogs to get to stock without you there. They can go out with you but when they start wanting to work stock it is important you put them up- unless you are training- till you can call them off. Then they can go around with you while you work, using the command that means **Stay With Me** – 'wait' 'with me' etc.

If you don't do the above, a couple of things can happen- They will learn to like working stock without you, so they will not be a partner. Or watching stock, if they have eye, can result in dog locking onto stock and not moving well.

Also, they can get injured/killed or frightened if they are not supervised properly!

Types of Herding dogs

- Gathering/ Heading dogs
- Diving/ Drovers dogs /Heelers
- Tending dogs

Some dogs move stock by movement, not power or presence.

Final Thoughts

- Figuring out livestock and stockdogs is a process, a journey
- It takes time watching and trying to understand the interaction of all the moving parts – you, the dog, the stock. All three parts—you the dog and the stock-- only learn what they are ready to learn.
- You have to build fundamental skills first – skills you need to learn and the dog needs to learn.
- Get the recalls, flanks and stops first then gradually build from there.
- **Stockwork is more about confidence, instinct, respect/trust and relationship with the dog (RESPECT for each other) than commands and obedience.**
- **Obedience does not allow dog to think and use his instinct.**
- You and the dog need the right tools for the job.
- You have to be Confident and Understand Before you can Train a dog
- STOCKMENSHIP is critical
- STOCK SENSE born into the dog is CRITICAL



Livestock Guardian dogs – their Instinct and their Job – is totally different from Herding dogs

Guardians = Protect

Live with stock 24 x 7

Bonded with stock to WANT to stay with them

Must be raised to ensure bonding

Work Independently of us

Need correction for inappropriate behavior (chewing on sheep, biting, chasing)but we can not teach them how to guard

Different breeds of LGD have different working styles



Lizzy explaining the finer points of good behavior. Holding the flock in while I go through the gate



4.5 mo old pup Kitt watching sheep on other side of the pond



Meg holding this ewe away from flock so I can pull her lamb



Moving to new pasture



Zeva moving ewes and lambs



Meg holding sheep away from me at feed bin

