



## Texas Livestock Guardian Dog Association

### LGD Best Management Practices (BMP's)

These BMP's are presented as a guide for breeders and ranchers using livestock guardian dogs, whose aim is the welfare and improvement of working LGD's. They are designed to promote the effective use of LGD's based on experience from long time LGD breeders, research from universities and animal welfare guidelines.

#### Pups

- Select pups from known LGD [breeds](#).
- Select pups from breeds suitable to your environment and working conditions.
- Select pups from parents that exhibit guardian instincts.
- Select pups that are healthy and up to date on vaccinations.
- Select pups from healthy parents not showing signs of congenital disease.
- If possible, select pups from breeders with guarantees and/or health tests
- Select pups from breeders who offer support through the process of raising a LGD.
- Select pups that have been in contact with the same type of livestock you own from birth.

#### Bonding/Training

- By 8 weeks of age, pups should be reared in close contact with livestock, such as a bonding pen.
- The bonding process should continue under close supervision until pups are 6 months old.
- As pups mature and develop gradually increase the size pens and pastures, they have access to.
- Start with 4-5 head of livestock in a bonding pen and gradually increase the amount and ages as pups mature.
- Rotate stock in bonding pens regularly.
- Pups should have safe space in the bonding pen to eat and lay down.
- Make the bonding pen escape proof. This teaches the pup to [respect fences](#).
- Bond single pups with stock, when possible, vs pairs of pups.
- Regularly observe pups in bonding pens from a distance and up close.
- Use the same type of [feeding system](#) in the bonding phase that you intend to use with the adult dog in the pasture.
- Bond to all species of livestock they are likely to protect or encounter as adults. .
- [Socialization](#) while in the bonding pen should allow you to:
  - Teach the dog basic commands of no, come, or stay.
  - Easily catch them in the field.
- Dogs should be [leash broke](#), [tether trained](#) and trained to [ride in vehicles](#).

#### Adolescent Dogs



- Monitor pups regularly until 18 months of age.
- Monitor pups carefully when introducing to lambing/kidding livestock and during breeding season.
- Monitor pups with any new additions to the herd/flock.
- Discipline unwanted behavior and provide opportunities for LGDs to mature.
- Place LGD bonded pups with adult LGD to “mentor” the pup.
- [GPS Trackers](#) on adolescent LGDS can help you keep track of them until they mature.
- [Methods](#) such as yokes, dangle sticks, drags or shock collars can help stop unwanted behaviors.

### Health

- Have your pup examined by a licensed DVM within a few days of bringing them to your ranch.
- Provide annual rabies and DHLPP [vaccinations](#) along with de-wormers for dogs.
- Spay and neuter all LGDs not intended to be breeders by 12 months of age or based on your veterinarians recommended age.
- [Flea, tick, and heartworm prevention](#) products are important to keep dogs free from internal/external parasites, healthy, and productive.
- Provide dog food daily or have a feeding station that can be accessed daily.
- Feeding stations should be checked routinely for pests and rancidity.
- Select a [dog food](#) that the LGDs readily consume and provides adequate nutrition to maintain proper body condition. Consult a veterinarian or nutritionist, if possible.
- Longer haired dogs typically require seasonal grooming to prevent heat stress and foreign object from causing harm.

### Misc.

- Place collars on LGDs with contact information.
- ID chip all LGDs and update online information to prove ownership.
- Use [positive reinforcement](#) such as treats when dogs are seen with livestock in the field.
- Construct [feeding stations to exclude livestock and varmints, if possible](#).
- Immediately return any roaming dogs to the proper pasture location.
- Take corrective actions for habitually roaming LGDs.
- Keep your breeder informed of any problems that may arise with the pup.
- Notify the breeder if for any reason you are unable to keep your LGD.