

The Protector's Message

TLGDA BOARD UPDATE

The Texas Livestock Guardian Dog Association Board is currently made up of five members consisting of LGD breeders, producers and AgriLife personnel. Officer positions consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and AgriLife Representative. The group has been working hard over the last two years to get the association formed with the State of Texas and set up as a nonprofit with the IRS. The Board has started a Facebook page @TexasLGDAssociation and a website www.texaslgdassoc.org to help promote the organization. They have also developed a Code of Ethics, constitution and bylaws for the organization. The Board has also developed two official logos for the organization. They are currently working on a list of Best Management Practices for both producers and breeders in the organization. The organization will hold its first annual meeting at the AgriLife Sheep and Goat Expo in August in San Angelo. In 2023, the board would like to hold the organizations first field day to help educate Texas ranchers on the benefits of using livestock guardian dogs.

President's Message

As the second year of the association is over half way done, we have had several challenges with setting things up but we have overcome them with teamwork. Membership is growing every week. I would like to see it continue to expand so that producers and breeders of LGDs can succeed and this organization can become a standard in the LGD industry across Texas and the nation. This organization will eventually provide a place for all LGD breeders in Texas to promote their dogs to ranchers in Texas and across all the states. We have plans to expand the website to allow breeders to post pictures of their breeding pairs and their litters. We would also like to hold an annual field day for producers to gain additional knowledge of how to effectively bond and use LGDs on their operations.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST:

3—BOARD MTG

20—ANNUAL MTG

SEPTEMBER:

7—BOARD MTG

OCTOBER:

5—BOARD MTG

NOVEMBER:

2—BOARD MTG

DECEMBER:

7—BOARD MTG

MEET THE TLGDA BOARD

President Mic Annuziato is an Air Force veteran and lives with his wife Theresa on their family ranch in Floyd County, Texas. They have been raising hair sheep and cattle for over 20 years. Mic has been raising Maremma dogs for over 8 years and credits his successful sheep operation to the Maremma breed.

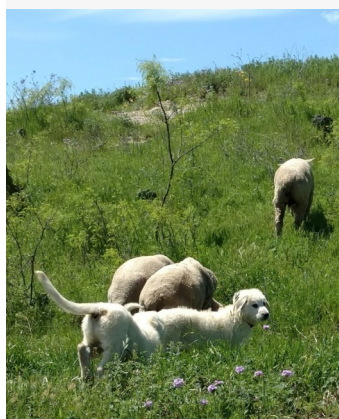
Vice President Kristal Senarath's parents started using livestock protection dogs in the early eighties due to the significant losses they endured from predators while trying to raise Angora goats. They learned quickly about how valuable an LPD can be to a livestock operation.

Kristal and her husband Glenn ranch in Mills County, Texas raising Angora goats, fine wool sheep and beef cattle. They use and breed registered Akbash Dogs and Kangal Dogs for guarding livestock. Thanks to the guarding skills of their LPDs, they can turn the mohair and wool into a finished product. They consider their LPDs to be an integral and invaluable part of the ranching operation. Unique to their operation is the use of Invisible Fence Brand fencing to keep the dogs on their property. They can now safely snare for predators and know that the LPDs will not be caught in the snares. In the six years that they have used this fencing it has proven to be a valuable tool in the ranching operation.

Kristal and Glenn are members of the Akbash Dog Association of America (ADAA) and she serves on the board of directors. She has enjoyed serving on the ADAA board and does what she can to help preserve a rare and beautiful breed like the Akbash Dog.

Secretary Bill Costanzo grew up working cattle on his family's small commercial Angus ranch in California. He was a high school agriculture teacher and FFA advisor for over 19 years. He has been using and working with LGDs for over 13 years. He saw a need for an LGD when his neighbors started losing livestock to predators. Bill's effective use of LGDs on his ranch in California allowed him to achieve over a 165% lamb crop before selling his herd to move to Texas in 2019. Bill is the LGD Research Specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Center in San Angelo. He enjoys working with LGDs and helping producers on daily basis. He plans to start breeding and raising his own LGDs in the near future.

Treasurer Walter Pfluger is a 6th generation Texas rancher. He and his wife, Sheryl, run Angora, Boer and Spanish goats along with sheep and Hereford cattle in Concho and Kimble counties. Walter graduated from Texas A&M in 1976 with both a BBA and a master's degree in agricultural economics. He also holds a law degree from the University of Texas. Walter attributes their success in raising lambs and kids in the Texas Hill Country to livestock guardian dogs.





HELPFUL LGD TIPS

- GPS Trackers are a great way to keep track of young or roaming dogs on your ranch.
- Always supervise pups during tether training in case they get entangled. Start with a few minutes and increase the time weekly during the bonding period.
- Make sure to rotate stock every couple of weeks during the LGD bonding period. This may help develop a bond to a desired species and not to a specific group of animals.
- A study performed at an AgriLife research ranch showed that timed feeders reduced the number of hogs, raccoons, and birds at LGD feeding stations. If using a timed feeder make sure that enough food is dispensed for each dog to get their fair share!
- Simple commands are important to teach to a LGD pup. “No,” “Stay” and “Come” are all commands to teach pups during bonding.

Check out our website: www.texaslgdassoc.org!

MEMBER UPDATE

OUR MEMBERSHIP IS GROWING WEEKLY! AS OF AUGUST 5TH WE HAVE 22 BREEDER MEMBERSHIPS, 16 FULL MEMBERSHIPS AND 7 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS FOR A TOTAL OF 45 TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS IN THE TEXAS LGD ASSOCIATION!

IF YOU ARE A BREEDER MEMBER OF THE ORGANIZATION, CONSIDER PROVIDING AN TLGDA APPLICATION TO ALL OF YOUR CLIENTS OR GIVING CLIENTS THAT FOUND YOU THROUGH THE TLGDA WEBSITE A DISCOUNT!

IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE ASSOCIATION, PLEASE GET THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION AND LET A BOARD MEMBER KNOW SO THAT WE CAN SEND THEM A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION!

AGRILIFE CENTER UPDATE

The AgriLife Center hosted the spring LGD field day in Ozona on May 13. They had a great crowd of producers with several vendors attending the event also. Capital Farm Credit sponsored the delicious lunch that was served. Producers had the opportunity to hear several workshop in the morning, a producer panel after lunch and then attend a ranch tour before finishing the day. Over 35 ranchers attended the event cohosted by the AgriLife Extension office in Crockett County.

The center is now in round four of the bonding project. This round is being funded by a grant from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center (NSIIC). Researchers are comparing their bonding methods with five cooperating producers methods to see which results in the best trained adult LGD. There are 16 pups in this round of the bonding project with 8 being trained and bonded at the center and 8 being trained by the cooperating producers. All dogs will be tracked with GPS trackers until they are 18 months old once they are released on the producers ranches in mid-August.



PASTURE FRESH — *"Now it's your problem!"* By Walter Pfluger

Back in early June, I pulled up to a pasture windmill and found a large group of billy goats in the shade of a large live oak. However, I soon noticed that I was short one of the two young Maremmas guarding these goats. After calling and honking for a few minutes, I noticed the missing dog moving around about 1,000 feet from the windmill, but still not coming to me. This was very odd because the dog's usual behavior was to come sprinting toward me when she saw my pickup. I drove to the dog and found her standing next to a dead billy goat. The goat had been dead for over 24 hours, but had not been disturbed by buzzards. The dog whined and whined to me as if she were truly grieving the loss of a good friend. After close examination of the goat, it was clear that it had not been attacked by any predator and that the dog had not left its side since the moment it died. I decided to put the dead goat in my pickup, hoping that the dog would relax and rejoin the herd. The dog did exactly that and happily joined its co-worker laying under the shade tree.

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