

The Protectors Message

TLGDA BOARD UPDATE

The Texas LGD Association Board meets monthly to work for the membership. The board has been discussing the idea of hosting a field day this coming June in the College Station area as more and more smaller producers are purchasing LGDs in that area. We would like to try and help out producers in the area become more educated on the proper use of LGDs in their ranching operations. The event will be held on Saturday, June 10 in Caldwell at the Burleson County Fairgrounds. We will have several workshops, lunch and an association meeting at the end. Workshop topics will include bonding LGDs to cattle, bonding to poultry, ranch fencing, and correcting bad behaviors of young LGDs. We will post more information on the Facebook page and website as the event gets closer.

If you are interested in taking on a leadership role in the organization please come to the meeting at the June field day. We will be looking for new board members at the event. Our current board has served the association for three years and needs to rotate out.

Presidents Message

The sheep and goat industry looks like it will be having another strong year as the need for livestock protection is in more demand than ever before. With that being said, ones due diligence and getting dogs or puppies from a reputable breeder that will stand behind their dogs is



very important. Quality dogs will benefit the producer and breeder with great results. Make sure to purchase only straight bred LGDs. I prefer purebred dogs as crosses can lead to unpredictable guarding styles. A crossbreed dog with a non-guardian breed can cause unwanted results as well as losses in livestock. Most LGDs breeds are white. If you see a dog with spots or speckles (see picture on the left), it may be crossed with a non LGD breed.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEB:

16—AGRILIFE LGD
WEBINAR

MARCH

1—BOARD MTG

APRIL:

5—BOARD MTG

14— AGRILIFE SPRING
LGD FIELD DAY

MAY:

3—BOARD MTG

JUNE:

7—BOARD MTG

10—TLGDA FIELD DAY:
CALDWELL, TX



LGD BONDING vs. SOCIALIZATION

Is there a difference, yes there is! LGDs should bond to livestock and be socialized with humans. LGD bonding is the process of forming a strong attachment of the dog with livestock. This process starts at about 5 weeks of age and ends around 14 weeks of age which is why it's important to raise your puppies in close proximity to



livestock. Nelms Ranch says "To be bonded is to desire to stay and live and protect those you are bonded with. To become inseparable is the desired outcome." I would agree.

During the bonding phase we leash and tether train all pups starting at 9 weeks of age. We start with a couple minutes twice a week and increase the time each week until the dogs are out of the bonding pens. We also give truck rides and expose them to herding dogs. We give direct socialization to each pup for about 5 minutes three to four times a week. During that time we check teeth, eyes, ears, brush long haired dogs and spend some time manipulating each paw so that as adults, nail trimming is easier. All of these things make giving medication and grooming easier when the dogs are adults.

For a LGD to be socialized is for it to accept your presence in the field and to be able to be handled without aggression. LGDs need to be able to take direction and training from owners. A well socialized LGD will accept you and let you walk it, tether it and if necessary medicate it. When it comes time for you to leave the dog should automatically return to its charges as you turn to go to. The dog should have no desire to "live" with you.

Nelms Ranch said, "When a dog is bonded to the livestock, they will follow them throughout the day wherever they go be it 10 acres or 110 acres. I do not usually see my LGD until evening when goats and dogs are at the gate to be let into their nighttime pen and to be fed. An LGD bonded to you won't leave and will constantly be wondering where you are and what you are doing."

Hopefully this article gives you a better idea of the difference between bonding and socializing your LGDs!



HELPFUL LGD TIPS

- Most common tick species stay on a dog for 2-7 days. Ticks don't engorge within 24 hours; an engorged tick means it has been there for longer than a day. Year round use of flea/tick products help to keep LGDs healthy and disease free.
- A tick can transmit *Ehrlichia canis* to a dog after biting in as little as 3 hours. The tick disease is most commonly reported south of I-10 in Texas and is thought to be moving farther north each year. Infected dogs will likely require veterinary care to recover.
- In adolescent dogs, pay close attention to rough play with livestock, as it might lead to injury or death. Young lambs/kids and weak animals are most susceptible. Separating young sibling dogs into separate pens or pastures may alleviate some of these issues.
- When transporting LGDs, including a few livestock in the trailer may reduce the overall stress on the dogs.
- 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.

***Check out our website:
www.texaslgdassoc.org!***

MEMBER UPDATE

Our membership is growing weekly! As of January 15, we have 28 breeder memberships, 21 full memberships and 13 associate memberships for a total of 62 total memberships in the Texas LGD Association!

If you are a breeder member of the organization, consider providing a 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

Things have been busy at the AgriLife Center since the fall field day. Pups in Round 4 of the bonding project are doing well at cooperating producers ranches. All of the dogs are now over 1 year old and will graduate from this round at 18 months of age. We will be starting another round of bonding in dogs in early March.

Our next field day will be on April 14 at the AgriLife Sonora Station. The event will have workshops, a ranch tour, producer panel and vendors. For more information check out our Facebook page @TAMUlivestockguarddog.



PASTURE FRESH — *“What took you so long?”* By: Bill Costanzo

We socialize all of our pups in the AgriLife Bonding Project. We have been decreasing the amount of time each round, to determine the least amount of socialization time that is required to keep the dogs catchable in the field as adults. I believe we have determined that amount in the Round 4 dogs! It's 3 days a week for 5 minutes.

In February, my student helper and I traveled to Eagle Pass to change batteries in GPS tracking collars and health check some puppies at a cooperating ranch. We found Reba and Marsha in a 40 acre open pasture with about 150 sheep. The dogs came to within 20-25 yards when called, but stayed close to their charges. We walked towards the dogs leashes in hand. Once we were within 10 yards, the sheep moved away and the dogs followed. This process went on for over an hour and a half; up a levy, through brush, down the levy through brush and water. No working pens were in the pasture to corral the ewes.

Every time we got close to the dogs, they would wag their tails and move away with the sheep. After crawling 15-20 yards on my hands and knees, I caught Reba while she was laying near two lambs. She greeted me with several licks to my hand. With Reba on a leash, I caught up with my student helper as she tried to catch Marsha. I gave her Reba and told her to follow the sheep as they moved hoping Marsha would follow the main herd. I tried many times to catch Marsha, but only got a look over her shoulder and a tail wag as she followed the sheep. Finally the sheep



joined the rest of the herd. As soon as Marsha saw Reba on a leash, she ran over to her and my helper. She quickly grabbed Marsha by the collar. After traveling the length of the field several times, I was tired and out of breath. When I got over to the dogs, I was greeted by a rapidly wagging tail and several licks from Marsha as she jumped around. Marsha appeared to be saying, “What took you so long!”

Texas LGD Association
7887US Hwy 87N
San Angelo TX 76901