

CHAPTER 7 PROTECTION

From Warning to Action

LGDs defend their livestock with great commitment and courage. However, it does not leap into fights without good reason. They will determine for themselves where their territory boundaries lie regardless of fences and other physical barriers. That boundary may be a mile away or it may be just to the top of the hill. The adult LGD will steadily increase the level of aggression it displays depending on the aggression of the opposing force. For an example, we will use the approach of an intruder in the night.



Level 1. The Bark

When a potential danger (coyote, strange human, bear, etc.) approaches that distant boundary, the LGD will bark a slow, repetitious bark. Bark, pause, bark, pause, bark. Then they will stop and listen. If they hear no more signs of danger, they will return to their flock and the event is ended. If the intruder continues to advance the LGD will increase the intensity and frequency of the bark. Bark,

bark, bark. Then they will pause and listen again. If the danger has gone, they will go back to work. If the danger advances they will move to Level 2. *(Photo: ASD barking at intruder)*

Level 2. Positioning

The advancement of the danger in spite of the warning barks will prompt the LGD to position itself between the danger and the herd.

(Photo: ASD positioning itself between goats and photographer)

If two dogs are working together, one will stay with the herd and the other will go toward the danger. Sometimes the dogs will position themselves in a series of barriers between the intruder and the stock.



For example, the alpha dog may go to the fence while the beta dog stands half way between the fence and the herd and a third dog may stay with the herd. This positioning

CHAPTER 8

USING AN ADULT LGD TO TRAIN PUPS



By far and wide the most effective method of training young LGD puppies is to place them with a good adult guardian dog. LGDs (and other guardian breeds) learn how to protect and care for livestock by mimicking the adults with which they live. This requires twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year of constant vigilance.

Humans simply can't do the job. *(Photo: Adult ASD training two pups with sheep)*

When Speed, Size and Agility Count

The young LGD may start off small and sweet but they will grow up and up and up. A six week old puppy may weigh a mere seven pounds. But by the time they are fifteen weeks old they will average twenty pounds and during adolescence they will be ninety and up. They will be capable of speeds up to thirty miles per hour or more



and as agile as deer. When a pup begins chasing the livestock, you will be hard pressed to catch it let alone be able to stop it by yourself. A pup that is racing around the pasture in a "fit of exhilaration" will be next to impossible to stop regardless of how panicked your livestock may be or how fit you may be. It would be like trying to play tackle against a team of gazelles! Your frustration, anger and lack of breath will not matter to the pup that has just had a wonderful time playing chase with you and the livestock. And no doubt, he will want to play that game again and again. This is often when your adult guardian dog is appreciated most. The guardian dog will respond to all of this silliness by running block between the pup and the stock. One adult male was seen grasping a youngster's collar in his teeth and actually pulling her to a stop. *(Photos: Adult ASD heading in to break up rough play and two adult ASDs watching a couple of pups wrestling)*

CHAPTER 10 FROM FOUR MONTHS THROUGH ADOLESCENCE

The Teenage Livestock Guardian Dog



All dogs go through an adolescent period in which they seem to forget everything they've learned, become completely rebellious to authority and rules, and apparently completely lose their minds when it comes to reason. The adolescent LGD has lots of energy and is quite capable of causing a lot of chaos. They have by now grown large enough to be able to seriously harm the livestock with their

boisterous play behavior. At this time it is best to have more than one dog for the simple reason that they will usually choose to play with each other and not the livestock as long as one of them is an adult or there is an adult LGD watching over them. Two puppies and an adult are perfect. *(Photo: Adult ASD with two pups following the sheep to a new location)* The puppies will play with each other and the adult will prevent them from any thoughts of creating double trouble. Two puppies alone may or may not decide to create double trouble. Our LGD training program often entertains three to five puppies of varying ages with at least one good adult and usually two. The adult is the secret to success with multiples. If you have a competent adult, multiples are no problem.

Adolescent behaviors can be very good and rewarding or they can be very destructive and annoying. Your puppy is now becoming a useful member of your guardian pack and provides some protection for your livestock. The size of the pup now is such that a passing predator such as a stray dog or fox would likely simply go on to the next pasture where there was no guardian. However, an adolescent LGD is still silly and is not yet ready to handle serious predators like coyotes, wolves, bobcats, mountain lions, etc. The pup will act as an alert dog for these

