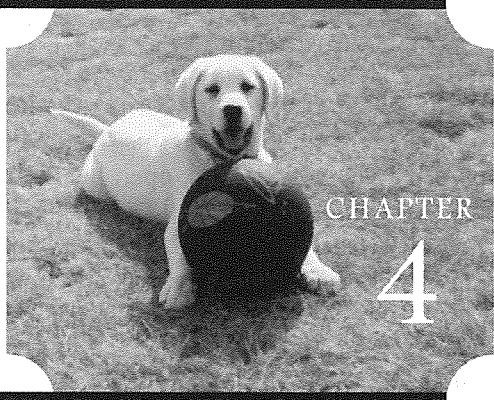


The Puppy Arrives



Whether you are at home, at the breeder's or at an airline freight office, chores and obligations begin when the puppy is first handed to you. Start with any immediate needs the puppy may have. He may be soiled from a rough trip, hungry and thirsty, cold or hot, and disoriented in his new surroundings. Check the physical condition of the puppy carefully. If the pup appears overheated or thirsty, give him a small amount of cool water immediately, and let him rest a while before offering any food. If the trip has not been too long, you may want to wait until you have arrived home before feeding him. Please remember the breeder when you arrive home, especially if the pup has had a long trip. She has invested eight to ten weeks of intensive care in the puppy, not to mention many months or years of planning. A telephone call to say the puppy has arrived safely is always appreciated. If the puppy is not behaving as you think he should or if you are concerned about the health of your pup, please let the breeder know immediately. If you have any questions about the health of your pup, a checkup by your veterinarian may be worthwhile for your peace of mind.

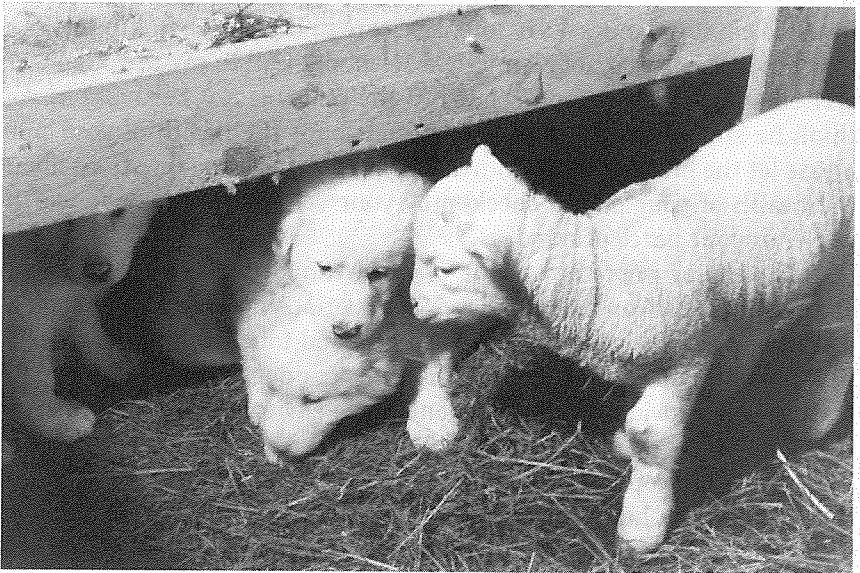
Equally as important as the physical comforts of your pup are his emotional needs. You begin to develop a relationship with him as soon as you have made eye contact, spoken to him and touched him. In order to have a successful working relationship with your dog, you must develop his trust in you. Providing food, water and a safe environment are just part of the equation.

It was previously believed that pups should not be touched at all lest they bond to the humans and not to the stock. In fact, such dogs can be dangerous if they cannot be handled when they have to be moved, dewormed, groomed or even have their nails clipped. All ranch dogs occasionally have to see a veterinarian.



You can begin with a series of exercises called “sensitivity training.” Gently roll the puppy on to his side and praise him when he relaxes. Pick up each paw, lift his ears, open his mouth and stroke him all over from nose to tail. Make sure you feel all his joints, and run your hands along the back legs from top to bottom. Some dogs, particularly maturing males, become sensitive about any handling near their genitals or the rear if they have not been exposed to it as pups. Eventually you will need to trim his nails, clean his ears and give oral medication. If you handle the pup daily and gradually introduce nail clippers, a cotton ball inside the outer ear flap and fingers inside the mouth, he will not mind so much when you or a veterinarian must do this later, even if he is injured and in pain.

You should also be able to lift your pup off the ground by cradling your hands under his chest (see Puppy Aptitude Testing in Chapter Eight). This should be a gentle, quiet movement with soothing words, lasting for a few seconds or until he has relaxed. Always praise him as you set him back down. When he is too large to lift, you can put one arm around his shoulder and the other under his chest and just lift his front feet off the ground. He should be praised for not resisting. These exercises teach your pup that



Maremma pups and lamb growing up together. Photo by Jay Lorenz.

you are in charge without handling him in a rough or threatening manner. They are not meant for older dogs who have not been treated this way from early puppyhood.

Take the pup on short car or truck rides while he is young. The same principle applies as above—teaching a malleable, young, 20-pound puppy and getting him used to something new is so much easier than doing the same with a 100-pound dog, especially in an emergency situation. You should try to expose your pup to anything you expect him to encounter later on. Do this in controlled manners, creating positive experiences for him. This way, your dog will not become alarmed by rides, movement of the sheep, visits by strangers, oral inspections, ear cleaning, nail trimming, new sounds, or whatever.

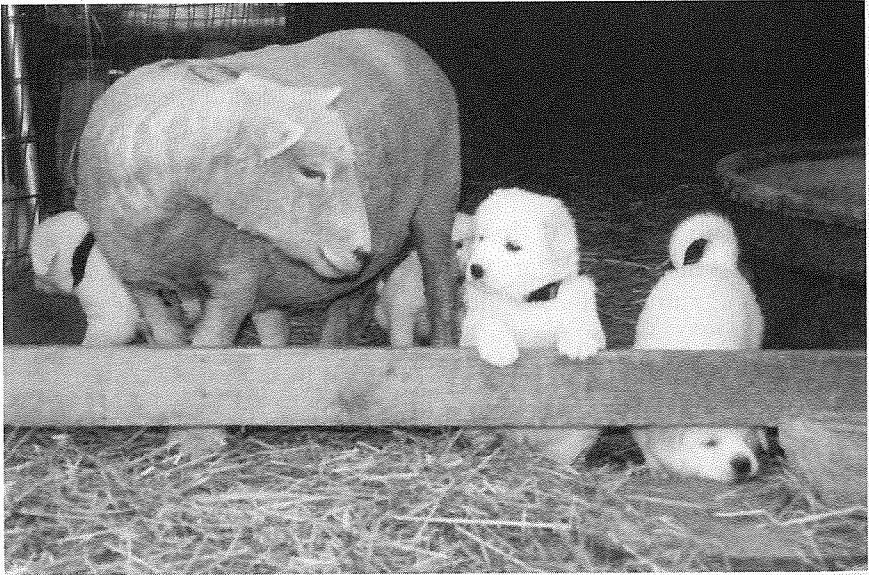
INTRODUCING AND BONDING YOUR PUPPY TO LIVESTOCK

As soon as the puppy arrives, it's time to begin the training that will eventually create a superb guardian of livestock. One of the more important aspects of training is to create the correct environment for a process called bonding, or as some prefer to call it, grafting. Bonding is the development of a close identification between animals, or between an animal and a human. The phrase "a feeling of kinship" denotes a similar idea. When the puppy has grown into an adult, he will guard whatever he likes or identifies with, or, in other words, whatever he has bonded with. The best time to start the bonding process is as soon as possible after the puppy is weaned. This is not to say that a dog will fail as a guardian if the bonding process is not started before the puppy reaches three or four months of age. The program described is intended to maximize the chances of your dog successfully bonding to your livestock.

An ideal place to keep your new puppy is in the barn or some other protected location near the livestock. To start off, it is usually best to place the pup in a secure pen next to the livestock where he can see the animals he will eventually be expected to live with and protect. The pen should be large enough for him to exercise and play in. Provide a few dog-proof toys to play with to provide him some diversion and exercise, such as rope toys or large fresh bones. If you choose to keep the puppy in an outdoor pen or pasture, provide a shelter from the elements. The advantages of keeping a pup separated from the stock are that the dog cannot injure a lamb, a ewe



Akbash Pup playfully paws a lamb. Innocent behavior if that's where it stops, but without supervision this can escalate into chewing on ears and chasing. Photo by Diane Spisak.



A mature friendly ewe is ideal to keep with young pups. Photo by Diane Spisak.

cannot injure the puppy, and the puppy can be fed without having to protect the food from livestock. On the other hand, the chief disadvantage is that the puppy is more likely to become bored and may try harder to escape.

Whenever you are at the barn or doing chores, let the puppy out so you can supervise him and protect him from aggressive animals. This way the livestock will gradually become accustomed to the pup and he will learn appropriate behavior around them—what is tolerated by the stock and by you. This approach is particularly useful with older stock that are initially fearful or suspicious of the pup, with very young or small animals who could be easily hurt by a playful pup, or with a pup that is too rambunctious.

If the pup runs at or tries to bite the stock, he must be disciplined immediately if the animals don't do it themselves. A quick and short correction is most effective, such as yelling "Aargh!" and interrupting his behavior just as he is in the process of starting it. If a verbal correction is



Sadie, a five-month-old Great Pyrenees and a ten-day-old cria check each other out while mama llama oversees the meeting. Photo by Janice Reed.

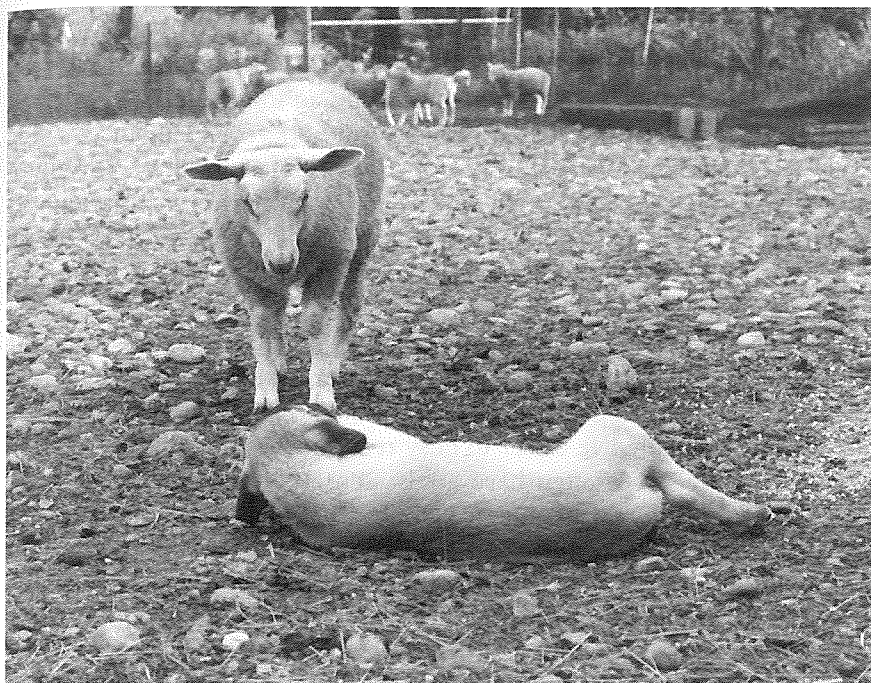


insufficient to stop him, you may have to grab the pup by the scruff and lift him off the ground a few inches, in addition to your verbal disapproval. Do not shake him like a rag doll once he is off the ground. That may be effective discipline, but it can also result in spinal injuries. If lifting the pup does not work, and he resumes his aggressive play behavior, you may have to quickly grab the pup and pin him to the ground, still using your verbal reprimand. Release him when he submits to you by rolling over and breaking eye contact. Finally, if this has no effect, put the pup back into his pen and take him out another time, perhaps later in the day.

Be reasonable with the amount of force used to stop bad behavior, but do stop it. Teaching correct behavior now is much easier than trying to retrain a dog that has developed bad habits. This is the time to learn exactly how much force you need to apply to achieve submissive displays from the pup and prevent him from repeating the misbehavior. The degree of physical force necessary to be assertive with a three-month-old pup is much less than with a pup six months or older, so now is the time to establish a leadership role with the pup. For more details on subordination exercises, see Chapter Nine.

An ideal situation which allows for the bonding of pup to livestock is to leave him with older animals, such as a couple of wethers or ewes, that are unafraid and tolerant of pups, but will not put up with rough play behavior and can discipline the pup without injuring him. You can leave the pup with these animals in their own pen for several weeks until you feel he will be safe with the rest of the flock. If such animals are not available, you will have to continue to supervise until the pup no longer attempts to play with the stock.

When the puppy is behaving reasonably around the livestock, not trying to chase or bite whenever you turn your back, you can begin to leave him with the flock for short periods of time. During this transition you will want to be sure he is trustworthy. One way to do this is to spy on the pup when he doesn't know you are watching. This can take quite a while in some cases, and not everyone is able to devote that time. However, it is very important to know if the pup is ready to be left alone, since this is the most common training problem with young livestock protection dogs—owners trust them with livestock before they are actually ready for that responsibility. Young pups often go through a phase of being perfect angels until they grow as large or larger than the livestock, at which time they may resume attempts to engage the stock in play. Then you will need to resume supervision and discipline as necessary.



An Anatolian Shepherd Dog pup rolls over submissively in front of a curious ewe. Photo by Jay Lorenz.

Although most pups enjoy any attention from people, resist the urge to pick up and cuddle the cute little puppy for hours on end. If you spend too much time playing with your puppy, he will bond to you to the exclusion of livestock. People are much more interesting than livestock, so most dogs will seek the companionship of humans over animals. Don't bring the cute little bundle of fuzz into your home so the children (or you) can play with him for long periods. No damage will be done to livestock bonding if members of your family play with the puppy for a few minutes a day at the barn or if he comes to the house once in a while for short visits. The dog should not, however, become too emotionally dependent upon humans. Place the dog pen in a location that is out of sight of the farm house, preferably out of hearing range as well. You will want the puppy to like you and look forward to your visits, but he must have lots of opportunity to discover and bond to the livestock. The other side of the barn, away from the activities of the house, is the ideal place to begin training a livestock protection dog.



BOUNDARY TRAINING

Most people will expect their adult guardian to remain within fenced boundaries. Even ranchers whose dogs patrol hundreds of unfenced acres will want their dogs to stay in smaller pens or pastures from time to time. For this reason, it is well worth your while to train a very young pup to respect the boundaries you have set for him. A pup that learns early on that it is impossible to escape, or that it may be painful to even try, will be much more likely to respect fences, gates and walls later on. One of the leading causes of death and trauma in young livestock protection dogs is being hit by motor vehicles after leaving their pastures or properties. Owners of companion dogs must be even more vigilant at keeping their dogs at home because they usually live closer to busy roads and potentially fatal traffic. Owners in rural areas often have a false sense of security, not realizing these dogs can easily travel miles from home to explore or patrol what they consider is their territory.

The best way to boundary train a young pup is to make sure he is never successful at escaping from the enclosure you leave him in. It helps if he is content and does not wish to escape; however, most pups, no matter how entertained they may be, will eventually be curious about the world outside the boundaries and will make some effort to explore it. Livestock protection dogs possess keen senses of smell, vision and hearing so they are well aware that a lot is happening beyond their reach. In other words, you can expect them to challenge the boundaries.

A very young puppy can usually be contained with chain link, small grid woven wire, solid wood or metal fences and gates. However, they are capable of squeezing through small openings, or if the earth is soft, enlarging holes and digging out. Some pups will learn to climb woven wire or chain link fences. Older pups and dogs can jump if the fence is low enough, although we find many don't choose that route, preferring to go through or under a barrier. When a pup is motivated, you will be surprised at how clever he can be in devising a way to escape enclosures. Owners must be even more devious in preventing those escapes. If tight fencing is inadequate, and you find yourself contemplating having to bury fencing two feet into the ground to stop a digger or spending hundreds of dollars to replace all the fences, there is still one more type of fencing at your disposal—electric.

In case you are not familiar with electric fences, they are electrified wires which, when touched, give a shock. They sound a lot worse than they are. Commonly used to contain livestock, electric fencing is inexpensive,

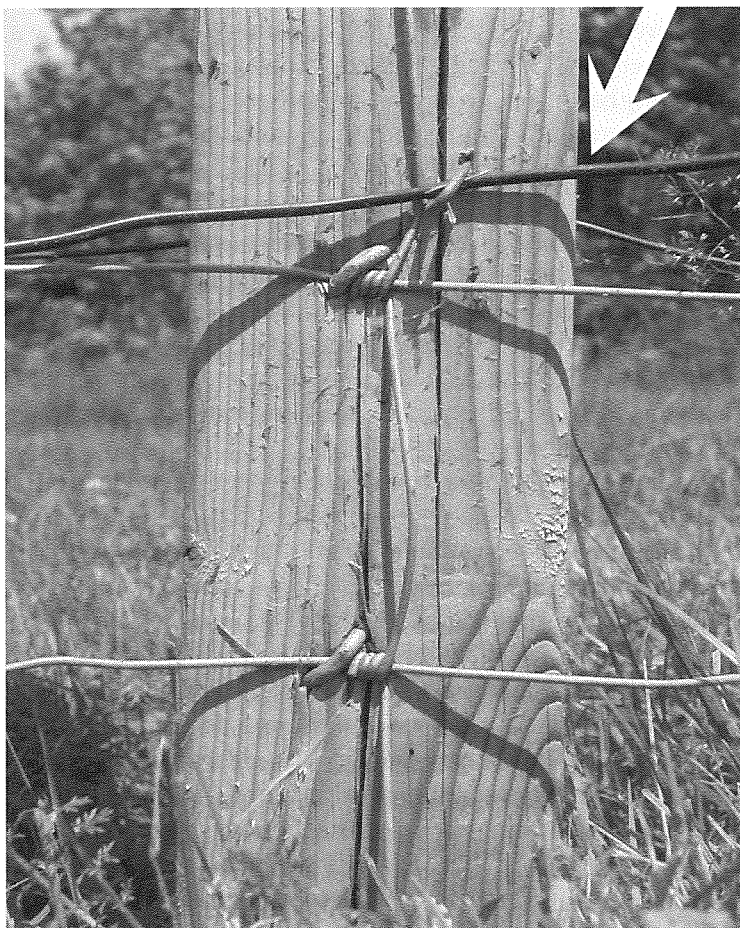
highly effective and easy to install and maintain. "Hot" wires carry a high voltage but a very low amperage. This combination can be felt, but will not normally do any harm. Fence chargers are electrical transformers with two terminals. One terminal is connected to a ground stake that has been driven into the earth. The other is the "feed" line which is connected to wires that have been insulated from the ground, usually by plastic holders. Electric fences give a shock whenever a dog or person (or another non-insulated object) connects the "hot" wire and the ground. The better the connection, the larger the jolt of electricity delivered. If you receive a mild shock from a fence charger while standing on dry gravel, wearing rubber boots, your dog will receive a stronger shock from the same unit. This is because his foot pads are usually moist, enabling him to make a better connection with the ground.

Depending on their strength, fence chargers may produce a tingle, a jolt, or a painful shock. We don't recommend the powerful units designed to service miles of cattle fences, unless that is the nature of your operation. Smaller chargers are more economical, often battery-powered, and don't pack as much punch. They can be purchased from most feed and fencing stores. The principle advantage of an electric fence is that it lets a dog know, in absolute terms, the exact boundary of his domain. Once he learns he cannot escape from a smaller pen or pasture, a dog is not likely to challenge any fence. Puppies we have trained with electric fences have shown respect for all fences they've been put behind for many years after.

Stringing one hot wire just above the ground where a pup might dig, another one a few inches above if he is inclined to squeeze through a square of woven wire, and one toward the top of the fence if he is a climber or jumper should be enough to discourage just about any escape artist. You must not forget the gates. We line our metal tube gates with chicken wire, then string one hot wire on the inside of the pen. This wire can be detached with an insulated, spring-loaded handle when we need to open the gate. Our main sheep pasture is a six-strand electric fence, which, once they are trained to it, is never breached by the dogs or sheep.

We have heard of many creative fencing solutions, but by far the most reliable way to train dogs to stay in is with electric fencing. Even if you cannot hot wire all of your pastures, you can do so for a smaller puppy training area and you will thus establish respect for fenced boundaries.

An alternative or additional type of electric fencing is the radio or invisible fence system. The dog wears a collar that acts as a receiver. An insulated wire cable is buried or laid around the boundary of the fence.



Invisible (radio) fence wire (arrow) reinforces the woven wire fence. While the wire could be buried for cosmetic reasons, on this farm the wire is stapled high enough on fence posts to be out of the way of weed cutters and lawn mowers. Photo by David Sims.

When the dog approaches within a few feet of the cable (you can set the distance), the collar emits a beep. If the dog continues to approach the cable, he will receive a shock. Although these systems can be used without physical barriers, we recommend that they be used where a fence or other barrier already exists to reinforce the boundary. We use this type of fence primarily in the winter around the barnyard since drifting snow

often buries our regular fences. Radio fencing prevents one of our keenest escape-artist/coyote-hunters from digging under regular fences where we do not use electric wires.

Prices for these systems are reasonable, especially considering the investment you are making in your puppy. However, radio-fencing may not be economical for larger farms and ranches. Another caveat is that dogs must wear the collar in order to receive the boundary signal, and this requires that its two metal prongs (smooth, not sharp) be in contact with the skin. Cheap units may not be safe and have been known to cause burns, but even the better products may cause chafing if the collar is too tight or not removed periodically.

THE NEW PUPPY AND OTHER DOGS

If you have other working or house dogs, your puppy should be introduced to them one at a time. Your protection pup should know all the dogs and people that live and work on your farm. Be certain that they are introduced repeatedly during the puppy's development. An ideal situation is to raise a puppy with an older, established guardian that is tolerant of the pup and will engage the pup in play. If the puppy is alone, he will still need an outlet for his youthful energy, so he may be allowed to play with your other dogs, but only for short periods and away from livestock. You should avoid playing with other dogs in sight of your protection dog as this may incite jealousy.

If you use herding dogs, you will need to train your pup to ignore the herding dog when you are working the sheep. Your objective is to raise a livestock protection dog that will tolerate the actions of herding dogs only in your presence. If the same herding dogs or strange dogs were to run your sheep when you are not present, you would expect your protection dog to interfere and defend your flock. Puppies are excellent mimics—they learn by watching and repeating observed behavior. You don't want a livestock protection dog to learn to eye, chase, nip and control the sheep. One obvious solution is to remove the livestock protection pup from the flock while the herding dogs are at work. However, this may not always be practical or desirable. You can chain the pup to a fence post while the herding dog is working, and reprimand the pup anytime he shows interest in what the herding dog is doing. Use verbal disapproval if this works, or if you are at a distance you can throw a noisy object toward the pup (such as a soda can filled with rocks) without hitting him. Eventually he should learn to



ignore the working herding dog and not try to join in. Most pups raised with herding dogs will accept them and not try to emulate them if discouraged early on. Older dogs not accustomed to herding dogs may not accept them and may have to be restrained while the herding dog is doing his job. This could also be the case if strange herding dogs are brought onto the property to work your stock. Introducing a herding dog into the mix creates what we call a human-animal-animal-animal interaction. This is more complex than simply working with sheep and a protection dog, and perhaps this is not for everyone to try. On the other hand, the use of herding and protection dogs concurrently is commonplace throughout the world. If you have a need for simultaneous use of both kinds of dogs, and this is almost always when shepherds are constantly with the flock, pay attention to the learning cues of your protection dog pups, and you'll succeed.

Raising more than one livestock protection pup at a time has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that the pups have each other to play with and use up their youthful energy. Ideally, they will direct all the normal chasing, mouthing and biting behavior towards each other and not the sheep. If they are in a situation where predators are common, they will eventually turn their attention to patrolling. We know a rancher who successfully raises groups of pups together and then puts them out on range with adults. There the pups have supervision both from shepherds and from mature dogs, and lots of work to do—an ideal situation. In a less than ideal scenario, say where space is much more restricted, raising two pups together may help overcome the frustration of boredom. Boredom invariably leads to problem behaviors such as destructive chewing, digging, excessive barking, chasing stock and escaping when possible.

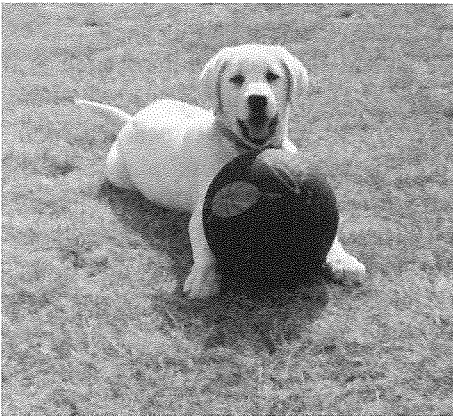
The disadvantage of raising pups together is that they may bond more strongly to each other than to the livestock or the owner. In many situations this is not a problem since dogs often protect stock by simply being territorial—bonding to livestock is not always necessary. However, two pups together may eventually “pack up” and direct their play behavior towards the sheep; they may require more supervision than one pup alone. There are also two pups to train at the same time, and most people barely have enough time to train one properly. They should be taught their commands separately—not many people have the skills to train two pups at one time. Finally, it is a good idea to separate the pups periodically and give each one time away from the other so they do not become too emotionally dependent on each other. Whether such rearing is successful or not will very much depend on the management of the pups and the

stock, the physical setup, time available for training and, to some extent, the genetic makeup of the pups. We do not recommend more than one pup the first time you raise a livestock protection dog. Once the first dog is trained, you have the advantage of that experience when training the second one. In addition, the older dog will do a lot of the work for you, helping train the second pup and providing an outlet for play.

CHEWING

The growing protection puppy will engage in many of the playful games that all young dogs exhibit. Between three and five months of age, the permanent teeth will begin to appear. During this period the puppy will be inclined to bite and chew quite hard. You should provide toys for the pup, including objects that can be safely chewed such as large, indestructible balls, rope toys and large bones. If such items are not available, he will find things on his own to chew and destroy—wooden mangers, posts, barn siding and rocks come to mind. We went through many garden hoses learning this lesson. We have also heard of dogs hospitalized for chewing and swallowing inappropriate items, like plastic bottles and bags.

One problem that has to be dealt with quickly is the mouthing and biting of livestock. If a puppy starts to chew on lambs or begins pulling wool, a natural extension of playing instincts normally directed towards other puppies, he must be corrected immediately. The timing of your corrections is critical. Make certain that the puppy knows you do not approve



Provide safe toys to entertain your pup while she is alone and to give her something to mouth and chew. Score: one for Winnie the Akbash, one for the megaball. Photo by Bob Montgomery.



of chewing on lambs by using a harsh voice to interrupt his behavior *as soon as it begins*, or just before. You will quickly learn to recognize the signs of a puppy about to start a play-chase sequence: the way he may crouch, do a play-bow, cock his ears or lower his head. If he does not respond to a verbal reprimand, you may have to use a more direct physical approach such as hitting the ground near him or slapping the pup on the rear with something like a riding crop. If you are too far away, you can throw a can with pebbles to startle him. If that is insufficient, and some pups can be difficult to deter, you may have to grab him by the scruff while growling harshly at him, making an “Aargh!” sound. A particularly determined pup can be grabbed by the scruff and jerked to the ground while you growl and stare at him; then immediately release him. If he does not stop his behavior once you have let him go, or if he resumes shortly thereafter, you will have to repeat the correction more forcefully or remove him from the lambs/kids and not allow him to interact with them unless you are present to supervise. All corrections should be short, only a few seconds long. Once the pup stops what he was doing and averts his eyes, rolls over or yelps, stop the discipline.

Another suggestion is to apply a bad tasting liquid to whatever the pup is chewing, such as lambs’ ears, to discourage biting. A product such as Bitter Apple, Boundary or Chew Guard can be quite effective. However, chew deterrents need to be reapplied.

If you take care of this rather predictable problem behavior early on, biting won’t become a habit. We repeat, this is one of the most common mistakes new owners make—trusting their pups with livestock far too early. Please don’t forget to reward appropriate behavior. There are so many ways you can signal your approval of quiet, respectful behavior around the sheep. Think about this, and reward your pup the way he most appreciates.

Many people are amused to have a little puppy chewing on their arm or undoing shoe laces. To many owners, there does not appear to be any harm in this play activity, but there is. In the case of livestock protection dogs that may end up weighing 140 pounds, that “harmless” play can grow into a serious problem. The dog is learning that mouthing people is acceptable behavior. You will no longer find it acceptable in a few months, so avoid the problem in the first place by letting the pup know when he has applied too much pressure with his teeth. For sensitive pups, withdrawal of attention can be an effective way to communicate your displeasure. By ceasing to play with them, puppies teach their littermates that they have gone too far. If this is not effective or the pup does not associate isolation

with his biting activity, you will have to be more direct. This can be done by vocalizing with an "Ouch!" or "Aargh!" and removing the arm. If the pup resumes biting, repeat the vocalizing. Some pups are so intent on biting, treating it like a game, that you will need a much stronger deterrent. If he continues to bite, give him a surprise squirt of lemon juice in the mouth or nose. The small, plastic, lemon-shaped containers are perfect for this technique. You can hide the lemon in your pocket and take it out quickly when the pup goes into a play-frenzy of biting. You may want to practice your aim before actually using it on the pup. For truly resistant dogs who are determined to shred your shirt or your arm, a squirt in the eyes may be required. Lemon juice will sting but should cause no long term harm. The only time pups should ever be allowed to play roughly using their teeth is with other "consenting" dogs.

FEEDING YOUR PUPPY

The diet you choose for your puppy is important. We will briefly mention diet here and will devote a full chapter to the subject later on. The breeds of dogs that are usually used for livestock protection are large and are therefore most susceptible to bone and joint problems. Research on one disease, osteochondritis dissecans (OCD), suggests that leaving puppies with unlimited amounts of food is not a good idea. Animals that are not nutritionally pushed to grow as fast as they possibly can are less likely to develop bone and joint problems. Additionally, dogs kept in lean condition all their lives can live up to fifteen percent longer than overfed dogs and are not as likely to suffer from elevated blood pressure, diabetes, or heart and liver problems.

Here is a routine that gives a puppy as much food as he needs: Offer a high-quality food twice each day, at whatever times fit your schedule. At the end of five to ten minutes, take the food away. Be aware, though, that if you stay around during this time, the puppy may be less likely to eat if he wants to play with you. Leave the puppy alone during feeding times. The actual amounts of food to offer a puppy will be described in Chapter Ten. The objective is not to feed the puppy to satiation; he should still want to eat slightly more than what you have offered him. While we realize some may not agree, our recommendation is to switch from a high-quality puppy ration to a high-quality adult chow any time after three months of age (despite what the advertisements say). However, if you do not feed a premium dry dog food



or raw food, stick with the puppy chow for a full year. Pups should also have access to fresh, raw bones to chew on when possible. Make sure the bones are not cooked and are large enough they can't be swallowed. We will discuss the use of raw foods in Chapter Ten. Fresh water should be available to a pup at all times unless he is being raised in the home, in which case it may be withdrawn in the evening to aid in house-training.

BASIC TRAINING

Large dog breeds tend to mature more slowly than the smaller breeds you may be more familiar with. Young puppies may put on amusing acts of guardianship for you, such as a warning bark when you first walk in the barn, but they should not be expected to really protect livestock for at least a year. Some become protectors by six to nine months, but others may take eighteen to twenty-four months or more to mature and find their places. As with other breeds, these dogs go through playful puppyhoods and goofy adolescences.

One of the best lessons you can teach a new dog is to walk beside you, on leash, as you patrol the perimeter of the property that the dog will be guarding. Loop the leash through your belt or around your waist to keep your hands free. Then, if you bring the dog on leash as you do your chores, filling water troughs, pitching hay and feeding the animals, the livestock will be more likely to accept the new stranger and the dog will learn that you care about the animals.

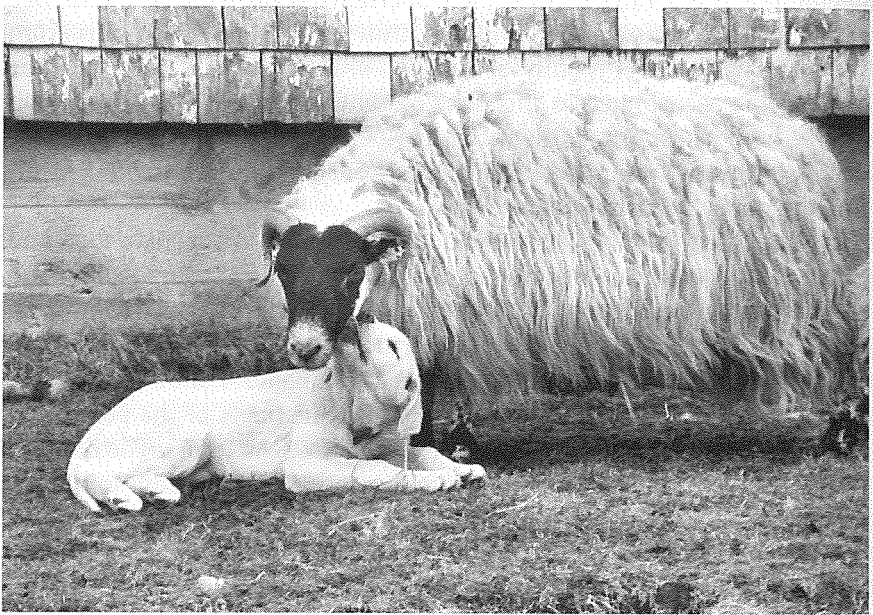
In terms of traditional obedience training, your eventual goal is to have a dog walk with you on lead, sit, come, stop and perhaps lie down on command. That is about all you will need in the way of commands with a protection dog, although this may not be so easy to accomplish. Learning to sit for treats is not usually a problem, but teaching a livestock guardian to come consistently is one of the more difficult exercises. Begin working on these basic skills as soon as your puppy arrives on the farm. Some owners of working livestock guardian pups will take them to public obedience classes, not so much to teach their pups the commands, but to socialize them away from the farm. Although this is something not all would wish to do nor can do, taking your pup off-farm to meet with other dogs does not seem to affect his ability to discriminate between strange dogs intruding on your property and those he meets away from the farm in non-threatening situations. Initially some believed that friendly exposure to other

dogs would ruin a working dog. In fact, we have seen many dogs who can be fearsome guard dogs on their own turf, but when taken off their properties, can be reasonably well-behaved in the presence of strange dogs. There will be more information on socializing and training the companion dog in Chapter Nine.

As with other breeds of dogs, yours may be sensitive to harshness. Some puppies are easily disciplined. The first hint of you being upset with him will have the puppy crying for forgiveness. At the opposite end of the sensitivity spectrum are pups that seem to require strong physical corrections to deter them from inappropriate behaviors. Most pups will fall in between the two extremes. Occasional harsh scoldings, especially if warranted, should not damage a pup's self-confidence, but you need to learn the tolerances of the puppy as soon as possible. If a pup continues a misbehavior after being disciplined, your actions were not effective. You need to increase the strength of correction, use a different method or improve your timing. If your timing is off, he may not associate your correction with the misdeed.

Whatever their level of sensitivity, all pups should learn to tolerate handling and touching all over their bodies from early on. As mentioned earlier, at some point you will need to trim toenails, remove a burr from the coat, check ears or mouth for infection or treat a wound. If the pup has not become accustomed to this level of handling when he is young, you may be in for a losing struggle with a 100-pound dog that resists. For more details on puppy training, establishing a leadership position and controlling the puppy, refer to Chapter Nine.

The basics of puppy care include proper shelter, adequate food and water, location of the pen such that the puppy will be encouraged to bond to livestock, protection of both the puppy and the livestock from each other, isolation of the puppy from other dogs if necessary, adequate exercise and socialization, and training in basic commands. Following this regimen may not be easy; however, the guarding instincts of the puppy will likely be strong enough to overcome a few excesses or errors. The dog will most likely work even if you have not followed these instructions to the letter. Your puppy will be able to live comfortably in the conditions that we have described above for several months. During this time, study the behavior of your puppy, get to know his personality, and be prepared to adjust the instructions in this book or other sources to meet the needs of your situation.



*Top: Three-month-old Akbash Dog pup Ruya uses a ewe for a pillow.
Bottom: Submissive licking. Photos by Orysia Dawydiak.*