

Herding Instinct Testers Guidelines



TESTERS' QUALIFICATION:

Tester must be a certified MASCA, ASCA, AKC or AHBA stock dog judge.

DOG QUALIFIES AS MASC HERDING INSTINCT TEST CERTIFIED:

A dog which, after a period of introduction, shows sustained interest in herding livestock, either going around them, gathering them and moving them toward the handler, or moving them ahead of the handler to drive them, or a combination.

A dog which works quietly, a dog which barks (a little or a lot), a dog which may feint as though to nip, or actually nips if on larger animals providing it is appropriate for the situation and not a threat to the health or safety of the livestock, are all acceptable. A dog may be loose-eyed or may show some degree of eye. A variety of approaches and styles are acceptable.

It is to be remembered that many dogs through inexperience will make mistakes in their early exposures to livestock, but at all time the tester must see clear-cut evidence of herding instinct, with the dog attempting to keep the animals grouped and attempting to control their movement. Dogs which merely chase, play or push stock around, not really herding, must not be passed; distinction must be made between herding behavior and chasing. Dogs should show some responsiveness to direction.

DOG DOES NOT QUALIFY :

A dog which, after a period of introduction, fails to show sustained herding interest in livestock. A dog which repeatedly leaves or attempts to leave the working area. A dog which makes little or no attempt to control the grouping and movement of the stock.

A dog which shows aggression toward the livestock so strong and of a nature to be considered a threat to the health or safety of the livestock. Any dog which repeatedly splits the group and attacks one or several animals, or grips any animal and holds on. A dog which evidences chasing rather than herding behavior.

Any dog which, for whatever reason, cannot be tested off lead or with lead dragging.

Any dog which shows fear of the livestock in such a fashion that the dog cannot demonstrate herding instinct.

NOTE TO JUDGES AND PARTICIPANTS:

It must be remembered that while basic herding tests may provide a starting place, their scope is very limited. They may give some picture of possibilities, but passing such a test cannot be taken as proof of a dog's herding abilities. Only time and experience will provide a clear picture of a dog's abilities. A lot of groundwork, time and education are required to produce a skilled herding dog.