

What to expect when you're expecting... to own a Livestock Guardian Dog

– Becka Pusbkin, Mazkeret Farm

There are few sights more gut-wrenching to a shepherd than the aftermath of a predator attack. Many turn to livestock guardian dogs (LGD's) to protect their flocks and help restore peace of mind.

A properly nurtured and socialized LGD can be an invaluable addition to your farm. But inadequate supervision and correction during training can produce a guardian that is ineffective – or possibly even dangerous.

I'm not an authority on livestock guardians. However, over the years I've owned 10 dogs of 3 different breeds, and have experienced just about every problem you can imagine. My goal is to share some of my experiences and opinions with those who are considering acquiring one of these dogs.

The various livestock guardian breeds differ somewhat in appearance, but not in size – they're giants across the board. Most are longhaired, but not all – and one breed even sports dreadlocks. Each breed has ardent fans as well as detractors, which can make gleaned objective information about these dogs difficult. People tend to ascribe certain traits to certain breeds, particularly with regard to temperament and guarding style – and such generalizations can be misleading. In my limited experience, these dogs seem as individualistic as we are, regardless of breed – with even littermates displaying markedly different character and temperament.

This individuality can also define a dog's fitness to task – specifically, just because a dog is one of the livestock guardian breeds doesn't guarantee it possesses the proper tools to do that job. Not all of them do.

Common Dog Problems

Food Aggression

Every LGD I've ever owned has displayed food aggression. I have found that feeding a dog separately from the other animals is the easiest way to prevent a fight. Over time, most of my dogs worked this issue out amongst themselves and the sheep with only minimal intervention from me.

Rough Play

Like any dogs, LGD puppies love to play – and most will “play chase” your livestock at



Kaelin, Karachan, in retreat

some point. Birds are great fun to chase – as are sheep with poor flocking instincts (like say ... Leicesters).

Your puppy may go barreling toward your flock to scatter them – then revel in the ensuing chaos. Or he may grab a mouthful of wool (or worse – a leg) and try to drag the sheep around like a toy. Plucking out locks of wool is a blast (apparently), and you may notice several of your Leicesters missing their forelocks shortly after you've introduced a new puppy.

Problem behaviors – even seemingly innocuous ones – require immediate attention from you. Play chasing or pestering stresses your sheep, and unintentional wounds from sharp puppy teeth will almost certainly become infected.

Failure to Guard

Dogs that have not bonded with their charges will likely be unreliable guardians. At best, they may be indifferent to the livestock and won't harm them. At worst, they may resort to chasing, bullying or escaping to quell their boredom. I believe that this bonding is necessary to ignite the powerful instinct that compels LGDs to GUARD – to stay close enough to their charges to monitor the environment effectively and react quickly to perceived threats. Dogs not exposed to their potential charges at a young age may be slow to form that bond, or – if they were

raised as pets then placed with livestock – may fail to bond at all.

Climate can also affect a dog's ability to guard. Hot, humid weather distresses dogs with heavy coats – leaving them susceptible to hot spots and fly strikes. Rain can be equally bothersome to some breeds, presumably because their dense undercoats can take days to dry.

Providing shelter from the elements will help alleviate some of your dog's discomfort, and clipping longhaired breeds gets rid of mats and facilitates the removal of the winter coat. However, shaving the dogs down to their skin in the summer temporarily removes the insulation provided by the coat.

Inappropriate Guarding

It can be incredibly frustrating to have a dog that possesses strong protective instincts, yet fails to use them properly ...

I had a dog that would kidnap newborn lambs and “protect” them from their frantic mothers. This same dog would occasionally guard the water trough – making sure that no sheep could drink from HIS trough that day. He would even block entry into certain fields at times by standing at the gate.

More commonly, some dogs object to unfamiliar sheep mixing with their flock, and may “protect” their sheep from the newcomers. This is particularly annoying if the dog interferes with the rams during breeding season.

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Message from the president

I hope all your lambing is done and you had a good spring. Ours was busy with the largest number of lambs we have ever had but over all it went smoothly.

The one casualty of the spring was the newsletter. It was on the list to do but kept getting pushed down the priority list. I would like to ask for a member who would be willing to take on the gathering of articles and getting them to Melanie Rowan in a timely manner. The goal would be to have three to four newsletters a year. We have plenty of information for several newsletters a year, and several good writers, we just need someone to organize the information and keep it on deadline. Are there any volunteers? – Even two folks who might work together on it.

We also need someone to volunteer to work with the youth of our organization. We have a good number of youngsters in the group and we need to help them become good shepherds and good spokespeople for our breed. It could be two folks working together to be youth coordinators. I was told

there were many good ideas discussed at the meeting which Layne Anderson and I missed [due to traffic around Washington DC]. Lets put these ideas to work, step up to help your association!!!

Colonial Williamsburg’s Coach and Livestock Department will host the annual conference in Williamsburg Virginia on November 11,12 and 13 2016. The program has not been developed yet so if there are any suggestions please pass them on to the board of directors. The schedule will be similar to most years, meet, greet and show and tell on Friday evening, lectures on Saturday, dinner together on Saturday night and lectures on Sunday morning. I’m still not clear about a hands on time with the sheep (we are under new management) but it will probably be possible. Stay tuned! Mark your calendars and we look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Thanks so much!

– Elaine Shirley

LLSBA President

Colonial Williamsburg Rare Breeds Program



Sheepish News

Membership in the LLSBA is broad and ranges from those with extensive livestock and sheep experience to those who have no sheep but are interested in preserving our wonderful heritage breed. It can sometimes be a challenge to create a newsletter that serves the needs of the entire group. This newsletter is provided as a service to the membership to update you with information on the organization, and to serve as a vehicle for education. The BOD and publisher do their best to have it serve these purposes. However, we are always open to hearing from you about what you would like to know more about. Please send us your thoughts on newsletter topics – what do you want to know about the breed, marketing, livestock husbandry? Fiber arts and shows? Lambing? Bloodlines? How to select breeding stock? If you send us your suggestions we can look into creating articles that educate and inform you.

Would you like to provide an article for the newsletter? Many of you have experiences and expertise that would be of great value to the membership. If you have an idea and would like to contribute, we’d love to hear from you.

Please send your response to any of the board members listed above.

LLSBA Membership and Registrations

You must be a member of the LLSBA and assigned a Breeders Code to Register and Transfer sheep within the Association. Membership dues are \$25 per year. Your dues must be current in order to Register and Transfer animals. (Dues are due in January of the new year.) If you failed to pay your annual dues and have prior year registrations, your dues will need to be paid in full before registrations will be processed. If you have any questions please feel free to email Kelly at hoppingacres@frontier.net.

Registration Fees; Ewes under 1 year \$5.00, Ewes over 1 year \$10.00, Rams \$10.00

Registration and Transfer Forms are available on the LLSBA Website.

You must note on your registration if the animal is white or colored. Colored animals are assigned a C after their registration number.

Please make checks payable to LLSBA. Send Registration and Transfer Forms to:

Kelly Smith-Anderson LLSBA Registrar, 3458 Sugar Valley Rd., Bruceton Mills, WV 26525

It is so important for all animals, of breed standard quality, to be registered and transferred within the association. Our goal is to preserve a rare breed to the best of our abilities by breeding top quality breeding stock to pass on to the next generation.

Check out the LLSBA on FaceBook.



USA Leicester Longwools Association:

www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_239467173365

USA Leicester Longwool Classifieds:

www.facebook.com/groups/265682270199125

From the Secretary's Desk

Joan Henry, LLSBA Secretary/Flock Rep, The Grazing Herd Sheep and Wool Co.

LLSBA Annual Meeting, May 6, 2016

The annual meeting of the LLSBA was held on May 6, 2016. 24 members were in attendance.

In the absence of the president, Kelly Anderson, Vice President called the meeting to order.

Old Business:

The minutes from the last meeting held at Colonial Williamsburg in Nov. 2015 were read by Joan Henry, Sec/Tres. No questions or corrections were made so the minutes were approved as read.

The Treasurers report was also read. No questions or corrections were made so the treasurers report was approved as read.

There was no other old business discussed.

New Business:

Youth Program: A discussion was held by the membership on the best ways to spend the money donated by Brenton Heazlewood (donation of money spent on airline ticket for the 2015 Card Grading show.)

Many excellent ideas were given by the membership, such as:

- A sheep shearing school
- Beginning shepherds class
- Spinning class with drop spindles and uses of fiber
- A research project on the history of Leicester Longwools and why they declined and fell out of favor.
- A mentoring program with designated shepherds
- Educating our youth on the fiber applications for Leicester Longwools.
- A contest for a Beginning Shepherds handbook written by our youth members and the winner would receive a scholarship.

A lengthy discussion was held and members were encouraged to keep thinking of ideas.

Fall Conference 2016

The location and dates for the Fall Conference were not announced due to verification from our president.

Members were asked for ideas on the subjects they would like to hear about and/or workshops they would like to participate in.

Some suggestions were:

- Cheese making class
- Nutrition class
- Lambing issues class
- Genetics class by Dr. Sponenberg
- Toxicology Class
- Basic weaving on a square loom class
- Benefit of Longwool Fibers and the specific uses of longwool.
- A lamb cooking demo
- Preparing pelts for processing
- Pasture care
- Processing your own lambs for sale.

As soon as the location and dates are verified for the Fall Conference, it will be sent out to the membership.

Announcement of New Officers for 2016-18:

President: Elaine Shirley

Vice President/Registrar: Kelly Anderson

Sec/Tres: Joan Henry

Flock Representatives: Chris Spitzer and Anne Camper

Kelly Anderson spoke on the latest status of the Leicester Longwools.

No other items were discussed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

- Joan Henry

Treasurers Report

Joan Henry, LLSBA Secretary/Flock Rep, The Grazing Herd Sheep and Wool Co.

LLSBA Annual Meeting, May 6, 2016

Beginning Balance	\$7931.61
Outgoing expenses	
USPS	\$54.18
Office/Printing	\$238.47
Bank Fees	\$32.45
Incorporation Fee	\$25.00
Web Hosting	\$96.00
Advertising	\$150.00
2015 Conferences Expenses	\$74.39
Newsletter printing	\$120.36
Sympathy flowers (Ritchey)	\$113.20
	Total \$904.05
Incoming	
Registrations/transfers/membership dues	\$2035.00
Silent Auction	\$390.00
Shirt Sales	\$220.00
	Total income \$2645.00
Ending Balance	\$9672.56

Respectfully submitted,

- Joan Henry



Photo-genic

Susan Munson, Time Together Farm

We entered several pictures in competition for this year's Shepherd's Weekend. This is the annual meeting for the Michigan Sheep Breeders Association. We won Grand prize for our Flock entry, first prize for Shearer At Work, and first prize for a Portrait of a Sheep.

The flock entry has several LL lambs as well as LLW cross lambs and a CVM in it.

The Shearer is especially nice as Lisa Carpenter from Williamsburg was here and she was hand shearing one of our LLW.

The Portrait of a sheep was of JJ Samuel, our original LLW herd sire.

We're especially pleased with the beautiful China mug given for Grand Prize as it was made in England.

Webmaster's connection

Kayla Corbin Wright, Webmaster, Heritage Preservation Farm

Hi everyone! Hope you enjoyed lambing season! You may have noticed that the LLSBA has been sending out updates via email. Please ensure that you have been receiving these emails, and be sure to add kaylacorbin@gmail.com to your contacts list so that these important updates will not go to your spam folder. Gmail users especially are the most at-risk of these emails going to spam. If you have been missing them, check the "promotions" folder at the top of your browser screen if you use the online email, or on the left hand side if you use desktop software (such as Mac's "Mail") to view your emails. If you manually mark older emails from me as "not spam" gmail will notice the pattern and start sending these to your regular inbox. If you need help, please feel free to shoot me an email at kaylacorbin@gmail.com.

2016 Spring Registrar's Report, LLSBA

Kelly Smith-Anderson, LLSBA Registrar, Hoppin Acres Farm

Total Registrations				
Year And Code	White Rams	Colored Rams	White Ewes	Colored Ewes
2010 X	44	8	142	15
2011 Y	40	13	132	23
2012 ZZ	63	14	136	24
2013 AA	73	15	169	21
2014 BB	59	20	181	53
2015 CC	64	26	200	40

Total Rams registered in 2012 77 Ewes 160 Total Rams registered in 2014 79 Ewes 234
Total Rams registered in 2013 88 Ewes 190 Total Rams registered in 2015 90 Ewes 240

Rams & Ewes producing registered offspring					
Year	Rams Registered	# In Production	Ewes Registered	# In Production	Unknown
2010 X	52	28	157	79	Rams 24 Ewes 78
2011 Y	53	30	155	94	Rams 23 Ewes 61
2012 ZZ	77	43	160	89	Rams 34 Ewes 71
2013 AA	88	22	190	60	Rams 66 Ewes 130
2014 BB	79		234		
2015 CC	90		240		

Of the 2010 registered rams only 28 went on to produce offspring in 6 years. Of the 157 ewes registered only 79 went on to produce offspring in 6 years. Of the 2011 registered rams only 30 went on to produce offspring in 5 years. Of the 2011 ewes only 94 went on to produce offspring in 5 years.

Of the 2012 registered rams only 43 went on to produce offspring in 4 years. Of the 160 ewes registered only 89 went on to produce offspring in 4 years. Of the 2013 registered rams only 22 produced offspring in 3 years. Of the 190 registered ewes from 2013 only 60 produced. The unknown is the number of animals that did not produce within the 3 to 6 year time frame. I did not include 2014 and 2015 due to age.

Top Producing Rams by year Birth – Spring 2016 (over 10 offspring)

Year & Code	Name	# Registered Offspring
2010 X	OGF Black Jack	32
2010 X	GHF Tony Dinozzo	22
2010 X	OGF Frederick	19
2010 X	CWL 2010-18	17
2010 X	JJ Brother Farley	15
2010 X	CWL 2010-04	13
2010 X	JM Darcy	12
2010 X	OGF Hidden Spring Ace	12
2010 X	GNF Alexander	12
2010 X	OGF Lord Fairfax	11
2010 X	CMSF Razz M Tazz	10
2011 Y	JJ Quincy	22
2011 Y	HA Harris	17
2011 Y	OGF Sir Galahad	15
2011 Y	AC Grimsby	13
2011 Y	UF Donny	13
2011 Y	OGF Sir Garfield	11
2011 Y	OGF Sir George	11
2011 Y	AMF Shaggy The Sheep	11
2012 ZZ	GHF Randall Mccoy	19
2012 ZZ	TFF Plato	12
2012 ZZ	JJ Chosen Charlie	11
2012 ZZ	CWL 12-03	10
2012 ZZ	OGF Homer	10
2013 AA	HA Prince Edward	18
2013 AA	CCSSF Maxwell	15
2013 AA	SKM Washington	10

Sheep talk and friends

It was the year 2015 that Underhill Farm was visited by fabulous people who are all related to the Leicester Longwools that help to change our lives.

First, we were visited by Cathe Capel who is a dear friend. She had driven from Illinois and needed a place to rest. We had all planned to drive together from Underhill to go to the Maryland Wool and Sheep Extravaganza. Cathe shared her stories and we shared ours. She is storehouse of wonderful and useful information on sheep and life. She has even raised silk worms.

Several days from returning from

Maryland (thank god we were in Pennsylvania), we were visited for a night by Elaine Shirley, Brenton and Anne Heazlewood. The initial idea was to see a local baseball team, part of the Americana Tour, but the exhausted travelers were fine to sit and sip on a lovely libation. That we did all night but Brenton was itching to see the farm and sheep. He kept looking at the ground vegetation and inspecting it for white clover which is very important to the health of sheep. But when he spied our sheep, he immediately exclaimed that they were Tasmanian. Later we dined and I convinced

them to see a Broadway play which they never had done. Days later I received a text that read, "Foot stomping" as they had seen *Jersey Boys!*

A month or two later came Melanie Rowan for a quick stop on her journey home. She had visited family in western Pennsylvania. Again, we discussed sheep, gardening, and dyeing yarns. She shared her stories and techniques and we shared ours. She had given us luxurious soaps made in unimaginable molds. Another great source of information on sheep and life.

And the last visitor was Carrie

William Smiley Churchill, Underhill Farm

Meet your new board members



Anne Camper

My interest in the Leicester Longwools began when I took a trip to the UK and saw longwool sheep grazing

in the Lake District. That fascination led to research and a decision to become involved with the Leicesters. I have always had an interest in heritage breeds. The heritage breed perspective along with my obsession with knitting sealed the deal. I became a member of the LLSBA in 2008 when I purchased my first two registered ewes. From those first two ewes my flock has grown to the current population of 17 adults (14 ewes and 3 rams) on my 20 acre dryland property in Montana. My breeding goal is to maintain the characteristics of the LLs as a dual purpose fiber and meat animal, and to produce healthy, strong animals.

I am also interested in promoting the breed to small scale farmers. This can only be done if there is some sort of financial return for the time and effort required to establish and maintain a breeding flock, and that means raising the visibility of the breed. To that end, my fleeces have been exhibited and awarded prizes at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival and the Estes Park Festival. I've marketed and sold fleeces to hand spinners around the country. Even though I am located at a significant distance from the majority of the other LL breeders, through the assistance of other members, have sold ewe lambs across

the country for breeding stock. At a local level, my non-breeding quality lambs/wethers are sold as butcher lambs and I have had rave reviews about the meat quality.

One challenge that I faced early on was the presence of ovine progressive pneumonia in my foundation ewes that was not detected until two years later. That experience has made me very much aware of the hidden health challenges facing a small gene pool, and how critical it is to ensure healthy breeding stock. As flock representative, I would like to help current and potential owners become educated in chronic diseases that affect sheep, what to look for and how to test, and how these devastating diseases can be managed and controlled. I am interested in promoting the breed through education and support, and encouraging those who purchase LLs to engage in thoughtful breeding practices.

Chris Spitzer

Thank you to everyone for voting for me as your flock representative. I hope to bring not only my almost 40 years of sheep/livestock experience to the table but also my experience in corporate America. Let me tell you a little bit about my personal life. I am the mother of 6 children, 5 daughters and 1 son ranging in age from 29-43. This month we celebrated the births of our 11th and 12th grandchildren. We primarily farm in Medina,



Ohio on almost 600 acres; 200 acres make up our home farm and the rest is rented ground. On that ground we grow soybeans, corns, hay, wheat and livestock. We raise freezer beef, pork, chicken, sheep, and goat for almost 200 meat/freezer customers. Our motto is "healthy, locally grown meats from our farm to your freezer." I have always been health conscious and believe that healthy, happy animals provide good nutrition for our bodies.

As your flock representative, I am committed to open communication with the members at large. I want to bring to the board your concerns, opinions, and ideas to make this a better organization. I am always open to email and/or phone/text messages. I also want to build a program that provides shepherding education to the membership so that members with little experience have a way to improve their skills without always learning "the hard way." Our success, along with the success of the Leicester Longwool sheep, lies primarily in our ability to work together for a better future. I look forward to building that future with all of you.

ALL Update

Harry Groot, Sunrise Valley Farm

The Appalachian Leicester Longwool group completed the USDA Value Added Producer Grant with a Feasibility Analysis done by Oates Consulting of Adrian, MO. The Analysis concluded the group had challenges to become profitable because of its low numbers (of active members and sheep) and variable member participation. Profitability would prove difficult because the expenses incurred with having a formal organization – in this case an LLC-based Cooperative – were more than the modest revenues could support. In the final report's recommendations, we were encouraged however, to continue to collaborating informally – in which we have been.

The ALL membership has stayed in close contact and is using, individually and collectively, a number of the lessons learned during the grant experience. Five fiber mills were tested to evaluate quality and costs and two stood out– which we continue to use. Under the grant, ALL also tested mill dyeing with a variety of colors and different marketing venues; we've used that knowledge to craft our current inventory and sales strategies. Lastly, we chose not to pursue a follow-up grant to expand the business, but have been satisfied with the go-slow, be-small course we're on.

MacDougall who spent the night and arrived in the night. She was returning from visiting family in Michigan and her car was loaded with family treasures. We had more lovely libations and dinner. Hours of conversations on sheep and fiber. More ideas were exchanged and she too is another storehouse of information. As she left, she reached into the backseat and retrieved a square angel food pan and gave it to us. It makes an astounding square cake.

But later in the year, we returned to Colonial Williamsburg and spent the weekend touring and talking to all shepherds and things related to Leicester Longwools. The village was ready to share information concerning how the animals played a pivotal

role in Colonial America's success. We were all over the village. But it was during a dinner on Saturday night, Fred and I learned we had become grandparents. What an exciting night of jubilation and laughs! Later, that weekend ended with a dyeing demonstration at the Weaver's Cottage. Several of us had had our yarns readied for the dyeing process and were able to dye the yarns using the same process used 200 years ago. Karen Clancey roared above the din of the day and tried to explain to us what the process was. She was marvelous.

So to fellow members, take my grandmother's advice and talk to others. You never know what story they are going to share and what you may learn.

What to expect *continued from Page 1*

Perhaps the most potentially dangerous form of inappropriate guarding occurs if your dog becomes far too protective of YOU. If your dog wedges himself between you and anyone who is walking with you in the field, this may simply be a dominance display – or it could be a red flag that he feels the need to protect you. If you have any question about the dog's motives, it is best to keep strangers out of your fields.

Blood Lust

In my opinion, a good livestock guardian should choose his battles wisely. However, some dogs – even excellent guardians – will chase and kill anything that runs. If you have a dog like this, expect to find a lot of dead groundhogs and other small critters in your fields. My dogs even chased down an adult deer – killed it, then ate it. Note: Keep your LGD's rabies vaccinations up to date!

Aggression

Aggression aimed at anything other than a predator is cause for concern. Some dogs will chase their charges maliciously, often singling out one animal and pursuing it like prey. This is a VERY serious problem and requires an immediate and memorable correction. Dogs that are immune to your discipline and continue to “prey chase” livestock are, in my opinion, not suited to guard.

I also believe that a dog's response to a perceived insult from livestock (or humans) is an important measure of its potential to become a safe, stable guardian. My worst guardians would react aggressively to challenges from the sheep, with one dog viciously attacking a ram that had simply shoved him away from a trough. My most trustworthy dogs have been those that would either retreat or assume a submissive posture in response to being bullied by a sheep – or just as importantly, after receiving a “correction” from me.

Common Human Problems

A good LGD can be a godsend – but the actions (or inaction) of even the best dogs will occasionally frustrate you. Extra supervision and guidance from you can remedy many problems – though sometimes your disappointment may stem from simply expecting more of the dog than it can deliver. In spite of its presumed innate talent for guarding, a Livestock Guardian Dog is still just a dog.

Unrealistic Expectations

Add Water ... Instant Guardian!

You may be disappointed if you expect a newly-introduced guardian to provide immediate protection. A new dog of any age needs time to learn boundaries and to bond



Canine Coiffure

with the animals, even if that dog was raised with the species you want it to protect. The dog needs supervision to determine if it has a tendency to chase or pester, and to gauge its response to challenges from the livestock. Correcting undesirable behaviors must be an immediate priority, and can be facilitated by introducing the dog to your animals in a confined area, such as the barn or a small paddock. It's difficult to issue an effective correction from a distance.

Insufficient Number of Guardians

If your livestock have free range over a large, undivided piece of property, it's asking too much of one dog to protect them all. While those “warning” signs claiming your dog can ‘reach the fence line in 2.5 seconds ... can YOU?’ may be entertaining, no dog can reach a predator that's 50 acres away in time to prevent an attack. If you can afford it, I'd recommend that you cross fence large fields into smaller paddocks. If that's not feasible, seriously consider acquiring additional dogs.

The “Lassie Syndrome”

I have read seemingly fantastical tales of LGD heroism written by adoring owners – stories I'm convinced they must have been recalling from episodes of Lassie that they viewed as children ...

No matter how great you think your dog is, there are some things that you cannot realistically expect him to do. He will not ring your doorbell to inform you that a ewe is in labor, or that a sheep is limping or scouring. He's unlikely to notice if your ram has his head stuck in the fence, or point out that a ewe has been lying in the same position for an hour and may be unable to stand. A good LGD can keep your flock safe from predators, but his diligence is not a substitute for yours.

Inadequate Supervision

Anytime you make a change to your dog's world – whether you're adding a new dog,

new livestock, or moving the animals to an unfamiliar field – it's important to monitor his behavior. You can't stop misbehavior if you don't know it's occurring. This can be tricky if you have a job that's off the farm – so planning changes for a weekend or your vacation time may be helpful.

Lambing season can be particularly challenging when dogs are present – especially if it's the first time the dogs have experienced it. Supervision is crucial here. You cannot assume that a dog will recognize a newborn lamb as part of “his” flock, and it is important to monitor the dog's interest in the baby closely. In addition, a normally steady dog may behave unpredictably with the smell of blood and amniotic fluid in the air, or when confronted with unexpected aggression from a protective new mother.

Creating a Spoiled Brat

In my opinion, one the worst mistakes you can make with your guardian is to raise it like a pet. LGD's form strong bonds, and will readily bond to you. If you reward your puppy with your presence every time he makes a bid for your attention – like you would if he were a pet – his dependence on you will grow stronger with each passing day. The more he looks to you for affection and companionship, the more miserable he'll be when you're not around to provide it. And unless you live in the pasture, there will be lots of times when you won't be around.

Perhaps you have experienced the aggravation of returning from a vacation to find that your beloved house dog morphed into a petulant child while you were away and “redecorated” your living room ... Spoiled LGD's seem as susceptible to separation anxiety as any other dogs, and when they're lonely and frustrated, you'll likely see an increase in chasing, pestering, inappropriate guarding, escaping, etc ...

In order for your dog to be a safe and dependable guardian, I feel he must be content spending most of his time with his charges instead of with you. You can make this easier for the dog by limiting the time you spend petting and playing with him. When your play session for the day is finished, WALK AWAY. Eventually, he'll accept that his time with you must be limited, and he won't be distressed when you have to leave him.

Remember, just because your dog is one of the livestock guardian breeds doesn't mean he's automatically suited for the job. But with proper guidance and supervision, a dog with strong instincts and a steady temperament can be molded into an effective, trustworthy guardian.

Special thanks to Brit Ritchey for her input

Heritage Breeds Conservation Continuity

While there are numerous critical ingredients to successful conservation of heritage breeds, one component that Donna and I are focusing on more and more is continuity. What can we do now that will contribute to successful breeds' conservation in the future? One approach is to promote the involvement of the next generation, through both education and hands-on experience, in conservation. For example, we initiated the Youth Conservation Program which celebrated its 18th year at the MS&WF in May. The YCP introduces youth to heritage sheep breeds through the donation of ewe lambs to youth selected based on their essay – Why do I want to help conserve rare breeds?

This past May we had the opportunity to be involved in Service-to-Stewardship (S2S), a bi-annual, two-day, workshop for military veterans sponsored by the Breeds Conservancy and the Virginia Cooperative Extension. The workshop was attended by over 30 veterans and active duty personnel from eight states. On the first day I led an hour discussion on *A Decision Tree for Getting Started – an Informed Commitment*. In the afternoon, 20 participants joined me and Donna in a hands-on demonstration and general discussion on raising heritage sheep, using our Leicester Longwools as prompts. As we had several lambs sired by a non-OGF ram, it was easy for even the novelist to identify key differences in both

body structure and fleece characteristics. The second day was comprised of farm tours. At OGF we were able to talk about logics, grazing management, feeding and healthcare for both our Leicester flock as well as our American Milking Devon herd. The highlight came as we put out for their inspection the white and colored fleeces from our two Best Fleece in Show rams. As a USMC combat veteran, working with this generation of veterans was most gratifying.

The highlight for Donna and me was our grandchildren, Kadi (9) and Luke (7), exhibiting our Leicester Longwools at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival. This process begins in March when the kids come to the farm to select the yearlings and lambs that they will show at the festival. This year, her second, Kadi showed a yearling ram and a ram and ewe lamb. Luke showed a ram and ewe lamb. A week before the festival, they return to help grandpa train their exhibits. Their efforts paid off, as evidenced by the big smiles on their faces, when their sheep were awarded Champion Ram and Best Fleece in Show (white longwool) and Reserve Champion Ram and Best Fleece in Show (colored longwool) along with a pocket full of other colored ribbons.

Will they raise heritage sheep as adults? I don't know. I do know, however, that Kadi loves chatting with the judges, telling them about George Washington and why conserving Leicester Longwools is important for the future.

Richard & Donna Larson, Old Gjerpen Farm



S2S Discussion at Old Gjerpen Farm



Who's prouder?



Youth Conservation Winner

Lamb donated by Kelly, Hopping Acres Farm

My name is Lynne Thomas and I live in Fallston, Maryland. I am fifteen years old and a freshman in the large animal strand of the Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences Magnet Program at North Harford High School. I have been an active member of the Baldwin 4-H club in Baltimore County for ten years and this is my first year as a member of the North Harford High School FFA Chapter.

Why Would I Like To Help Preserve A Heritage Breed Sheep ?

I would like to help preserve a heritage breed sheep because they are an important part of our American agricultural history and because of the role they play in genetic diversity. Colonial American history is one of my favorite subjects and while I was in elementary school our annual family vacations were always trips to Colonial Williamsburg and Mount Vernon. During these trips I became acquainted with Leicester Longwool and Hog Island sheep. I learned at a young age the importance of sheep in colonial times, not only for their wool for clothing and blankets, but also for their meat, lanolin and manure. I would like to be considered for a Leicester Longwool or Hog Island sheep, but I would be honored to receive any of the available breeds.

If I am selected as a recipient of a heritage breed sheep, I would be educating others about it through my 4-H and FFA activities.

In addition to showing the ewe at our county 4-H and state fairs, I want to use her fleece to spin yarn that I can make into accessories for future Make it with Wool outfits. Raising this ewe would also be my FFA Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) for the coming school year. In this project, I will not only document raising the ewe through records and photographs, but also give a presentation to my class. This will give me an opportunity to educate other students about heritage breed sheep and the importance of preserving these breeds. I would also give presentations about my heritage breed sheep in Agro Land and at Food for America.

In conclusion, I would love to have the opportunity to preserve our agricultural heritage and history and to conserve valuable genetic traits, by raising a heritage breed sheep. Thank you for considering my application for the Youth Conservation Program! Sincerely Lynne Thomas

On Mentoring

Laurie Ball-Gisch, *The Lavender Fleece*

Sheep do not 'just take care of themselves' as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.

– W. Phillip Keller

Training other shepherds is important to the future of all sheep keeping and especially crucial in preserving rare and heritage breeds. Since there aren't many opportunities for people to go to "sheep school" it is imperative that mature, experienced shepherds become shepherd mentors.

Sheep are more than just a pretty fleece and being a good shepherd is more than acquiring a few sheep and throwing them out in a field. And being a shepherd/mentor is more than taking the money and waving the new shepherds and their new sheep off, as they pull out of your driveway.

Just like we need to anticipate what our sheep will do, mentors must remember their own mistakes, and try to anticipate the mistakes the new shepherds will make. Those who sell breeding stock to new shepherds must realize the responsibility they have to graciously mentor new shepherds.

Shepherds must be open to learning, be flexible, and change as needed, but so too must their mentors. Both will experience great joy as well as deep sorrow in their respective jobs. Just as the worse thing to happen to a new shepherd is having a sheep die – the hardest part of mentoring is when the new shepherd calls, sobbing, and tells us of their first sheep death. It requires time, patience, listening, diagnosing, and advising (and as well as directing them to veterinarians), as they go through their first year of caring for their new flock.

I now tell my new shepherds that raising sheep is akin to turning four-legged "toddlers" loose in the barnyard or pasture, and praying the fences and gates will keep them contained and that they will not do harm to themselves, each other, or become prey for predators.

I also advise new shepherds that they must

be prepared to be obstetrician, pediatrician, diagnostician, nurse, nutritionist, and sometimes even surgeon - and regretfully even a coroner – to their flock.

As mentors to other shepherds, we have to be willing to share our time and skills to best prevent the losses that we ourselves learned from. Those of us with years of experiences with our sheep, both the good and the bad, are today's "professors" in shepherding. We need to realize the huge responsibility we have to teach and nurture future shepherds so that they can care for and nurture their flocks.

Good mentors who pass on the knowledge they have acquired can save the lives of many sheep and ease the trials and tribulations of their shepherd-students. Just as importantly the new shepherd must listen to and learn from the mentor, for one day they will be the mentors for the next generation of shepherds.

The shepherd's life has changed less with the change of the years than that of any other calling.

– H. Somerset Bullock, 1909



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LLSBA Fall Conference
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