

Training Puppies with Livestock

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Turkey Anatolian Shepherd Dogs



3-4 week old pups with livestock and older Anatolian

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs will bond with whatever they are raised with. The sooner the pups are exposed to the livestock they will be guarding, the easier the training will be. Our puppies are raised with livestock since birth. They are whelped and raised in a large stall with board fencing around it. Livestock are kept in the paddock surrounding the puppy's stall so that the pups are familiar with the smells, sounds and activity of the livestock as soon as they can see and hear.

By the time pups are 3-4 weeks old, they are put directly with livestock and given supervised periods of time to interact with the livestock. It is important to ensure that pups are started with

very gentle livestock that are familiar with dogs, so that they do not injure the young pups. The pups at this age will be curious about the livestock and they will react by sniffing and investigating the livestock.



Pups bonding with babydoll sheep



5 week old pup investigating our babydoll sheep

At 5-6 weeks of age, when pups are stronger and more active, they are then allowed to gradually spend more time with the livestock. We continue to feed the puppies with livestock and they spend time sleeping and playing with their littermates in the area with the livestock. By the time pups are 7-8 weeks old they are living with the livestock full time and are bonding very nicely.



7 week old pup bonding to livestock

Pups at 3-12 Months of Age

Training throughout the first year involves supervision of the young dogs with livestock rather than teaching protective behavior. This supervision consists of watching the young dog to ensure they are exhibiting a quiet disposition around the livestock, and to immediately curb any overly playful or rough play with the livestock.

Although Anatolian Shepherd dogs are livestock guardians, they still may exhibit typical puppy behavior at times, and may have active periods when they may want to play with or chase livestock. This



4 month old pup with doe and kids

activity should be corrected very promptly so that no unwanted behavior is learned. It is

often helpful to have them in a pasture accompanied by a trusted adult guardian dog that will set a good example of desired behavior. I like to take the young pup with me on a lead while feeding, interacting and working with the livestock. This teaches the pup to be quiet around the livestock and, if any playful activity develops, it is easily discouraged by correction with the lead. Quiet appropriate behavior is rewarded with praise. During times when supervision is not possible, the pup can be housed adjacent to the livestock in a separate pen so that they are in contact with the livestock as much as possible. It is better to separate the young pup until proven trustworthy, rather than have them learn undesirable behavior that will have to be corrected.



5 month old pup with goats and adult guardian dog

Each pup will vary in the amount of time needed to become trusted reliable guardians. Some pups are naturally quieter than others and may hardly ever need correction, while more active ones may take more supervision and patience. If you keep the pups with the appropriate livestock, the livestock will help greatly in your training. Adult livestock are less tolerant of a playful pup and will help greatly in training by standing their ground with an overly rambunctious pup. The pups learn to respect the livestock and continue to bond with them at the same time. Care should be given to not put a young pup in with very aggressive livestock or they will resent being bullied, but neither should they be kept with young livestock that may run from them and create the temptation to chase and play. Anatolian Shepherds typically exhibit a period of increased activity during early morning and late afternoon. This is a good time to test the young dog at the time they are most prone to playful activity. Once the pup shows the proper quiet temperament around adult livestock during these periods of increased activity, they are then allowed to spend time with the adult livestock full time. As the pup learns to be quiet around the adults, they can then be introduced to younger livestock using similar methods of supervision until they prove trustworthy. Usually by the time the pup is 12-18 months old, they are reliable guardians provided they have been given the proper supervision and training.