

FAQ'S

Q: What are the laws pertaining to livestock guardian dogs in other states?

A: In all states, livestock guardian dogs or livestock herding dogs are not classified as companion pets, although some are considered family members and brought into the home when not working. Most states categorize them as “production animals” or “working dogs” and many provide them with some basic legal protections against neglect. Unfortunately, there are still some states, such as Utah, that classify the LGD as livestock and in Utah, livestock do not have legal protections. This puts LGD at risk for neglect and abandonment without any accountability. Other states, like Idaho, have loopholes in the law. For example, in Idaho, LGD are classified as “production animals” and have legal protections however, animal control cannot enforce those statutes.

Q: Why are livestock guardian dogs abandoned?

A: There are a multitude of reasons why they are abandoned:



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- The LGD roams because it is injured and/or hungry and is seeking help.
- The owner no longer wants the LGD for numerous reasons.
- Intact males often run off other males and they do not return.
- LGD are raised without human contact and fear humans and cannot be recalled.
- Pregnant females will often leave to give birth.

Most, if not all, of these can be prevented by properly feeding, microchipping, training and providing spay/neuter. According to TAMU LGD program, “Either sex can be an effective LGD and spaying or neutering does not seem to decrease a guardian dog’s protectiveness. Neutering males tends to reduce how much they roam and can be beneficial, especially when this roaming conflicts with neighbors. Heat cycles for intact females can disrupt protection by drawing in outside dogs or distracting male LGDs from their duties. In addition, when females whelp and rear a litter of puppies, they are not as effective in their role as protectors.”

Q: Does LGD neglect and abandonment happen often? Why are we hearing about this now?

A: According to long-time residents in certain rural locations in Utah and Idaho, this has been an issue for over 30 years. However, a number of factors have contributed to the increased



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reporting of LGD neglect and abandonment. Heavier pressure on public lands contribute to higher numbers of abandoned LGD which find human assistance. Social media has played a major role in helping the public to share the LGD in need. Historically, municipal shelters have often been overwhelmed with impounded LGD, however we now live in a time where we strive for positive outcomes for these loyal dogs. As a result, there has been an increase in non-profit rescue groups who rehabilitate and find homes for them. According to some, this has been an issue in the Western states for over 25 years.

Q: Are livestock guardian dogs aggressive?

A: No, on the contrary. Many are very friendly to people and love children. A good LGD will be protective against intruders, not aggressive. Some producers intentionally raise their LGD to be aggressive. Experts at the world-renowned Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (TAMU) San Angelo Livestock Guardian Dog program warn that LGD are more at risk to harm people when they are not properly socialized with humans as a puppy.

<https://www.facebook.com/TAMUlivestockguarddog/videos/1657391387744948/>



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Q: What is the difference between a livestock guardian dog and my companion Great Pyrenees or Akbash dog?

A: When they are born, there is no difference, they all have genetic traits of protectiveness, barking, roaming, independent thinking and loyalty. Some go on to protect livestock and others go on to protect their human family. Some producers raise LGD to be working during the summer months and companions during winter. The biggest difference are the laws that protect them. A livestock guardian dog breed that is raised as a companion pet is protected under animal cruelty statutes. A livestock guardian dog that is raised and used as a working dog has no protections in some states, and minimal protections that are rarely enforced in others.

Q: Is it true that livestock guardian dogs are supposed to be thin?

A: According to the experts at world-renowned Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's San Angelo Livestock Guardian Dog program, the ideal body score of working LGD should be a 5. Many dogs we are seeing across the Western states are between 2-4.

<https://sanangelo.tamu.edu/2020/03/02/the-guardian-way-march-2020/>



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