

Love and train the animal that can be your biggest help on your farm, but only as good as you.

You may ask, “Why have a chapter on dogs in a grazing book?”

Controlled grazing originated in New Zealand with only 4 million people and 60,000 farms grazing 50 million sheep, 8 million cattle, a million deer, using 200,000 working dogs to help, especially on the steep hills, vast areas and dairy farms. There are also increasing numbers of Alpacas & Llamas being farmed. They have been domesticated for thousands of years so don't need dogs to fetch them, and can act as guard dogs by guarding against wild attacking dogs. Read their chapter.

Before buying a farm in some countries, you should buy a guard dog to protect your animals against wild dogs, wolves, thieves, etc.

Before buying a quantity of grazing animals in most countries, one should get or train a good working dog.

Many of the following suggestions also relate to pet dogs. If you learn nothing more than why you should not give commands more than once, and you should not ‘pat’ them on the head, it will be worth reading.

Pasture farming would be labour intensive, frustrating, labourious and less profitable without dogs, and the life of animal farmers, musterers and drovers would be a lot harder, or impossible.

The typical North or South American cowboys with lassos, fight animals. Good dogs coerce and guide animals. People are best leading animals, on foot, on a horse, ATV or other vehicle with a good dog at the back making the animals follow.

In South Africa I've seen half a dozen people with much shouting, stick waving and stone throwing, take ages to dip a few cattle, which they do weekly in summer, and fortnightly in winter. In New Zealand where dipping is seldom needed, one person and one dog can do the same in half the time with less stress all round. Some people believe that dogs stress animals, and some do, but correctly trained good ones don't. People shouting with whips and sticks stress them more.

Make sure your dogs are always under control and that they stay at home unless you or someone responsible are with them, and make sure they are microchipped and re-registered each year. In New Zealand, dogs registered as working dogs don't have to be microchipped, but it's a good idea to do so in case they are stolen or become lost.

I believe that over the years animal product prices will decrease relative to other prices because too many people like farming, and because most farmers work hard and over-produce. Gradually, both the political power of farmers, and subsidies (in countries where subsidies are paid) will decrease. Also, consumers want to spend more of their money on pleasure and less on food, and governments aim for cheap food in their countries. A solution graziers have to this inevitable trend, is to handle more animals with the help of one or more good dogs.



### **Tip was an excellent dog**

As many know, New Zealand farmers use working dogs extensively. I bought Tip, a five months old Border Collie in 1955, for NZ£20 then, now the equivalent of NZ\$2,000, calculated by a cow being NZ£20 then and NZ\$2,000, now. In 1962, Phil Ryall, a Clevedon sheep baron, offered us NZ£500, the equivalent of NZ\$50,000 now, I said that I wouldn't sell Tip at any price, despite having little money because of developing our first 100 ha, 2 metre deep poor peat farm and milking only 120 cows then.

### **Both new**

I had previously never trained a dog, not been taught how to, nor read how to, and had only used mediocre dogs on the three farms I worked on, but fortunately Tip was well bred and needed little training. She spent her awake hours looking between me and any livestock in sight, hoping for a command to do something with them. When just new on our farm, she ‘strong-eyed’ the cows, as they left the farm dairy shed and passed her dairy kennel. Her home was near our house.

Newly calved cows are reluctant to leave the dairy area where their calves are, to go to the new pasture. Half way through milking in 1955 I took Tip and walked left and right behind the cows saying

“take ‘em away.” Although she was a strong-eyed header, bred to go to the front (head) and fetch animals, she started moving back and forth behind the cows that then moved away. I went back to milking and after a while looked to see what she was doing. She had taken them to the far corner of the paddock about 200 metres away and was still moving quietly behind them from left to right in the 30 cm (12 inch) tall grass. One call and she came back. I knew I had a good dog.

After that first time, I learned to call her back when she got to the paddock gate, so she soon learned to take them just to the gates of paddocks. When she got old, she thought there was no sense in wasting energy, so gave a few barks and then sat and watched them walk away. Sometimes they would stop half way down the lane and she would have to be told to “take ‘em away” again. She would bark and run a few metres to get them moving and would then sit and look at them, then at me.

Tip could fetch stock, take them away, wait at a gate for hours to keep cows in until I told her to fetch them for milking, notice and sort out a bull or wrong animal from a mob, keep bloated animals moving one by one, going to the one I pointed to next and I didn't have to be accurate in pointing because she identified bloated ones and loved work.

She fetched Auriel's parents' Dachshund from the paddock when they were ready to go home, kept my racing pigeons flying for exercise, would go to a paddock they landed in and chase them up, chase the neighbour's sheep back home, bowling them over to discourage their return. She loved doing this and used to attract my attention to them when they came into our farm hoping I would give the command to chase them out. She almost never did anything without a command to do so.

Wild ducks and Pukekos (NZ wild fowls) can spread salmonella if they get into the water troughs. Cattle symptoms are small fine bubbles in their dung. An excess of molybdenum or a copper deficiency can cause the same, but if smelly it is usually salmonella. We trained Tip to chase them off the farm. Shooting them is not allowed except in the shooting season.

If we'd known what Border Collies can do, we'd have used one in South Africa to chase ringneck doves off our maize fields. They were clever in that they would walk along the planter rows even days after planting and dig up the seeds 20 cm apart. Ringneck doves are now in NZ and should all be destroyed because they multiply quickly and when there are hundreds will be difficult to keep off maize fields. I've told the government and Federated Farmers, but got no response. So another pest has been allowed in, and not eliminated when possible.

### **Sorting & drafting**

When sorting animals with her I soon learned to not give her left or right commands to guide an animal, because she saw before I did what the animal was going to do. Her ability in this was quite uncanny. By the time my left hand had shot out and the command had come out of my mouth saying, “Left”, she may have started to go right because the animal had changed and was going right, but she would go left because I said so. When young she always did what I commanded, but when older she would do what she thought was right, so I learned to just give the first command “fetch 'em out”, and I walked away and opened the gate.

Most of my commands were just to acknowledge that she could do what she had already seen was necessary. When she was close behind bloated cows keeping them moving to the command of “bloat” to make them belch, they would dung on her as they walked and their digestion started working, but she didn't complain, she kept on duty.

She loved work so would work for anyone who was told both voice and hand commands, so I could keep contracting and Auriel could milk, after she got home from her work.

### **Rustlers**

Strong-eyed dogs seldom bark. Stock rustlers liked them for this reason. If ever in the South Island of New Zealand, visit the McKenzie Country, first settled by European pioneers in the 1850s. They began extensive breeding and grazing of sheep and cattle on natural NZ grasses called tussock.

The Mackenzie Country is named after New Zealand's most famous outlaw, James Mackenzie, a sheep rustler who, along with his very clever, so very useful, Border Collie sheep dog called ‘Friday’, was accused of rounding up and stealing sheep at night, without a sound. He was finally captured in 1855, and after a series of escapes and increasing illnesses, he was released in 1856 and disappeared forever.

There's a statue of the dog next to the road. Each tour bus driver will tell you a slightly different

story so it is worthwhile doing the trip more than once! I don't know which one to tell you so visit it and hear your own, or Google it. Dog Friday Mackenzie sheep dog New Zealand.

The name Border Collie comes from the border between England and Scotland. I don't know whether it originated from the Scots doing a McKenzie on the Brits across the border, or visa-versa.

### **Hates**

We all have hates - mine is cheats and crooks, Tip's was newly-calved cows that would protect their calves from dogs, so she would keep well away or on the opposite side of an electrified wire. The whole dairy farm was fenced with one or two high power electrified wires, giving a lane and 40 paddocks. So moving newly calved cows was my job. Her extreme intelligence told her that some cows go mad if a dog comes into the paddock after they have calved. Other cows will sometimes join the calved cow in trying to run down any dog which comes near, creating a shambles. If the dog tries to hide behind you, lookout! So the dog is best kept well away, or left in its kennel if it can't be controlled.

As well as dogs, animals can be trained to lead others by always feeding the chosen "lead" animal something special (which can be new pasture) when it gets to where you want them all.

The command when Tip misbehaved or went the wrong way, or just did the wrong thing by mistake, was a long "Noooo" in a loud cross voice and a raised shaking fist. Some people go mad when the dog does something wrong and swear and shout abuse in sentences at the top of their voices. The result is that the dog usually thinks the person has gone mad, so either comes to the person to see if they can help, or it runs away in fear, or it just keeps doing what it is doing, causing the handler to give another long threat in a raised voice, so things escalate. Avoid abuse, just remember "Noooo" and the shaking fist. The raised shaking fist also makes one feel better! Sometimes, with some dogs, one needs it.

### **Bite'em**

When told to, "Bite'em, Tip" she knew to bite only just above the hoof. I don't know how she knew this except from hundreds of years of selective breeding by the Scots and later by New Zealanders. She was a pure Border Collie.

Once, when a cow was in a two metre deep ditch nearly full of water, I couldn't get a chain around her neck to pull her out with the tractor. Each time I went towards her with the chain she would go back or swing her head away despite Tip swimming behind her and barking each time I gave the command. In desperation I said, "Bite 'em Tip". I thought she would just nip the top of the cow's tail that was right in front of her jaw, but no, she took a breath and dived down to the hock. I was so surprised that I nearly got knocked over when the cow gave a bawl and lunged forward into the chain loop.

### **Friends & enemies**

Tip had friends and enemies within the herd. She would not make an old, slow cow go faster if it was her friend, but would delight in doing so to an enemy. Ones that never kicked or swung their head at her were friends, while those who kicked at her were her enemies.

From the above, one could get the impression that she was never naughty, but sometimes she was. Being on a 89 hectare (220 acre) 200 cow dairy farm she didn't get anywhere near enough work, and even fetching the cows was to her a dreary job, because they knew to come when they heard the command and/or saw her coming, so all she had to do was wait for them to come to the gate and then walk up behind them.

For exercise and the fun of it, she would sometimes run into the herd and bite a cow which had kicked her some time before. I sympathised with her, because one cow she didn't like was called Malkop, which is Afrikaans for Mad Head. My wife, who frequently milked, believes she still has the bruises from being kicked by her 50 years ago! I didn't know about manganese, which I later found out was high in our soils, pastures and water, made cows nervous, stressed and bad tempered. Read both Manganese chapters (in Farming and Human Health) to see how bad it is in New Zealand.

To give herself work, Tip would sometimes, instead of just bringing the young calves out of a paddock, first chase them away, and sometimes split them, so that she could then group them again. If this was not stopped, the calves would soon learn to run away when they saw her coming. Also, when chased by her, they would sometimes run through a single wire electric fencing, and occasionally break the 16 gauge wires (before the days of 12.5 gauge high tensile).

She sometimes liked bowling a calf over. She was so quick that I don't know how she did it, but the

calf would bawl and Tip would display a proud-of-herself look.

While these were just naughty attributes, she had one genetic bred-in instinctive problem. She was strong-eyed so would sometimes like to half crawl, half walk up slowly and stare into the eyes of cattle instead of barking and running around them to move them. Strong-eyed dogs were bred for catching sheep in the paddock, which a farmer could do while being strong eyed, but we had a dairy farm and one seldom wants to catch a cow in a paddock.

Strong-eyed Border Collies are not the best for cattle, but I believe are more intelligent than any other breed of dog. They often win the Tux Dog Obedience and Game trials. The Australian Kelpies are often second, followed by Poodles (believe it or not) and Labradors.

## Training

Much of the above shows that a **good** dog needs very little training.

Dogs don't understand any language, so the sound you make has to indicate the message you aim to give. Training requires repeating the identical sound to do the same thing. Whistling can be used as a language. The same word, whistle or sound when louder sounds different, but when at a distant may have to be used.

If your dog does need a lot of training, use a short chain or rope to start with to guide it to your left and right following your voice and arm commands and to "come behind" to the command and by patting your hand on your thighs. Then use a long light rope to allow the dog more movement and to see if your training is working. Try each on its own to ensure that the pup understands both. Once trained, either command could, where necessary, be used on its own.

The first thing to train it to do is to come when you call it, the second to Sit, the third to follow you closely, the fourth what 'No' means, the fifth to work animals well away from them (not in close which can cause animals to run), to Bark, to Go Home, not to bite animals unless told to and then only the hocks, to Jump over fences, to Stay There until told to move. You must have control and show control of your dogs all the time. When you are walking it must be at your side and slightly behind you. If you are having difficulty controlling it have it on a lead with a narrow collar just behind its ears (at the top of the neck), where it doesn't have much strength, not down towards its body where it has more strength. If it disobeys, give an immediate short sharp pull with a command if necessary. You won't train many dogs in minutes or hours. It takes weeks or months. Your being consistent is the most important thing.

The right arm and hand raised straight up and "Get away" means go further straight back. Raised to the right and the same command means further back to your right. The left hand raised to the left means go to the left.

An arm to one side moved up and down with the hand pressing down with the command means Sit. They will usually not sit, but lie down which is fine. Sit is an essential command, useful when the dog is getting out of control after which start again by first calling its name.

"Stay there" means sit or lie down, but for much longer, so she would find a comfortable place to lie down, perhaps under a hedge within a few metres of where she was given the command. Here she chose the hay barn. Training to do this requires a mature dog that has gained your confidence, some shade (one can't expect a dog to stay for long in the sun) and a rope tied to a stake in the ground to train it to Stay there.



In all cases of hand and arm commands both must be moved, because from a distance a stationary arm or hand will not be seen as easily, if at all. Animals seem to have difficulty identifying objects that don't move. Whenever possible use a full moving arm command with the verbal one, then when they are out of hearing because of distance, wind and/or old age they will know what to do. If you are a long way away and with a bad background, it is easier for them to see a continuously moving arm than one moved once, then left motionless. Tip could work against the wind at three quarters of a mile by hand commands. I remember the distance because it was before metric and was the distance to the top of a hill half

way down our farm where I would tell her to sit when I was working there during the day, and then at milking time I could direct her by hand to fetch the cows. She would sometimes go for the cows before I gave the command, but it was usually because I was late. Apologies for the old photo taken in 1957.

You must be able to tell dogs to “Jump over” a fence. Train them to this by covering the fence with a sack or similar and calling them over. You must also be able to get them to leave the paddock or area. “Jump over” pointing to the nearest fence will do this, or “Go home”, and then when far enough away, call Stay there.

When helping a ewe to lamb, after you have caught the ewe with the help of the dog which will strong eye them while you walk up quietly from behind and catch it, tell the dog to “get out”, then “sit”. Lay the ewe down and have something to throw over her head so she can't see you.

Some need to be kept a bit hungry while working (Tip didn't) and need to be given a portion of a dog biscuit to get them to obey the “ Tip, here” or “ Tip, come in behind” commands, especially in the early training days.

Calling their name first is necessary sometimes and certainly when working more than one dog, or you can use words for one dog and whistles for the other.

When training them, never let an animal run them down or gore them, which can scare them for life. Training new pups is best done with “trained” animals. Moving animals to new feed every time soon trains them to come. Just a call and most animals will follow you. The dog can bring the new animals and any stragglers. Once you have trained animals to come when you call them, a new pup can be easily trained to follow them and if it has any heading instinct it will bring them all to you.

Good dogs love working so even when all your animals and dog are trained always try and walk in front of the mob being moved. It allows you to open gates as required and control their speed. A long rod helps keep them behind you. If you have difficulty call the dog to walk with you, but be careful, especially with sheep, that they don't all turn back and go the other way.

Electric fence shocks can also scare dogs. When a new dog arrives on the farm turn the energiser off or to the lowest power so that the shock they will get is not too tough on them. Remember the “No” command to go with any shock they may get.

Have you ever got to the back of the farm and remembered a phone call you should have made? A useful thing we had Tip do was to “Go to Auriel”, my wife's name and “Go to Vaughan”. We could then send messages tied to her collar such as “Phone vet, 33 is sick” or “Stuck. Phone Archie.” Archie Raitt was a wonderful neighbour who pulled my tractor out of the peat bog much more often than I pulled his out.

Training her to do this was easy because when in the garden I gave the command and Auriel called her, then visa-versa. She soon got the message and was rewarded with a cuddle or biscuit. We then increased the distance and she went to Auriel and back to me from a kilometre several times with messages attached to her collar. I always felt good knowing Tip could do this should I have an accident. Mobile phones weren't available then.

Recently there has been cases where farmers had accidents or were killed. If they could tell their dog to go to their spouse, who if there was no message tied to the dog, would realise that there's a problem, and say to their dog go to (name) and follow it, saving a lot of time searching.

Bringing animals quietly to the owner has been bred into heading dogs for who knows how long. Tip was a header, so a command or an arm gesticulation could get her bringing every animal in sight. One foggy morning when about six months old I told her to “Get away back”, but no cows came for milking until I fetched them myself. After two days searching our long narrow farm and still no Tip, I started inquiring around the neighbourhood. On that foggy morning she had taken the neighbour's cows to their dairy and she was so good that they wanted to keep her.

Do you know that dogs can help you count sheep? Move the animals towards a corner of the paddock, then allow them to move away along a fence in a thin line, using the dog to stop any going behind you.

Being able to select the best pup from a litter may not be possible. Tip was the last of the litter and was returned for a refund at four months of age by a previous buyer before I bought her because, “She was no blimming good.” The breeder told me this years later, when I was raving about how good she was.

I prefer short-haired dogs. Border collies can have short or long hair. If long, keep it cut in hot weather.

### **Teaching Tip to bark**

Because she was a strong-eyed header she only barked when told to (some never bark), or if really

upset. In the beginning, on foggy mornings she would bring perhaps only half the cows, so I would have to send her back again. So I taught her to bark so the cows would know she was there and come.

After much persuasion I got my wife Auriel, with a dark blanket draped over her to look like a small monster without a head, make a strange noise as she crawled slowly towards Tip. I stood next to Tip and showed fear and encouraged her to bark and said, "Speak". When she barked, I said, "Good girl" and stroked her. She loved being stroked. She soon learned to bark at the command "Speak". I didn't have a hand command. Possibly both in the air would work.

### **Teaching to find things**

If you can't find the foetus of an aborted cow, walk the paddock with your dog to search for the foetus. If the dog finds it give it a biscuit and say slowly and clearly "foetus." After a few times the dog will go searching each time you say foetus.

Carrying a biscuit is always a good idea to give to your dog as a reward, or just when you call it to you.

Bury the foetus and all soil with blood on it in case it is infectious.

Another reason for carrying a biscuit is to stop your dog from eating the placenta, which should also be found and buried, to avoid dogs from spreading possible infections.

### **Problem dogs**

Dogs are like people - all are different. Owners have to learn how to handle them. Some need more firmness and some more directions and some need more gentleness like the one bought by a USA farmer. She was very shy and would run away or back home if shouted at. When this was realised and a soft gentle command was given and without saying anything more she brought the animals to him. She ended up "a delightful dog" and bonded well with the owner and tried to do the right things.

Dogs have been used by man for about 20,000 years and mostly aim to please. If the dog is not pleasing you, look at yourself. What are you doing wrong? Losing your temper is a common reason. Once you do that, your voice and emphasis change so the dog doesn't know what you are talking (or shouting) about, so it is your fault. Control yourself and you'll be amazed. I've seen many dogs that wanted to do the right thing, but not know what the boss wanted. Sometimes one has to call the dog in gently and stroke it, talk to it, calm down yourself and start again.

Taking care of your working dog, or your pet, is very important. The parvovirus is an acute, highly contagious virus spread from dog to dog, or through the environment. It is most dangerous to puppies under four months, through can be contracted at any age.

**Parvovirus** is extremely painful, destroying the gut lining and often causing blood poisoning. It can be treated with intravenous fluid, anti-vomiting medicine, pain relief and antibiotics, at a cost of \$500-\$1,000. It can often be fatal. Symptoms include being off food and very quiet, progressing to vomiting, diarrhoea and weakness.

It is strongly recommended that people vaccinate their pups against this deadly virus, which is mostly seen in December, January and February.

### **Housing & feeding**

Tip was never tied up. She had a pen on concrete with a raised wooden platform, sacks to lie on, a leak-proof roof and water in shade. It was handy to the house so that I could let her out to fetch the cows sooner than if walking to the dairy to let her out. She was also close for any emergency such as being told to sit at the road entrance when other animals were being moved along the road or when required to chase neighbours' stock out.

She was also closer to "her family" which was us and our children. To get in she was told to "trap" once, and after a look to see if I really meant it, she would push through hanging inverted U shaped 6 mm (3/8") steel rods swung on fence staples which allowed the rods to only move inwards. This saved me going to her pen to open and close a door behind her. To let her out the rods could be raised with a length of bailing twine or thin rope to a suitable point at the house. Auriel would place her food and milk there so Tip trapped willingly. Auriel washed her troughs regularly.

Remember to control ticks, fleas and worms and to ask your veterinarian about any vaccination necessary.

Rat and other poisons can kill dogs so ensure that poisons are safe ones always placed in small secure tins or pipes that dogs can't access, and ask neighbours to do the same. You can be visiting a neighbour with your dog on the back, and in seconds it can be off and eating a poison. The blue block rodent poison killed a friend's dog. They can also kill Moreporks that eat poisoned rats.

Puppies need three feeds a day, grown dogs just one. They need good food (gluten-free dog biscuits and/or meat and bones to chew) every day, but only sufficient that they finish it. One can tell how much by how fat or thin the dog becomes. Aim for a happy medium. Avoid most Chew Bones. Use genuine bones from beef.

Most pet foods contain far more omega-6 fats from grains which are not dog or cat food, than omega-3 fats from animal and sea foods, your pet may benefit from safe mercury-free fish oil that has omega 3. A deficiency of omega-3 fats in your cat or dog can result in stunted growth, eye problems, muscle weakness and a lack of co-ordination. Feeding omega-3 can give an itch-free shiny coat.

**Scratching a lot:** A dog's itchy skin making them scratch a lot can be from low zinc, a damaged liver from some toxins such as mercury, manganese, lead, arsenic, aluminium, yeast, gluten, or from dry skin caused by washing them with bad cheap soaps or detergents. Use no soaps, or use a little EGO QV Skin Lotion for dry skins, or Ego QV Bath oil, both are safe and available from chemists.

New Zealand's west coast fish has less mercury than from the north East Coast, especially close to White Island where there are mercury pools under the sea. Old deep sea fish have more mercury than younger surface feeding fish. Sardines have the least. See Human Health Elements > Mercury.

Gluten causes many problems. Foods containing grains almost always include barley and oats that don't have gluten naturally, but become contaminated from wheat or barley from wheat harvesters, transporters and/or storage bins.

Changing an animal's diet too quickly can result in diarrhoea.

I mentioned to avoid gluten. Most of it comes from wheat. Another reason for avoiding it is because so much wheat is sprayed with Roundup to desiccate it for sooner and faster harvesting, so all people should also avoid all wheat products. Most sugar cane and sugar beet are also sprayed with Roundup. Read Toxins, and about it and Gluten in Human Health.

## Summary

- Choose a short name with two strong syllables like Tip, Dog, Bert, Bess, not soft ones like Fluff.
- GOOD working dogs can save you thousands of dollars in time, bad ones can cost you.
- Buy only good dogs from a long family line of good workers, not one from a mate who got it from another mate, etc. Decide whether you want a Header (usually only brings animals to you) Strong-eyed (can be very versatile), Hunterway (which have been bred to take animals away), or an all rounder which may be a cross Header/Hunterway, which I don't like because they can throw to either side, or an all rounder from a long line bred this way. Before buying one, see its parents working and ask to speak with others who have full brothers and sisters from the same parents because even if both parents are the type you want their offspring may not be.
- Give a dog a chance before condemning it.
- Get your dog loving you. Feeding, stroking, care and speaking to it nicely achieve this.
- Write down your chosen commands (see end of this section), take them with you until learned, and be consistent.
- To be good, most dogs need plenty of work. They will never be good if used only once a week.
- Like children, train them young. A teenager is usually untrainable!
- Like children, don't let them learn a bad habit because it will take a lot of curing. One is working in too close to animals, especially sheep, then when one breaks from the mob because of close pressure, the dog can go after it and bowl it over, bite it, etc. Don't allow dogs in close right from the beginning when training.
- If you repeat commands they'll wait for the repeats. Say it once, unless there is a good reason to repeat it. This doesn't apply to arm commands that may have to be repeated for the animal to identify it from a distance.
- Don't think you can train a new pup by having it work with an older one which has bad habits. While it is a good system if all goes well, a well bred pup is better allowed to develop its own skills rather than learn faults such as going in too close to animals.
- Training and working one dog is a skill, working two or more together, while common on large

sheep and cattle ranches, is a skill that few people have, and certainly not beginners. If you have more than one dog, take only one, and remember the more pups you have the longer it will take to train them and the worse they'll be. Practise makes perfect.

- Close all working dogs up when you are not home and at night or they may do more than work your neighbours sheep, poultry, etc. Dog pens are better than chains and safer if there are stray dogs that could attack yours.
- Treat them kindly and they'll love you and show it in their work and the look in their eyes as they look at yours. All they ask for is to be rewarded after work just with a stroke or cuddle and good food - and not too much.
- When you get a driving licence you read the vehicle and driving test instruction books first, not after you have had a crash or run out of fuel. BEFORE buying a dog, read as many sheep and cattle working dog books as possible. They are usually quick, easy and enjoyable reading.

New Zealand farmers seldom go anywhere on their farm without their dog, so they become good friends. Do you know what I missed most after retiring from the farm to town? Certainly not milking or driving the tractor, but training and working dogs. Tip was the only really good one I had, however good breeders and dog trial competitors have many excellent dogs. Don't settle for less than the best. Some will learn nothing, others just to fetch and some just to take them away.

Have you noticed how New Zealand farmers have "working" dogs and "work" their grazing animals, including their dairy cows sometimes. I know that "working" grazing animals is completely foreign and difficult to understand by those who have never done it, but take your pick, have your animals work for you to improve and maintain good pastures, or you have to work for them. "Working" doesn't mean slave driving, it just means using your animals to clean up weeds and improve pastures that will make them better for the next grazing. If not applying lime-plus and correct fertilisers based on pasture analyses, grazing won't control weeds. See Elements > Calcium and Weeds.

I repeat, good dogs love working and obliging. Tip naturally went wide, she naturally brought every animal out of the paddock, she naturally bit only hocks, she naturally bowled over stray animals she was chasing off the farm, etc. She was a natural wonder, so buy a good dog, not one that takes ages to train and is never as good as the best.

To get a dog to work well for you, you have to work mainly on yourself - to be consistent, to keep having the dog do all the things you have trained it to do (you can't give it a command you haven't used for a year and expect it to respond), and to not change your pitch when you get upset by the dog or by what an animal does.

## Commands

To save you going through the article again, here is a list of commands in approximate order of importance and learning. Add your extras to it. In each case call the dog's name first, essential if more than one, although this is mainly to attract their attention so will not always be necessary, and won't be used when urgent. The emphasis must always be on the actual instruction.

Noooo, Sit, Stay their, Come behind, Jump over, Get out, Speeaak, Good dog, Get away back, Take'em away, Left, Right, Fetch'em out, Bloat, Bight'em, Go home, Go to spouse's name, Go to other spouse's name, and Trap.

Each command will be just a sound to the dog so must be quite different in sound and length and must not be changed when you are in a hurry, tired, cross with the dog, or in a bad mood.

Dogs trained to whistles have more difficulty working for other people, as do the people learning the various whistles because while whistles are very good, they are not a language which can be written and taught to humans. Many very good handlers of dogs use whistles extremely well. Dogs can hear the high pitch of whistles at a long distance, however there are so many commands necessary (15 for a well-used good dog) that to be able to whistle them all is difficult, the wind can be against one and some people can't whistle. For those, there are shepherds' whistles made of plastic on a string which hangs around the neck. To me using one is unhygienic and a pain because every time you want to give a command you have to put it in your mouth. If you can make 20 different whistles, good luck, but like everything, their can be a mixture. Noooo is the most important command to avoid a mistake and disaster. Calling a dog to you can be the second to most important command so a high pitched long whistle can be useful and should be taught as well as "Come behind" and patting your side. Sheep dog

trialists in they're highly professional trials use sticks to point and indicate, but who wants to carry a stick, when arms will do. Both depend on the dog watching you as well as what they are doing, and there are trees and hedges which can block views.

Tip would work for anyone who was told the voice and hand commands. She loved working.

As far as dogs not having good eyesight, humans love saying that we have better everything than animals and birds, but trials have shown otherwise. Tip could see my arm command from a kilometre when she couldn't hear me because of wind and/or machinery, and she understood and made fewer mistakes from arm commands of left, right, go away (arm straight up vertically) and come here (arm down and patting my side).

### **Most dogs like people**

Most breeds of dogs have been domesticated for a long time, and like people, because they feed them, provide accommodation, security and friendship.

### **Developing a friendship**

Suggestions for enhancing your relationship with a dog through touch -

- Always ask the dog's owner before interacting with one you don't know.
- Let your dog initiate contact most of the time, rather than invading its personal space. Some dogs need a little time to settle themselves before getting physically close enough to be touched.
- Pet it gently on the chest or behind the ear closest to you. Always avoid reaching over it which can be threatening until it is tame to you and confident.
- It is not good to hug a dog. Some dogs tolerate it, but it's a form of constraint, which is threatening to some. Watch for what it likes.
- Watch for stress signals, such as looking away, lip licking, yawning, ears back, "whale eye" (the white of the eye showing at the corners and/or rim), lifting a paw, tail tucking, freezing, or urination. If your dog is doing one or more of these things, stop touching it and allow time.
- Stop petting it after a short time and see if it asks for more, or seems relieved and/or moves away.

In all interactions with animals, we should pay attention to the impact we're having on them. Each one is an individual, so while one may love a vigorous rubdown, another may be completely stressed out by that type of handling.

There are dogs that have anxiety and fear about being approached by strangers. It could be nervous or had been abused. By observing your dog's reaction to physical contact and following its lead, you can enhance your bond with it and forge a positive relationship.

Working dogs work better for people they like, so if taking a strange dog to do something, start off by sitting down on your haunches to its level for a while and stroke it and tell it what a good dog it is. When it moves away, call its name and stroke it again, so that you can call it to you. Talk to it along the way so it becomes accustomed to you and your voice. A bit of biscuit (containing meat and no wheat) occasionally also helps, especially after the dog has done well. Some trainers say this is bribing. It is not, it is rewarding or tipping as an indication of appreciation for a good job done and to encourage good work in the future. Fully trained dogs seldom need anything except a stroke.

Almost all dogs respond to a whistle, so if further away than your voice can carry, whistle to attract its attention, then give an arm command.

Many old dogs go deaf so arm commands will again be useful.

After doing a good job I would call her "Tip, here" with both hands out towards her and she'd run at high speed for the strokes and scratching she knew she'd get. It is amazing how much working dogs will do just for a stroke.

### **Don'ts**

**Never** pat dogs or animals, because it is similar to hitting. Stroking resembles licking that they do to each other and was done to them by their mother. It can be easy for it to misinterpret some dislike signs, such as patting. The result can be a bad relationship or could even be dangerous.

Don't hug dogs and don't bare your teeth at a dog.

Don't look straight at the eyes of a strange dog, because it is threatening, and may then attack you.

When a variety of people may work a dog - spouses, children and employees arm commands are

useful, because they are the same from all people and all dogs to see. Voices vary a little, while whistles are the hardest for people to imitate and dogs to understand from a different person, especially from a child.

Some say that working dogs need a lot of training. Well-bred Border Collies work instinctively from a young age, sometimes from five months. Before buying one, make sure it is a well bred one. Why do I stress this? Your time is too valuable to spend TRYING to train a no-hoper and your animals are too valuable to have them driven through fences or onto main roads or into creeks.

The saying, "The fastest way to move animals is slowly" has to be taught to some dogs. Do so early right from the beginning. Bad habits should not be allowed, then they won't have to be broken.

When not working, keep dogs in kennels or under control because the desire to work animals is so strong in most good dogs that they are inclined to work yours, and worse still those of a neighbour.

Jim Snyder, Edmore, MI, USA, wrote "Electric fence keeps our Great Pyrenees in with no problem. She was zapped once and never went close again. We have a 100 mile (160 km) AC electric fencer with 4 to 8 high tensile wires and 4 ground rods 10' deep."

A sheep farmer on the Internet wrote, "Since I discovered the benefit of trained stock-dogs - border collies for herding, Pyrenees for guarding, my life has become much more enjoyable."

Talking about enjoyable reminds me that Tip was happiest when Auriel and I were out on the farm together with her. We loved it too. We both still miss her even after 40 years. She was so lovely and so much one of our whole family and friends. I think that she reciprocated our love to her by aiming to please to the nth degree.

Those were days when there was almost no aggression (crime) in New Zealand. I wonder what Tip would have done had anyone tried to attack either of us, which brings us to guard dogs.

## **Guard dogs**

Using guard dogs to protect sheep from wolves has been done in some countries for centuries. In New Zealand we have the occasional town or wild dog causing problems, but there were no animals of any kind here before people brought them, so we have no problems with lions, wolves, coyotes or even dingoes. Therefore I can't help much with experience on the use of guard dogs, except to say that there are special breeds and they must be trained by rearing them on their own with sheep and with minimum human contact. Black Mouth Curs have been reported to be very good.

In Poland I saw a farmer looking after his flock of 50 sheep all day. He locked them in a building at night because there were no fences. He had a German Shepherd (Alsatian) dog with him, because while able to do limited herding, it could also discourage predators of any type from wild dogs to bears, something a Border Collie would have difficulty doing.

I've been told that even some well bred guard dogs with correct training are failures, many are dangerous, some kill animals and can attack strangers (humans). Each one can protect only a small flock and some apparently stray away and do some killing themselves.

High power electric fencing is used in many countries now to keep sheep in and wild dogs out. It can also be used to help keep guard dogs in and make it easier for them to protect sheep.

Train your children to be aware of guard dogs (yours and others) because you don't want them injured.

There are books written on guard dogs. Learning costs little and saves lots. See the USDA bulletin "Livestock Guarding Dogs" on the web and search for "Guard dogs" and read not only the sales pages.

Advice from FW Owen of Ohio is, "Don't rely too much on dogs. Dogs are OK, but are short-lived creatures with as many foibles as their owners. If the perimeter fence is a properly constructed, high tensile, low impedance, high power, electric fence, and continuous, then predators should not be a problem. (See GrazingInfo > Fencing, for full details.)

"There are coyotes and feral dogs living in this area in great numbers but they are not getting into my paddocks. A two or three wire fence that will keep calves in, will keep dogs out, if it's properly constructed and frequently inspected.

The purpose of frequent inspections are to -

1. Find places where digging under it may be occurring.
2. Find and adjust the bottom wire where it is the improper distance from the ground
3. Run down any grass (with a 4-wheeler) that may be touching the fence.

“By ‘properly constructed’ I mean that the lower wire is pulled down to a fence anchor at the low spots, and the fence is absolutely continuous around the perimeter of the farm.

“The electric fence should not have any traditional gates to the outside world. Everything must be electrified.

“The best way to gain access with a tractor or four wheeler, is to use "pin lock insulators."

Unpin the fence and drop the wires where access is needed. I always do this "hot". I keep a claw hammer with a fiberglass handle in the tool box of tractors and 4-wheelers that I can use to hold the hot fence while pulling and replacing pins.

“At places where I frequently cross the perimeter fence I keep a pair of heavy wood fence posts to put over the fence so it does not grab the drawbar pins.

“Even in the worst case, it would be hard for predators to penetrate more than one or two paddocks from the outside of a correctly fenced farm.”

Some say that it is best to use both good high power electric fencing with good Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGD), which while still not 100% effective, will give some protection. Coyotes can sometimes find low places that have not had the bottom wire pulled down enough.

If larger predators such as lions are present and might jump the electric fence, then put electrified flexible offsets (ones hooked on to the live wires or onto posts going both ways) on both sides right from the beginning. Once animals learn to do something, it is harder to stop them. Half a million deer are farmed in NZ and many are controlled with high power electric fencing. Offsets work wonders with them, other wild animals, and to keep some people out.

One sheep farmer said he didn't want anyone shooting the coyotes in his neighbourhood, because his LGDs have the coyotes trained to avoid his pastures and if those coyotes get killed, new coyotes will move in and he could lose a few sheep before the guard dogs get the new coyotes trained to stay away.

Apparently coyotes can live on grain and other animal feeds that have been spilt or left lying around. This can be put out for them in an area not fenced to keep them out, and they can then be watched for and shot. This will be horrid to some people and I understand it, but in human settled and farmed areas there is no room for coyotes and no need for them, as there could be in wild areas where they may help maintain a balance and clean up carcasses and sick animals.

A farmer wrote that his LGDs “take the stock (pigs, sheep & poultry) out on pasture during the day, guard them, move them about and then bring them back in the evening. We have bears, cougars, coyote packs, fishers and more.

Nothing messes with our livestock as the dogs will make lunch of them. We have six LGDs, which means there are always enough out with the animals (3 to 5) that you would have to be insane or rabid to try going for livestock. The dogs are very protective and I've seen them bring all the stock back into the central coral when there was a threat - without my saying or doing anything”.

Some set their boundaries so will urinate and leave faeces along the boundaries to deter predators.

One dog won't cover many paddocks, so many dogs will be needed on a big area.

The more sheep, the more guard dogs needed.

## **Donkeys**

Most donkeys are aggressive towards dogs so can be used to protect poultry and animals. If working dogs are used on the farm, the donkeys should be trained to accept them and visa versa. Train donkeys by having them in adjacent paddocks for a few weeks to accustom them to the animals concerned. Don't put more than one donkey in a paddock. During lambing remove the donkey to an adjacent paddock so that it doesn't become protective of the newly born and chase the dam away. Use geldings, not Jacks.

One farmer wrote, “I keep a donkey in each paddock. If they sense danger they round up the animals and start their heehawing.”

At least one donkey killed a coyote.

Google for ‘Guard donkey poultry’

Also read Llama guards below.

## **Llamas**

Llamas live to 15 years, so can provide an effective, long-term, economical predator control for sheep and goats with quite high levels of protection. Llamas have been credited by producers with eliminating or reducing losses to large predators such as bears and mountain lions, however some

predators may be too large or too aggressive for a llama. Llamas have been known to alert herders of large predator attacks. No training or previous association with sheep or goats is required for a llama to be a guard animal.

Gelded llamas are recommended because intact males can attempt to breed the ewes, which could cause deaths or injuries. Gelding a mature intact llama should be done by a vet, and several months before introducing it to the flock to assure that he has lost interest in breeding.

Some have had success with female llamas guarding sheep. Females are very aggressive toward strange canines, and several female llamas with sheep in paddocks that are not hundreds of hectares, have prevented predation of sheep.

A single llama with each flock is more effective than two or more llamas. Llamas tend to bond with each other and may ignore what is happening to the flock.

### **Human health & care**

With all dogs humans must be careful about getting internal and external parasites from them. Children can get infected from them. In foreign countries, don't even touch a dog to avoid rabies, or the sheep worm that is a danger to humans, called hydatids. Special care is needed with this because dogs are the secondary host. In hydatids areas never feed raw offal or raw meat to dogs because it can spread hydatids, which is a dreadful thing in humans.

People can get leptospirosis from humans, cattle, deer, pigs, sheep, dogs, possums, rats and mice, any of which can infect humans through touch or one drop of urine. Animals and humans are infected by bacteria in the urine of an infected animal entering their body, either through the mouth, eyes or a cut in the skin. Once in the body, the bacteria usually establish and multiply in the kidneys and can be excreted in the urine for years, which may infect other animals. Water sources can be contaminated by bacteria in urine from livestock, rodents and wildlife.

Leptospirosis can recur for many years causing fever, upset stomach and flu-like symptoms every two to three weeks, then clear up again until the next attack, which could be brought on by some other infection. cats and rodents. Read Leptosporis. Be very careful and speak with your vet re other problems and vaccinations necessary in your area for yours.

If a dog attacks someone and you are handy and bigger than the dog, grab it by the back leg and hold it in the air well away from you until the owner or police chain it up. However, be very careful because vicious dogs have killed people.

If you have to stop dogs fighting, don't try to do so manually because you are likely to get bitten by both dogs because they become wild and won't know which side you are on. Shout commands at them and/or throw water over them from a safe position. If you hit one with a stick it is likely to attack you.

### **Dog health**

Dogs that consume too much calcium and carbohydrates may begin to suffer from orthopaedic disorders caused by improper nutrition. The excess calcium causes a dog's bones to grow fast and abnormally, particularly if this type of malnutrition occurs while the growth plates in its bones are still active. Dogs that suffer from malnutrition-based orthopaedic disease are usually not starved or neglected, but can be simply fed an unbalanced diet by their owners. Some people have a craze for calcium. Taking it has caused many people to suffer ill-health and even die, because there is already plenty in greens and other foods. When consulting and visit farms feeding calcium to cows, their health improves dramatically after I stop them feeding calcium.

You should also avoid Macadamias in all forms because of their mercury content. One nut has killed dogs and cats. Grapes and raisins can cause irreversible damage to dog's kidneys, with possible deaths. Avoid Roundup which is in wheat, sugars, etc. Read Roundup.

### **Gluten**

Grains are not what dogs would eat naturally, and wheat was modified to increase the protein which is the gluten, in about 1950 by USA.

In April 2007, Nestle Purina PetCare Company, which manufactures their 71-year-old brand, wrongly wrote that dogs are not allergic to gluten, but many dog owners disagree. One dog owner wrote, "This is a damage to the small intestine from intolerance to gluten, the protein part of wheat. There are many similarities to celiac disease in people, although the intestinal damage and clinical signs are less severe

in dogs. Gluten-sensitivity is prevented by feeding a 100% gluten-free diet.”

“Signs of this disorder are usually apparent by about 6 months of age. Affected dogs fail to gain weight normally, or they start losing weight, and some develop smelly diarrhoea.

“This disorder is treated by always feeding a nutritionally balanced gluten-free diet. Typically the symptoms clear up within 4 to 6 weeks of the diet correction.” Dogs can improve in health and even in nature to be, in one owners words, "A different dog". Meaning it was much better in every way. Wheat is not natural for dogs or cats, nor are any grains. Rice is the least problem, but keep the volume down. They need meat.” End. See Human Health > Gluten.

The same applies to cats. Some are allergic to gluten. Both are allergic to Macadamia nuts. Many dogs vomit them up. We no longer eat macadamias in any form (even biscuits) because of their high mercury content, that gives me boils or pimples. Macadamia trees bring mercury up, just like Brazil nut trees bring up selenium, and unfortunately also lead, so should not be eaten. Poplars bring up zinc in the leaves and bark which are no problem. Deer eat poplar bark.

If you want your dogs to be healthier and slimmer, cut out all sugars. Some cane sugars and some beet sugars contain Roundup, applied to dry the plants for easier harvesting.

### **Digestive difficulties**

Dogs that suffer from malnutrition may also suffer secondary dietary distress from the condition, making it even more difficult for the dog to digest food. Malnourished dogs may suffer from vomiting or diarrhoea. Treatment of malnourished dogs with these conditions should start with providing it easy-to-digest foods like mince.

### **Toxicities**

Unbalanced diets may lead dogs to develop dietary imbalances that cause toxicities in their system. Dogs may suffer vitamin A toxicity if fed too much liver, while phosphorus toxicity can be caused by a deficiency in calcium in a dog's diet, weakening its bones and teeth. Read ‘The Effects of Malnutrition on Dogs’

### **Sad ends**

When Tip was about eight years old, she was slowing down a little. We had to move a bull along the road one day, so took a few cows as company. We drove the car slowly behind them, while Tip kept them moving in the right direction and could get them to keep left. Suddenly the bull kicked out sideways at Tip. She was knocked under the front wheel of my car. We were devastated. We got her into the car, the cattle into a paddock, and called the vet. She was obviously in pain so he gave her a painkiller, and suggested X-rays and fuller examination in his surgery. These showed serious internal injuries, for which nothing could be done, so he put her out of her pain. Burying her on the farm of which she had been a part was heartbreaking. Without her willing and untiring help we would not have achieved what we did. New Zealand working dogs are famous - Tip was the queen of them all.

A much sadder story I heard on a radio program about working dogs shows their obedience. Sheep were being brought on barges from one of the islands around New Zealand. Some jumped overboard so the dog was sent swimming to head them off. When it was in front of the sheep the shepherd gave the command to “sit”. The dog did and was never seen again. This was an example of dogs’ loyalty to people and a lesson in thinking before commanding.

As with many animals, humans are frequently the limiting factor of what animals can do.

### **Townie pet dogs**

These get taken for walks for exercise and for the owner’s exercise! On roads, you should walk facing the oncoming vehicles with the dog on your side, away from the road. They should be trained to stay within a few metres.

Some use retractable leashes which are a length of thin cord wound around a spring-loaded device housed inside a plastic handle. Dogs can learn that retractables allow them to pull and go where they like. The handles are bulky and can be pulled out of human hands, especially with a big dog accustomed to pulling when they want to go further, resulting in a runaway dog partly crossing a road or going into a garden, or to fight with another dog, which yours may kill. If yours is approached by an aggressive dog, it is nearly impossible to control the situation if yours is more than two metres from

you. The thin cord of a retractable leash can be broken by a big dog, spring back and injure the holder.

If your town dog is well trained, gentle mannered and smart enough to master a regular leash and a retractable leash without being confused, you could be one of the rare guardians who can walk your dog on any kind of leash without increasing risks to either one of you.

### People's best friend

This is indeed the case when one sees what cattle dogs, sheep dogs, and other dogs do for their owners, especially handicapped people, mostly aiming to please their owners. New Zealand and Australian large sheep and beef farmers couldn't survive without them, especially in hill country. Even on a small flat dairy farm, a good, controlled dog can save the farmer time which is money and give more contented cows than being pressured from a farm bike.

Tip and I were best friends. If you could've seen the look in her eyes when she looked into mine, you'd agree. This was in 1963 and a lump still comes to my throat. After moving to town, all I missed was our good dog.

Dogs have died from eating the blue rodent blocks rat poison. This Natural No Rats, safe rodent poison doesn't kill dogs, cats or Moreporks even if they eat the poison - killed rodents. Using traps saves using toxins.



Vaughan Jones, ONZM Queen's Honour in 2013, for services to farming.

Author and International Agricultural Consultant & Journalist.

99% record pass in Dairying University in 1948.

NZ Dairy Board's most Improved Dairy Farmer in Waikato 1959.

NZ Marketing Institute founder of 100 + and its first chairman.

Doubled sales, and exports for companies, including Gallagher from \$3m to \$23m in four years.

Represented New Zealand at Agricultural Journalist Congress in USA in 1992 & Austria in 1994.

Author and MD of [www.grazinginfo.com](http://www.grazinginfo.com) since 1970, was free to all who are mostly farmers, lifestylers and gardeners in many countries, especially USA including their university scientists.

There are 70 farming spreadsheets with software and 300 chapters of practical, natural, profitable farming methods. Seventy chapters are on Human Health, to help the third who are stressed and unwell. More than a hundred emails of thanks and testimonials have been received. All are free to copy and can be published at no charge, provided the source is acknowledged - please.