

# The English Shepherd Club

## Working Trait Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation form is to offer English Shepherd owners and breeders a means of sharing information about their dogs. Our hope is that by sharing this information, those of us committed to supporting and preserving English Shepherds as working farm dogs will be able to find dogs with the characteristics we need for work and for our breeding programs.



This evaluation is intended to be a starting point for discussion. It is not a “test” and there are no right or wrong answers. If you aren’t able to answer a particular question, you are free to skip it. If you want to write in a question or answer that isn’t offered in the “menu” of options, please do so. You are in the best position to know what information is important regarding your dog, so please take what is offered below and adapt it as necessary to share what you think will best convey the working qualities of your dog.

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**Owner’s Name/ Address:**

**Dog’s Name:**

**Birthdate:**

**Current age:**

**Registration:**

**Gender:** M / F

**Intact?** Yes / No

### How much exposure has this dog had to livestock work?

(Note: answers may vary from daily exposure for years on a farm, to a few times a year at herding clinics, to a one time instinct test. Indicating how much training time and experience a dog has had will help provide context for understanding what you have and have not been able to assess.)

**Livestock Worked:** please circle or check all that apply

Which characterizes your dog’s relationship to livestock he has worked:

Familiar to dog (on own farm)

Unfamiliar to dog (e.g., at clinic, trial, training facility)

Types of livestock worked :

Cattle – dairy / beef / range

Sheep – heavy / flighty

Goats

Pigs

Ducks

Other poultry

### In general, what do you like best about this dog?

(Feel free to insert extra pages as needed to fully answer these questions!)

### What would you like to improve?

(No dog is perfect. An ability to identify where each dog could use improvement is critical to maintaining the balance of traits necessary in each successive generation.)

## **Working Behavior**

There is a range in expression of most traits and many dogs will adjust their approach to suit the situation in which they are working. If possible, try to answer these questions in terms of what you observe to be the most natural or comfortable style for your dog, what comes easily for him.

### **Herding Drive**

Herding drive, or “keenness”, often increases as a dog gains experience working with livestock; consequently, this question may be difficult to answer if you lack access to livestock on a regular basis.

- Works livestock continuously if not supervised or kenneled
- Works livestock readily when needed
- Works livestock but easily discouraged
- Uninterested in working livestock

### **Herding Style**

Dogs often show a preference for either gathering or driving in their first exposures to livestock. Most stockdogs learn to do both in time. Which *natural* style best describes your dog?

- Gathering (naturally attempts to head off/ circle stock, move it to handler)
- Driving (dog keeps stock grouped while pushing stock away from handler)
- No preference

### **Power**

“Power” is reflected in the effect a dog’s presence has on livestock.

- Livestock are intensely aware of and respect dog at all times
- Livestock generally respect dog
- Dog lacks power to move challenging or stubborn stock

### **Stock Ethic**

The ability to take responsibility for and control a group of livestock without abusing them.

- Dog typically aggressive or rough in asserting control
- Dog maintains control appropriately, without causing undue stress in livestock
- Dog sometimes fails to assume responsibility for controlling livestock

### **Work Ethic** (may check more than one)

Commitment and perseverance while working.

- Stays with the job, maintains focus
- Somewhat distractible while working
- Easily discouraged, prone to quitting
- Will work independently if necessary (e.g., return escaped animals to pasture or pen)

### **Responsiveness, biddability**

Working ability requires both initiative and tractability in a dog; how these traits combine will influence how the dog works in partnership with his owner.

- Very responsive to guidance, control
- Somewhat responsive to guidance, control
- Resists guidance, control (argues about it)
- Unresponsive to guidance (ignores it)
- Inhibited by guidance, control (resents it)

**Approach**

The distance a dog prefers to work off of stock:

- Wide
- Moderately wide
- Close
- Shows preference for one of above (circled) but adjusts as necessary

**“Eye”**

- Loose (generally upright posture, free-moving style, less intense focus)
- Medium (more intense concentration but often upright and free-moving)
- Strong (very intense stare, lowered/ stalking posture, pauses in approach)

**Bark**

- Works silently
- Force barks (fairly quiet but readily barks to move stubborn stock)
- Sustained barking

**Bite**

Frequency (circle one): often / sometimes / seldom / never

Location (circle all that apply): heel / above hock / tail / neck / nose / ear

Appropriateness: bites as needed / bites excessively / reluctant to bite

Intensity on stock: hard bite / adjusts as needed / soft bite

- Unable to evaluate (biting inappropriate for stock used)

**Although not strictly “herding” related, the following behaviors may contribute to a working farm dog’s usefulness**

Please circle number that best describes your dog’s position on the following scales (from 1 – 4):

**Orientation:**

Primarily interested in livestock 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 Livestock second to Owner

**Territoriality**

Frequently wanders off property 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 respects boundaries, stays home

**Patrol**

Does not patrol territory 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 constantly patrols territory

**Warning**

Ignores unusual situations 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 always barks to warn of unusual situations

**Defense of Property**

(note: “property” may include sacks of feed, vehicle, etc)

Does not attach importance to owner’s property 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 staunchly defends owner’s property

**Defense of People**

Indifferent, laidback 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 diligently protects owner, “watches your back”

**Tracking ability**

Does not track 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 will track by scent and find prey

**Predators**

Does not react to predators 1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 will always drive off predators

**Attitude towards newborn livestock**

Aggressive 1 ——— 2 — <neutral in behavior > — 3 ——— 4 shows gentle and/or protective nature

**Pest Control**

Shows no interest in pest control 1 — 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 routinely hunts rodents

## Structure and Movement

### Build:

- broad, stocky
- average
- light, leggy

### Movement:

- Smooth, effortless
- Average (efficient but not spectacular)
- Choppy and/or inefficient

### Agility, ability to maneuver quickly:

- Excellent
- Average
- Poor

### Coat (check all that apply):

- Frequent mats, tangles
- Excessive, very heavy
- Thin, inadequate for cold weather
- Low maintenance, good quality

### Tail:

- long tail
- docked tail
- natural bobtail (length: \_\_\_in.)

### Speed (when running):

- Very fast
- Moderately fast
- Slow

### Jumping ability:

- Exceptional (gravity defying)
- Average
- Limited

### Bite:

- Scissors bite
- Level bite
- Underbite
- Overbite

## Temperament

### Behavior towards unfamiliar (non-threatening) adults:

Confident      1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 fearful

Friendly, sociable    1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 aloof, disinterested

Mild    1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 aggressive

### Behavior towards family members:

Devoted, watchful      1 — 2 — 3 — 4 detached, independent

Affectionate    1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 stoic

### Activity Level:

Low      1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 very active, busy all the time

### Disposition:

Very calm      1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 very nervous

Very steady    1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 impulsive, reactive

Hard      1 ——— 2 ——— 3 ——— 4 soft

Thank you for participating in the English Shepherd Club's effort to compile and share information on dogs in the breed!  
Please return form to: The English Shepherd Club, 13131 Knaus Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034