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 is 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:

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 : (please circle or check all that apply)

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 (circle all that apply): bites as needed / bites excessively / reluctant to bite

Intensity on stock (circle all that apply): 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)

Tail: _____ long tail   _____ docked tail   _____ natural bobtail (length: _____in.

Movement: _____ Smooth, effortless _____ Average (efficient but not spectacular) _____ Choppy and/or inefficient

Speed (when running): _____ Very fast   _____ Moderately fast   _____ Slow

Agility (ability to manuever quickly): _____ Excellent   _____ Average _____ Poor

Jumping ability: _____ Exceptional (gravity defying)   _____ Average   _____ Limited

Coat (check all that apply):

_____ Frequent mats, tangles   _____ Excessive, very heavy

_____ Thin, inadequate for cold weather   _____ Low maintenance, good quality

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, C/O Darlene Partlow   2550 110th St. Stuart, IA 50250