

TRAINING COURSE

LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOG

BASIC COURSE

Knowing, understanding and integrating a livestock guardian dog into your farm environment

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Silvia Dalmasso

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

In extensive livestock farming systems, livestock guardian dogs are essential to keep sheep and goats safe from large predators. They are also used to protect other species, like cattle, horses and even poultry, not only against wolves, bears and lynxes, but also from foxes, martens and birds of prey. Guardian dogs are working dogs with specific behavioural and morphological characteristics: they must be reared and integrated properly to do their job well. Moreover, these dogs are large and strong willed, they are born and will work in freedom (not restrained by a leash or muzzle) and largely independently. Therefore, proper training is important, to prevent a resource from becoming a problem.

Traditional methods of raising guardian dogs are not particularly standardised and are mainly based on the presence of competent adult dogs from which the puppies learn; coercion is often used to punish unwanted behaviour and adult dogs that do not have the desired behavioural traits are eliminated. Apart from being ethically unacceptable, such methods produce very variable results and, in some cases, the dogs develop problems such as anxiety, fear and aggressiveness.

I have been working with guardian dogs for nearly twenty years. During that time, not only have I introduced numerous dogs to farms and then followed and visited them; I have also socialised and raised puppies with sheep and goats myself, and developed a method of rearing and training that not only works, but also respects the animal and its specific characteristics.

Based on existing knowledge about canine behaviour, the various stages in the development of puppies and animal welfare, and in the light of the most recent research into the cognitive processes of dogs, the aim of the course is to provide the basis for knowing and understanding guardian dogs. We will address the various aspects of raising, handling and training guardian dogs: we will follow their development from birth through to adulthood, and explore the aspects which are fundamental to ensuring the dog's psychological balance and successful integration into the farm environment.

We will visit the kennels to see some Maremmano Abruzzese Sheepdogs that live with a small flock of sheep and goats: this will give us an opportunity to study their personalities and the social interactions between different species, and to observe the way they are managed.



WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?

The course is for dog breeders and owners, dog trainers, vets and anyone interested in learning more about the history of guardian dogs, their characteristics, their use, and about good practices for breeding and handling these dogs and integrating them into the work environment.

PRICES AND ENROLMENT

The price of the course is **€ 150.00 per person**.

For those who are interested, the following day I will be available, by appointment, to conduct behavioural tests to assess your dog's character and to discuss any issues you have with handling and/or behaviour.

Once you have enrolled for the course, you will receive an e-mail telling you how to make an individual appointment. Prices are as follows:

€ 120.00 for the dog behavioural assessment only

€ 230.00 for the course + the dog behavioural assessment.

ENROL NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Places on the course are limited to 10, so that everyone has the opportunity to fully participate and have their questions answered.

For information and to enrol: lgd@cadelcucco.eu

LUNCH

When you enrol you will also be offered the opportunity to book a table for lunch on the day of the course, for **€ 20.00**.

The lunch break will be short, so we recommend booking a meal on the premises.

