



Livestock Farming

Handout 20

Guard Dog

Anatolian Shepard Dog

Anatolian Shepherd dogs originate in the Anatolian plateau of Turkey. A plateau is a high, flat-topped mountain like Table Mountain. Summers are hot and dry, and winters are cold, but the Anatolian Shepherd Dogs live outside all year round. They were bred to guard sheep against predators and are still used for this purpose.

The breed still exists in Central Turkey. From ancient days they have defended sheep from dangerous animals like bears, and wolves. They have also been used as fighting dogs in wars, & as hunting dogs.

They are large, imposing dogs, but not too heavy and fat to run fast! Agility is an important factor - not size alone. They must be able to stalk & chase a cheetah! Anatolian shepherds reach maturity at around 4 years of age.

In Namibia & South Africa, Anatolian shepherd dogs are being used on farms to protect flocks of sheep & goats from jackal, caracal, leopard & cheetah. God created all the animals for a purpose. We only live on earth temporarily. Let's not shoot all the wildlife but use natural means like dogs to protect our assets! If we destroy all the small animals, the big predators will have no choice but to kill domestic animals for food.

The cheetah is the fastest land animal, able to accelerate from standstill to 80 km/h in only three seconds; its top speed is 120 km/h. Their spines bunch up and release as they run, and their hips are flexible. At top speed, a cheetah does not touch the ground for eight meters. It is flying! Cheetah is the most endangered African cat. If these cats see a big dog, they are unlikely to approach! This is a much better way of controlling them than using cruel traps or poison.

Temperament

Anatolian Shepherds are alert, observant, and intelligent dogs. They are protective & possessive towards their families and territory. Care should be taken when friends visit! Careful bonding with the owner is necessary in puppyhood, in order to control a large dog when it is grown. This breed will not suit a meek, unassertive owner! The dog must not take charge of the owner!

Anatolians excel at guarding flocks, and if they are to be used for this, they should not be treated as pets, but should live outside in all weathers with the flock, from a puppy. Thus the dog adopts the sheep as its family that it has to protect. One dog can protect a large flock of sheep.

If they are pets, then a big, secure yard is needed, and they should be taken for walks or runs every day.

Colour & appearance

All colour patterns and markings are acceptable, but the usual colours are fawn with a black mask, pinto, white and brindle. The dogs have black lips, a black or brown nose and muzzle. The almond shaped brown eyes may be outlined with black or brown.

The head is big & broad. Ears normally hang down but stand up when listening. The neck is thick & powerful.

Anatolians have a solid robust neck, and their legs are long and straight with muscular paws. Their tail hangs low and has a slight curl at the bottom.

The back is short in proportion to the leg length.

