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FEATURED STORY | *Cowdogs: Great Friends and Business Partners*

Cowdogs: Great Friends and Business Partners

Tammy Goldammer-Stuart has been ranching for most of her life, growing up on a cattle ranch in the Nebraska Sandhills, studying her family's cattle nutrition, reproduction, and economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia, working on cattle and feedlot programs for the University of Nebraska-North Platte, and now successfully running her family's cattle operation, Goldammer Ranch, in Lohman, Mo. Despite her vast experience, the last of these wouldn't be possible without the help of her cowdogs.

"Basically my cattle and ranching operation could not function without my cowdogs," said Tammy. "I don't have hired people. It's just my cowdogs and myself, and we get a lot more done. In a lot less time, than if we had a lot of people around."

Tammy breeds and raises Hangin' Tree Cowdogs, purebred working dogs bred specifically to work with cattle. The breed was developed by Gary and Choc Ericsson, by crossing the Catahoula Leopard Dog, the Border Collie, and the Australian Kelpie. It brings the best qualities of three breeds into one dog that has versatile mental and physical capabilities needed to work on a cattle ranch.

Hangin' Tree Cowdogs are agile, medium sized dogs. They have a strong bone structure that allows them to handle the physical demands of working cattle. They come in a variety of colors, from solid to merle, and have short coats to help withstand with heat and keep coat maintenance low.

"They're great friends and pals, but they're also really great business partners," Tammy said.

Tammy trains her cowdogs to hunt for, gather, and then bring cattle to her. The cowdogs are trained to bring or move the cattle to where she wants them to end up, using some bark and bite if necessary. Cowdogs have the instinct to work in a driving manner and will heel cattle to move them forward. They also have the instinct and drive to get in front of the cattle for turning and will head if it's necessary to turn the cattle back to the herd. Key components of Tammy's cowdogs' skills include the ability to listen naturally and be quick learners. A cowdog that is naturally easy to handle, generally is a good listener and will think about its work and not create unnecessary work or stress to the cattle.

"The dogs I want are willing to learn and listen, and do it naturally," said Tammy. "I like dogs that are easy to handle and get the job done."

THE DIFFERENCE FRESH FOOD CAN MAKE

Tammy, who has been feeding her dogs Exclusive™ since 2002, was an obvious choice to participate in the trial feeding of the new updated formulation of Exclusive Brand Pet Foods. She had been pushing for a product like it for years. Tammy had already realized the benefits of using feed that included probiotics for her cattle, and when talking to a Purina beef specialist, she suggested it would be nice if PMI Nutrition could reformulate their pet food line to include digestive health support. When the field trials finally came out, Tammy put eight of her cowdogs in the trial. Because of her background in research, she kept extensive records to both compare the overall difference feeding the new formula made and to compare how it affected cowdogs in a growing phase versus those in maintenance phase.

"The main things that I found in the food were that it has all the nutrient requirements that I want, it's formulated with select natural ingredients and they ate it and looked forward to it," said Tammy. "A dog food isn't gonna be worth anything if they don't eat it, and if they do eat it, it needs to have all the bells and whistles so they are able to perform well."

Tammy was also impressed with how her cowdogs performed on the new Exclusive™ formula during the coldest months of the year. They participated in the trial throughout December 2009 and January 2010, with extreme temperatures, wind chills and lots of snow, when a high calorie diet is a requirement. She measured the cowdogs' weights before, throughout, and after the trial and experienced good results.

OWNING AND TRAINING YOUR COWDOG

In addition to working with her own cowdogs, Tammy also breeds and trains dogs that she sells to others. All her breeding dogs have earned permanent dog registration status with the American Cowdog Association or the Hangin' Tree Cowdog Association/Registry. They have demonstrated they can effectively work cattle, work independently, grip both the head and heels, and have met the requirements of having short or slick hair and a docked tail.

Tammy also offers demonstrations, cowdog production days (Cowdogs Days), and training sessions for owners to observe and learn principles of training. Training sessions include tips and techniques on how to start a puppy, teach dogs to retrieve cattle, teach skills for pasture and corral work, evaluate and fix problems with bad habits, and use electronic collars. During training sessions, Tammy works with each cowdog, assessing their skills, and then has the owners participate in the training sessions so that they learn how to apply the skills being taught to their cowdog.

If you would like to learn more about Tammy and her cowdogs, have questions, or would like to see her cowdogs in action, visit Tammy's website at www.tammyscowdogs.com.

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PET TIPS | Training and Obedience Tips

Training and Obedience Tips

Owning a pet is supposed to be a rewarding experience, but without training man's best friend can turn into your worst nightmare. Whether you're training a new puppy or trying to teach your old dog new tricks, read the tips below for help on training and obedience.

All dogs are different and training styles might need to be tweaked and personalized, but in general there are some basic do's and don'ts.

- Do offer positive reinforcement to reward your dog for doing well
- Don't hit or yell, because this can cause fear and aggression
- Do find a quiet area with few distractions so your dog can focus on you and the training
- Do use a higher pitched, friendly voice when giving praise and a firm tone when offering corrections and commands
- Be consistent, training isn't going to work if you only do it sometimes–if there are multiple people in the household, make sure they all use the same methods and commands
- Be patient–it will take time and repetition for your dog to learn these new behaviors, but it will be worth it!

Sitting
How to sit is one of the first things you should teach your dog. It will help you control her behavior and is a base for many other commands. Keep commands simple, using only the word "sit."

Start out by using a leash to keep your dog from wandering off. Position your dog at your side and run your hand down its spine until you reach the hip joints. Say "sit," give a slight squeeze and gently push down until your dog is sitting. Stretch out the word "sit" the entire time you are pushing down. Once your dog is in the sitting position offer her praise. Repeat the process, and when your dog begins to respond to the command, try getting your dog to sit without pushing on her hips. Once your dog seems to have this down, try it without the leash.

Heeling/Walking on a Leash
While it's nice for dogs to be able to roam free in a yard, going on walks can be a great time for exercise and bonding for both you and your dog. Of course, it's easiest to train a dog to walk on a leash as a puppy, but don't give up on training if you have an older dog.

If your dog isn't used to wearing a collar, put it and the leash on while your dog is eating and let it hang loosely by your dog's side. This will help your dog associate the leash with something positive. Once your pet feels comfortable with the collar and leash, follow him around the house for a few minutes. Do this multiple times, for longer time periods each time, and then try the same thing outside.

Hold the leash in your right hand, with a treat in your left to coax your dog to walk along your left side. When you're ready to start walking, say "heel" to encourage your dog to walk forward. Praise your dog when he does well. If your dog tries to pull ahead of you, once it reaches the end of the leash say "heel" again and do a clockwise turn or U-turn and walk in another direction. This will force your dog in a new direction so he has to catch up to you. Praise your dog when he catches up. Keep doing this each time your dog tries to run ahead to teach it that it must stay by your side while walking. If your dog lags behind, try to verbally encourage it to come and give a gentle jerk on the leash if needed.

By giving the "sit" command each time you stop, you can train your dog to automatically sit when you stop walking. Your dog will become so used to doing this that you eventually won't have to say the command.

Chewing
Dogs chew for multiple reasons, but some of the most common are teething in puppies, improper confinement and boredom, separation anxiety and need for attention, improper chew toys, and lack of exercise. Supervising your dog while it's out in the house and making sure the objects you don't want chewed are unavailable is the first step in training.

Just like in humans, teething in puppies can be quite painful. Puppies begin to teeth between 5 weeks and 6 months old. To help ease the pain, wet an old washcloth with water and freeze it for a cold chew toy. Be sure to watch your puppy so it doesn't try to eat the cloth.

Dogs are very social animals and need a lot of physical and mental exercise. Leaving your dog alone in his or her crate or at home for extended periods of time will cause boredom. By giving your dog plenty of exercise and things to do, they will be less likely to find their own amusement such as chewing. If you must leave your dog in a cage make sure she can see out and has plenty of chew toys available.

Giving your puppy real shoes, clothes or household objects to chew on will only confuse her. Dogs can't tell the difference between your old things that don't matter and a new shirt or pair of shoes you love. Give your dog a variety of toys such as hard rubber ones, ropes, balls, and stuffed soft toys. If you catch your dog chewing on something she isn't supposed to, interrupt her with a loud noise. Don't punish or yell at your dog after the fact, even if it has only been a few minutes, because your dog won't understand or associate the punishment with chewing.

To stop your dog from chewing on objects you can put a taste deterrent such as Bitter Apple® on it to make it less appealing.

Barking
Barking is how dogs communicate, so when they get excited, scared, lonely, hungry, or want to play they'll bark. Excessive barking can not only be irritating to you, but also to the people that live around you. The first step in training your dog not to bark, is to figure out why he is barking. Common reasons for increased barking are separation anxiety, lack of exercise, confinement, and outside noise. Feed your dog on a regular schedule and give him plenty of attention and exercise. If you're going to be gone for a long time and your dog has to stay in a cage or kennel try leaving the radio on quiet too.

There are multiple solutions to help your dog stop barking. Dogs bark for a reason, and once you figure out what it is that your dog wants, remove the motivation for barking. For example, if your dog barks at things outside the window consider putting blinds or curtains up. Another option is to ignore the barking until your dog stops. As long as the barking continues, don't offer any attention, don't even look at your dog. Only offer praise and rewards when your dog stops. This method can be useful if your dog barks when you put it in a kennel or crate. Another method is to gradually help your dog get used to what stimulates him to bark. Offer your dog treats and praise in the presence of the barking stimulus so your dog has a positive association.

Jumping
Generally dogs jump to assert their dominance, when they get excited and greet people, and because they've been rewarded for jumping in the past. Although it might have been cute when your dog was a tiny puppy, jumping can be a painful or annoying habit.

The "sit" command can be a great tool to discourage jumping. Tell your dog to sit when you enter the house or yard. Then you can greet on his or her level. This way your dog won't have to jump up to reach you. To assert your dominance and stop jumping, don't greet your dog for at least 15 minutes after arriving home. If your dog tries to jump, say "off." Try squirting her with a water gun or shaking something that makes noise to startle your dog. Be sure to give your dog plenty of praise when she doesn't jump. Avoid tug of war or wrestling with your dog because it will lead to aggressive behavior and encourages jumping.

Jumping on Furniture
Dogs like to be elevated and are attracted to their owner's scent, so jumping on furniture is a natural choice. Decide early on if you're going to let your dog get on couches, chairs, and beds.

If you don't want your dog on the furniture, be sure to supervise while your pet is in the house. Teach your dog that jumping on the furniture isn't okay, by telling him "no" or "off" when you catch him or her jumping up. Praise your dog when he gets down. If you're leaving the house with the dog out, make furniture unappealing or difficult to get on. You can put boxes or laundry baskets, balloons, or aluminum foil across the furniture to deter jumping.

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GET TO KNOW | Red Flannel™ Prime Formula

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: Red Flannel™ Prime Formula

Red Flannel™ Prime Formula is specially formulated to provide prolonged energy for your hardworking dog. It delivers 100 percent complete and balanced nutrition to your dog at any stage of its life. All Red Flannel™ formulas are researched by nutrition professionals and veterinarians, so not only do they meet industry standards, but they often exceed them. Red Flannel™ Prime Formula provides your pet with the wholesome, high energy diet he or she deserves and needs, to live a long, happy life.

Red Flannel™ formulas are made with high quality ingredients for quality results and a taste your pet will love. Red Flannel™ Prime Formula:

- Provides prolonged energy for strength and endurance
- Omega 3 & 6 fatty acids for a healthy skin, coat and immune system
- Contains natural sources of glucosamine for strong bones and healthy joints
- Naturally preserved–no artificial chemical preservatives

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