

September 15, 2004

To: Whom it may concern:

I am writing to report on the Stock Dog Clinic that the Peace River Agriculture Development Fund (PRADA) helped sponsor. It was very successful again this year with more and more people demonstrating interest.

I applied to do a four day clinic with a trainer named Herbert Holmes from Texas. Due to a family illness, Herbert was unable to instruct us. I was able to replace him with a qualified instructor named Jack Regier out of Saskatchewan. Jack has been instructing dog clinics for 20 years. He also judges and trains dogs for other people.

We provided four days of clinics at my Ranch in Pink Mountain from the 6th of September to the 9th of September. During this time, the dogs worked rain or shine.

The first two days were lovely. The sun was shining and we had a nice breeze. The next two days rained. We still worked dogs. While Jack Regier (the instructor) and a handler worked dogs, the rest of us were able to observe and yet remain dry under an airplane hanger. We built a fire in it and watched as each person took their turn with Jack and the sheep. Jack works with every dog and handler pair individually and then explains to the rest of the group what he is doing and why. He works the dogs in a positive manner, gently correcting them when needed and yet allowing the dogs to work as much on instinct as possible. The last day it snowed. We still worked dogs. Every single person in the clinic made good progress. This progress was evident to all handlers.

Each person and dog used five sheep. We learned how to bring sheep (using the dog's instinct) drive them, (against the instinct and on command) and move them to where we wanted them.

As a result of these clinics, the handlers put on a demonstration and a dog trial at the North Peace Fall Fair again this year. This is the 3rd year that we have hosted the trials at the Fall Fair. The clinic gave most of us the confidence to compete in front of a big crowd and show people what a trained dog can do. Most people have no idea what a useful "hired hand" these working stock dogs can be. They are truly a useful and integral part of herding livestock properly.

We are getting more and more inquiries about this type of clinic for next year and had a waiting list for the clinic this year.

Learning to train a dog is an ongoing process and a lot of handlers from this clinic are interested in another clinic next year. Hopefully we are able to tap into the resources of PRADA again next year and bring a trainer of this caliber into our area again.

The handlers who have taken the clinic already have plans to meet every three weeks to help each other, and anyone else that may be interested in working stock dogs. By doing this, we are able to pass on our knowledge to other people of the community. Through their sponsorship of this clinic, PRADA has helped a lot of people in the agriculture industry.

I would like to close by saying we had an excellent clinic with more people interested than we could accommodate. The clinic was affordable to the rancher and farmer because of the grant we received from PRADA. We would like to thank you for the opportunity that we had. Everyone went home happy with their dogs; dogs that were working much better than when they started.

Sincerely, 

Mrs. Palmula Boring