

June 11, 2005

To: Whom it may concern

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the grant that enabled us to provide another stock dog clinic to the people of the surrounding area. It was another very successful clinic.

I had an instructor from Redding, Oregon arranged to instruct the clinic. Her name was Karen Child. Due to unforeseen circumstances, she was unable to make it. I was able to replace her with an instructor by the name of Carol Nelson. Carol started working dogs about 10 years ago. She has been trialing and competing very successfully the last few years. Last year she won two silver belt buckles, numerous "day money" and various ribbons. Carol has qualified one of her dogs to compete in the United States National Border Collie trials this fall. She is a tough competitor and proved to be an excellent instructor.

Carol instructed three days of clinic from June 3<sup>rd</sup> - June 5<sup>th</sup> at the 7UP Ranch in Pink Mountain. We had handlers from Flat Rock, Rolla, Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John and Pink Mountain.

The first two days of the clinic were great. The temperature was hot but a cloud cover prevented it from being too hot. It was just the right temperature to work dogs.

Carol started the young dogs out with three or four sheep in a round pen. The object of this training method was to contain the sheep, allow the dogs to fetch the sheep, and prevent the young dogs from scattering the sheep. As the dogs gained experience, they moved to the field. The older more experienced dogs worked out in the field the whole time as they possessed the ability to control the sheep. As each person had their turn with Carol, they would come back to the group and Carol would explain what the problem was or what they were working on. This made it a learning experience for all the handlers.

The last day rained off and on. While Carol and the handler worked, the rest of us watched from the shelter of an airplane hanger. We built a fire, stayed dry and watched. Later in the day, the handlers and dogs completed an obstacle course. This obstacle course acted as a review; the purpose of this course was to make sure the handler successfully applied the concepts that had been previously taught in the clinic.

Carol worked the dogs in a positive yet firm manner. Every person and dog in the group showed considerable progress. This progress was evident each time the dog was worked. The dogs worked on many things. Some of these things included "fetching" (bringing the sheep to the handler based on the dog's instinct), some dogs were "driving" (driving the sheep away from the handler which is against the natural instinct of the Border Collie), some dogs were working on "pace" (moving the sheep in an orderly and quiet manner), others were working on completing a "correct circle" (a circle where a dog stays out away from the sheep so the sheep are not being hassled; this skill teaches a dog to "stay off" the sheep so later the sheep are not being turned where they shouldn't), some dogs were working on "square flanks" (where the dog flanks off the sheep squarely; this allows the dog to drive the sheep straight), and still others were working on "whistles" (whistle commands that teach a dog to respond to whistle commands rather than voice commands).

Learning to train working stock dogs is an ongoing process. We have been fortunate to have The PRADA grants to help out with the costs of this process. As a result of the clinics that PRADA has helped sponsor, the handlers put on demonstrations and a dog trial at the North Peace Fall Fair. Once again, the fair has asked us to bring our sheep and dogs to demonstrate to the spectators what working stock dogs are capable of. Most people have no idea what a useful "hired hand" these stock dogs can be.

The handlers who took the clinic already have plans to meet twice a month to help each other and anyone else interested in working dogs. By doing this, we are able to impart our knowledge to other people in the community.

Everyone went home happy with their dogs; dogs that were working much better than when they started.