

THE AMERICAN HERDING BREED ASSOCIATION

ABOUT THE AHBA

The American Herding Breed Association was founded in 1986 in response to the increasing interest in herding activities by owners of a wide variety of breeds. The AHBA was set up to help provide information in response to inquiries from those interested in herding and the herding breeds. The focus of the AHBA program is on practical herding work. While recognizing that many individuals will not be in a position to use their dogs daily in practical work, the AHBA desires nonetheless that herding be taken seriously and does not desire that it be viewed as a casual hobby. The AHBA has an interest in all aspects of herding and the herding breeds, and the investigation of canine behaviors that relate to herding ability.

The scope of the AHBA involves dogs of all herding breeds including rare breeds, as well as multi-purpose breeds that also have been used for herding, and herding breed mixes. The AHBA Herding Trial Program allows dogs to demonstrate herding ability in herding trials at started, intermediate, and advanced levels on a standard field course, on farm/ranch courses, which vary in detail

but include specified requirements, and on a variety of arena courses. The testing program includes Herding Capability Tests, for dogs taking part in tests for herding instinct and beginning herding work, and Junior Herding Dog Tests, for dogs in early training, at a level preparatory to trial work.

The AHBA has available a list of books and magazines on herding and a list of herding-oriented clubs across the country. Information on AHBA, including rules for trials and tests, is available on the internet at: <http://www.ahba-herding.org>

Membership includes an events bulletin sent every other month, containing a calendar of upcoming events, results from AHBA trials, and articles covering a range of herding activities and other items of interest to owners of herding breeds.

The goals of the AHBA are to promote an appreciation of the skills and value of the herding dog and to help provide information about herding breeds, herding training, herding behaviors and herding in general.

For more information regarding membership, contact:

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TRIAL/TEST HERDING PROGRAMS

The AHBA herding program offers four types of trial classes, each with three levels, and a test program with two levels. Dogs may enter the program at any level -- no title is a prerequisite for another title -- but once a leg for a title has been earned at a particular level, the dog may not be entered at a lower level on that type of course or that type of stock.

TRIAL PROGRAM

Herding Trial Dog (HTD), Herding Ranch Dog (HRD), Ranch Large Flock (RLF), and Herding Trial Arena Dog (HTAD) titles, all with levels I, II and III, require two qualifying scores under two different judges. These titles are earned separately both as to type of course and type of stock. Titles may be earned on sheep, goats, ducks, geese, turkeys or cattle (except that HRD and RLF classes may not utilize ducks except in specific "mixed stock" classes), with a small initial after the title indicating the type of stock on which the title was earned. Progression of difficulty in the trial classes echoes the progression in the training of a versatile herding dog. Trials are open to all breeds.

Herding Trial Dog classes take place on a standard course. All levels include an outrun, lift, fetch, wear and/or drive, and pen (the pen may be on the fence for the started level, but is free-standing for the higher levels). At the started level, the outrun is short and the handler may accompany the dog and sheep throughout the course. At the intermediate level, the outrun is longer and the handler may accompany the dog only part way through the course. At the advanced

level, the outrun is longer, the handler remains at the handler's post until time to pen, and after the pen there is an additional exercise (removing a ribbon from a marked sheep). HTD trials are designed to be held in large fields.

Herding Ranch Dog classes and Ranch Large Flock classes take place on courses which vary in detail while including specified requirements. Levels are differentiated by such aspects as position of handler, variations in a task or inclusion of an additional task, etc. Exercises include a gather, fetch/drive work, pen work, sorting work (required for the advanced level, optional for other levels), and various elements such as chutes, bridges, holding the sheep in place, etc. HRD and RLF trials may use combinations of open fields, arenas and pens.

Herding Trial Arena Dog courses are held in arenas on one of four basic courses or a variable design-it-yourself course. All of the courses have options such as whether to begin with a gather or take pen, type of sort used in the advanced class, and some variations in the obstacles. Levels are differentiated by restrictions on the handler's position, and the inclusion of a sorting exercise for the advanced class.

A Herding Trial Championship (HTCh.) is earned by obtaining 10 additional qualifying scores of 80 or above in the advanced classes, after the completion of an HTD III, HRD III, RLF III, or HTAD III title. These scores may be earned on any of the courses, and may be earned on one type of stock or on any combination of types of stock, with up to 3 scores allowed on ducks.

TEST PROGRAM

Test levels include the Herding Capability Test (HCT) and the Junior Herding Dog Test (JHD), both of which are run on a pass/non-pass basis and require two passing runs under different judges. These events are open to all herding breeds. Tests may be held on sheep, goats, ducks, geese, or, with special approval, cattle. The JHD is stock-specific, like trials, with both legs being earned on the same type of stock. HCT, however, is not stock-specific, and the two legs may be earned on different types of stock.

At the HCT level, the first leg may consist of a basic instinct test in a small arena with the tester allowed to handle the dog. The second leg requires an initial pause, some simple, controlled movement of the stock back and forth across the small arena, a stop, and a recall; for the second leg, the owner or designated handler, not the tester, must handle the dog, although the tester may give advice.

The JHD test is held in a somewhat larger arena. The dog is handled by the owner or designated handler, although the tester may give advice. There is a simple course through which the stock is taken, consisting of two corner panel obstacles and a free-standing panel obstacle in the center of the arena, ending with the sheep being put into a fence-line pen. The handler may accompany the sheep and dog throughout the course.

Rule books may and information about holding trials may be obtained by writing Linda Rorem, 1548 Victoria Way, Pacifica, CA 94044, email: pacifica19@gmail.com.

