

## Herding Dogs



A well-trained dog can save a producer a great deal of effort when herding and moving sheep. Many breeds of dogs are used on sheep farms throughout the world. In Canada, the black (or brown) and white Border Collie is perhaps the most popular. In selecting a dog, make enquiries, watch sheep dog trials and, if possible, enlist the aid of an experienced handler. A purebred dog is by no means essential, but a well-trained dog is. Most breeds of herding dogs have strong instincts to stalk and chase livestock. If these instincts have not been properly channeled through training, dogs will generally do more harm than good by chasing sheep in the wrong direction, running through the flock, or becoming overly aggressive towards the sheep. Even with well-trained dogs (depending on their temperament), you may wish to restrict their use to gathering sheep in large areas, rather than in small pens or handling systems. Dogs may become overly excited with sheep in confined areas, particularly if the flock is not moving well. The sheep will remember the frightening experience and may be reluctant to enter the handling system the next time. If you buy a professionally trained dog, be sure to take some time to learn commands that the dog will understand; improperly trained people may be just as frustrating for dogs, as poorly trained dogs are to shepherds.