

Editorial

Dear Readers,



When it comes to German Shepherds and herding (HGH), some of you may be thinking that it's an old-fashioned relic from the beginnings of the association that has only been kept alive by tradition. I would like to explain to you why herding is such an important part of our club. Sheep flocks are more up-to-date than ever and the dream job of being a shepherd is anything but leisurely and outdated. This profession, or perhaps we had better say, this 'calling', requires a special relationship with the animals and the associated work. Paddock sheep on dykes and grazing sheep in heathland are used for landscape protection as well as landscape maintenance in nature reserves. In order to lead these flocks safely through our busy environment or to ward off browsing damage by sheep, reliable, willing and very well trained HGH dogs are more important and valuable than ever.

Herding is the German Shepherd's most original task, where they perform as working dogs in the true sense of the word: healthy, resilient, happy to work and environmentally safe. In the course of a long day with their shepherd, these dogs have to solve a variety of tasks on their own: exiting the pen, keeping the flock out of protected areas or creating a lane for passing cars. They also have the task of disciplining stragglers, nibblers or escapees and reintroducing them into the flock. They keep the flock together in close guard, defend its borders in wide guard, secure its passage through bottlenecks and over bridges, and finally, they re-pen the flock. Three-hundred and sixty-five days a year, in any weather.

These HGH dogs are all the more valuable at a time when the shepherd's profession has had to and must continue to adapt to changing conditions, requirements and constraints over the years. Not to forget the bureaucratic hurdles: everything has to be documented.

This is why herding events at SV are so important. Since the founding of the association in 1899, they have represented an elementary and original field of activity for the German Shepherd in club activities. German Shepherds in their current form were systematically selected and purposefully paired with one another at the beginning of pure breeding, using existing herding dogs that were found in different areas. The decisive breeding criteria for the club's pioneers were resilience and joy when working in hard, daily herding. Although the advancing mechanisation of the German Shepherd's field has significantly expanded and changed, shepherds remain dependent on the performance of their HGH dogs today.

Since the founding of the association, herding events have been very important for monitoring work disposition and the resulting consequences for the breeding of our HGH dogs. Herding is carried out at the local level (OG Herding), at the regional level (LG Herding) and in the nationwide National Performance Herding competition. These competitions between shepherds with their dogs are shown with flocks of 200 to 300 animals. Herding takes place according to the herding regulations of *Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V.*

We hope that Covid will soon be over and that the association's work can be resumed without restrictions. If local and federal group events, and the highlight, our annual National Performance Herding, can be held once again, you should certainly visit an HGH event to get an impression of the excellent work of our German Shepherds in the HGH field.

Yours truly,

Ulrich Hausmann, Provisional SV HGH Representative