

## Editorial

With recent and nationwide pet food recalls of many top brand pet foods, we must begin to ponder the question of "just what are we feeding our pets? What are we requiring them to consume?" It seems that each week a new food is added to the recall list. Some of us buy inexpensive brands to save money....rather than researching what food is best for our pets.

Months ago my 15-year-old Boykin named Dixie...began to have serious health issues. She was not eating, was losing weight, her coat thinned out and looked dull... and she just slept or moped around all day. Remidyl apparently wasn't giving her any pain relief and she was unable to jump onto the couch as she had been doing all her life. Medical tests revealed no illness. Apparently, it was just old age. She had lost her spirit and I feared she was dying. She had a stroke a couple of years ago and had some sight and hearing loss because of it.

For years I have fed Purina Pro Plan Performance to my Boykins. (It was expensive as I had 13 Boykins! However, I believe in feeding high quality dog food regardless of the cost). I had tried all the foods my vet recommended for Dixie with no success. So, I began preparing food for her in the hope that she would eat it.... but she seldom

ate very much...and what she ate one day, she would not touch the next.

During this time I was building a commercial boarding kennel and was researching what I would feed the boarding dogs. I felt that Pro Plan would definitely be too expensive. To my surprise, I found that many boarding kennels are feeding very inexpensive feed...inexpensive brands like you would find at Wal-Mart or PetSmart! Yuck! So I began to check out "Natural" foods. I spoke with many reps of various brands. I spoke with the rep for Canine Caviar specifically about my Dixie girl. She strongly suggested that I try Canine Caviar Special Needs Diet. Long story short...Dixie loved it. She began to gain weight and her coat is again beautiful. She is again playful and has bounce in her step. She has resumed jumping on and off the couch at will without Rimadyl!!!

I urge you to consider going "All-Natural"...I am feeding only all-natural cuisine at my boarding kennel .... I want the best for everyone's pet ...not just mine. I pay a lot more...but, I don't worry about the safety of what I am feeding.

The brands I recommend are **Canidae All Life Stages** (Canidae.com), and **Canine Caviar** (canineCaviar.com). You

can go online to find out who sells these products in your area. You will NOT find them at Wal-Mart or Pet Smart. I retail all three at the boarding kennel and everyone has had great results with them. I even slice up rolls of Natural Balance and use pieces as a treat ... or you can shred it up to sprinkle on the dry food. Some of the canned foods are all meat and I don't feed them alone.... I use the canned meats mixed with water to make gravy to pour over the dog's dry food.

Try feeding an all-natural diet...no wheat, artificial colors or preservatives... and I can assure you that you will see a difference in your pets. I am now checking out a fourth all-natural food...Flint River Ranch...so I'll tell you about that later.

Happy Hunting,

Pat





## Dog Training

By: Hal Roemer



These are some tips I've given to my friends, who, after seeing my dogs work, seem to ask the same questions over and over. So I put it into a word document that they could take home and read. None of it is very earth shattering, nor is any of it new, it's from my experience and things I've picked up from trainers and books over the

years. Pat asked me to clean it up a bit for the newsletter. Here goes:

The thing we want to do is in every training situation with a young dog, is set the pup up for success. Every drill needs to be easy for the dog to understand, and easy for the dog to succeed at. Using a leash or check cord gives us control, and the dog a measure of security that he will be corrected.

I compare the training a dog receives to when I was memorizing my multiplication tables as a kid. I'd be able to nail the 7's or 9's one day, but for some reason a day or two later, I couldn't recall what the heck  $7 \times 8$  was.

I think I see the same thing in my young dogs. They learn a basic command and have it nailed for a day or two, but later may not be able to remember exactly what that command means. Our patience and understanding as owner / trainers is what makes the difference. Primary ingredients in training a pup are (just like the multiplication tables when I was in school) repetition, repetition, repetition, and praise.

I use the with-holding of praise as opposite of praise. That may sound strange, but compare that to someone who severely scolds or even hits a dog in lieu of using praise. Believe it, when you with-hold praise, the dog gets the message. When you overly scold or strike a young dog, you can cause confusion in the animal; he didn't understand in the first place, and now he's being yelled at... what the heck?

It's incredibly important to be in the right frame of mind when training a dog. You've got to be able to control your temper, and keep a positive attitude. You've also got to be able to use simulated anger and stern correction, and mean it, with out actually being angry. You've got to understand, that when the dog does not work correctly, it's your fault. You are not pre-

senting the drill or instruction so that the dog can succeed, or you are not recognizing some thing that your doing wrong, or you are trying to advance faster than the dog is ready, or you are pushing too hard, or, or, or....

If you feel yourself getting angry, stop the drill and take a break. If the dog is not working correctly and you or both of you are getting frustrated, stop training. When ever possible, end on a positive note, with a success or a drill the dog has down pat.

I do not use treats for rewards, but that's me. Some people use treats with good results. Praise is the only reward my dogs receive. Once the dog starts retrieving, is introduced to birds, and starts putting it all together, the work is it's own reward.

**SIT**

Put at least a 6' lead on the dog, a 10' check cord is OK too. I buy a bunch of light cheap cotton clothes line, works as well as the expensive check cords.

Give the dog the 'sit' command, and point down with your index finger in front of the dog's face, while pulling back slightly on the lead. If the dog resists, repeat the 'sit' command, and while pulling back on the lead, push down on the dog's back.

If the dog sits, but it takes pulling on the lead, and pushing on the back, and / or you have to repeat the command more than once, pet the dog and give light praise.

Once the dog sits on one command, with only slight pulling, lay the praise on a little heavier.

Once the dog sits on one command with no leash pulling or back pushing, make a huge fuss over the dog. Really go over the top. Then stop. Your done for now. Just play with the pup, or let him just be for a while. From now on, alternate the 'sit' command with one blast on the whistle. Very soon the pup will understand that a single whistle is 'Sit' or 'Stop'.

With a young pup, do this drill about 3 to 5 repetitions. As the pup advances, continue until the pup makes at least three good sits with none or a minimum of slight leash pull; unless the dog refuses. If the dog refuses, back off and move on to some retrieve play for a few minutes, then make one more sit drill, but make the dog do it right, and give praise.

**STAY**

Once the dog will sit, even with slight leash pull, you can move on to 'stay'.

Keep the leash on the dog. Put your hand out in front of the dogs face with a Cop's "STOP" signal, and say in a forceful voice "STAY".

While standing (don't crouch down, that's an

invitation to break) back off about 3', repeating the "STAY" command / hand signal. Now move back to the dog, repeating the STAY command / hand signal all the way back in, and lay on the praise, saying "Good Stay".

If the dog breaks do not praise, do not scold, do not say any thing (with-hold praise). Simply lead the dog back to the original starting point and begin again.

Repeat the STAY drill several times, backing further out, or until the dog stays to where you can back off to the full 6' length of the lead.

Go out to the length of the 6' lead, repeating the STAY command / hand signal over and over, then move back in to the dog, repeating the STAY command / hand signal all the way back in. Once the dog has stayed while you go out and back, lay on the praise, over the top.

Eventually you'll be able to move on to the 10' check cord, and repeat the drill out to 10'.

Once the dog is staying with the 10' check cord, back out to the end of the 10', lay the check cord on the ground, and back off at about 5' increments till you can back off to about 20'.

**HERE / COME**

Some people like "Come" some like "Here". I use "Here", because a professional trainer explained to me that you can draw the "Here" command out with more emphasis in the field: HEEEEER!!!! As opposed to COME! I tend to agree with that.

The "Here" command can be taught to the dog, without the dog even knowing he's being trained: When your playing with a puppy, get down low while he's in the yard or house away from you. Getting low on your butt or haunches is an invitation to the dog to approach (standing is not as inviting). Wait for the pup to see you and commit to coming, but make sure he's committed. Once the pup is committed to coming slap your thigh, clap your hands, make a big silly fuss, and say "Here". The pup will run in to you. Once the pup is in your lap, give over the top praise, saying "Good Here" several times. I feel the combination of the praise word "Good" with the command word "Here" helps to reinforce the command.

For yard drills:

You need the 6' lead or 10' check cord on the

... Continued on Page 5

