

The Herding Capability Test Program is run on a pass/not pass system and leads to the title "Herding Capability Tested" (HCT).

## **SANCTION OF HERDING CAPABILITY TESTS**

1. Tests may be open to all eligible breeds or limited to a specific breed.
2. Clubs or individuals wishing to obtain sanction from the AHBA must complete a Sanction Form and return it to the AHBA Sanction Coordinator at least 60 days before the test, along with a sanction fee of \$15.00. Herding Capability Tests are sanctioned separately from trials, with a separate form and fee required. The fee will, however, cover a test held over consecutive days. In addition, Junior Herding Dog tests may be held in conjunction with Herding Capability Tests, in which case the sanction fee for the Herding Capability Test will also cover the Junior Herding Dog test. Sponsors must carry insurance. Sponsors will be notified as to granting of sanction; if sanction cannot be granted the fee will be returned. Refund of the sanction fee for a canceled event is at the discretion of the AHBA board and will be provided only in the case of extreme weather, disasters, or unusual circumstances preventing the holding of the event.
3. Copies of the AHBA test forms will be provided to the sponsor or individual requesting sanction, from which the necessary number of individual test forms needed for the event can be made. Entry Record forms will also be provided, to be used for recording qualifying runs, along with a Test Report Form.
4. The language set out in Appendix A to these Rules must be incorporated into the entry form/release form which must be signed by each entrant of an AHBA event. The original forms must be kept by the sponsor for a period of six months after the test so as to be available to the AHBA upon request.
5. Testers must be approved prior to the event by the AHBA Secretary and must be selected from the list of approved judges/testers of the American Herding Breed Association. Potential testers not present on the list must apply to the AHBA for entry onto the list; application forms and information regarding requirements can be obtained from the Secretary. If testers are paid, they should be paid by a designated representative of the sponsor.
6. A copy of the flyer or premium list should be provided to the AHBA at least one week prior to the test. The flyer or premium list should provide complete information regarding the event, including starting times for classes and indication of any ribbons or other awards which may be provided to qualifying dogs.

## **ORGANIZATION AND RECORDING**

1. The event secretary or a designated assistant to the secretary must be present throughout the event. The tester must be provided with an assistant to serve as scribe and timer.
2. A designated stock supervisor must be in charge of the stock and must be present throughout the event.

3. Total entries per day, including pre-entries and any day-of-test entries, are not to exceed 25 dogs per tester, preferably fewer. If the tester is also judging a trial that day, total numbers of entries for the test and the trial must be reduced accordingly.
4. Waiting dogs and people must keep a sufficient distance from the arena where a trial or test run is taking place. There shall be no outside interference or double-handling.
5. Good sportsmanship is to be shown at all times. The sponsor and sponsor's representatives have the responsibility for the overall conduct of the event; the judge or tester has the responsibility for conduct of the event in the test and trial arenas. Should any controversy develop, this is to be discussed quietly and in private and is not to be allowed to interfere with the event.
6. Awards or ribbons are provided at the discretion of the sponsor and the details must be clearly stated in the entry flyer or premium list. It is recommended that ribbons and/or awards be given to each qualifier.
7. Participating dogs shall have test forms filled out in full. The original test form is given to the owner of the dog or the owner's agent. A complete record of entrants and results must be kept by the sponsor for a period of at least six months after the event; this record may be one or more of the following: copies of the test forms, copies of the Test Recording Forms, or a completed catalog.
8. A Test Recording Form must be completed in full for each entry; only this form will be accepted for recording. (Note: If desired, the sponsor may provide this form to prospective entrants, who can then fill out the top part of the form and return it to the sponsor for later indication of results.) A form must be sent in for each participating entry whether or not the entry qualified, although recording fees are provided only for qualifying dogs. The original Test Recording Form is sent to the AHBA Test Secretary; a copy of the form is sent to the AHBA Records Coordinator.
9. A Test Report form shall be completed by the Test Secretary and the Judge(s) for the event and sent to the AHBA Secretary.
10. Sponsors of sanctioned events shall pay a recording fee of \$2.50 per qualifying dog for those dogs to be recorded by the AHBA.
11. It is the duty of the sponsor to see that all forms are completed and that the Test Recording Forms, the Test Report, and the recording fees are sent to the AHBA Sanction Coordinator no later than 30 days from the date of the event. A fine of \$50.00 will be assessed for forms and recording fees submitted after the 30-day period.
12. Failure to conduct the event according to these Rules may result in suspension of the judge/tester and/or sponsor.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

1. This program shall be open to all herding breeds and multi-purpose breeds with herding background as listed following these Herding Capability Test Program Rules.
2. Dogs must be six months of age or older.
3. Spayed bitches and neutered dogs may participate.

4. Bitches in heat may take part in tests, but must wait until all other dogs have participated.
5. Dogs must be sound and in good health. Any dog which appears to be unfit will be removed at the tester's discretion; examples are: lameness, injury, illness, advanced pregnancy.
6. Dogs must have prior training to come reliably when called and to stop (down, sit or stand-stay); this requirement must be made clear to owners before they enter. For first-leg HCT tests, it is highly recommended that dogs have had prior supervised exposure to livestock, although it is not a requirement that dogs have had prior herding training. Second-leg tests require that dogs have had some basic herding training; this is to be made clear to prospective entrants.
7. Owners of participating dogs need not be members of any club or organization.
8. A dog owned by the tester or any member of the tester's immediate family or household may not be evaluated by that tester, nor may a dog be evaluated by a tester who has been the owner or the primary trainer/handler of the dog within the last six months.
9. Dogs which have been in previous tests and have not passed shall be eligible to be tested again on another day.

## **TITLE REQUIREMENTS**

1. For each title, two qualifying scores are required, earned under different judges. Upon completion of the second leg, a certificate will be issued awarding the title.
2. A dog may not be entered in both HCT classes and trial classes on the same day. The dog may, however, be moved up upon the completion of a title.
3. Test titles may be earned on any single type of stock or combination of stock. The type of stock on which the second leg was earned will be indicated by use of a small initial after the title: "s" for sheep, "d" for ducks, "g" for goats, "ge" for geese, "c" for cattle.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HERDING CAPABILITY TESTS**

1. Tests should be held in the setting of a clinic. Where stock numbers and lower entry limits allow, a short instructional run (as indicated in the guidelines) may be given to each entrant earlier in the day, with a second run constituting the formal test held later, entrants going in the same order each time.
2. Up to two separate Herding Capability Tests may be held per day. The two tests should be held in succession, with "Test A" being completed before "Test B" begins. There may be more than one tester participating in Test A or Test B, but a dog may be entered under only one tester in Test A and one tester in Test B.
3. Tests may be held on sheep, ducks, goats or geese. Use of cattle in tests is not encouraged, but may be allowed with special approval. Stock must be healthy and in good condition and accustomed to being worked by a variety of dogs.
4. Total number of stock present must be at least one head of stock, preferably more, per every dog, plus reserves. Multiple entries of one dog are counted as separate runs.

5. Groups of at least three head of stock must be used for each run; larger numbers may be preferable. Stock must be kept in identifiable groups and rotated frequently: preferably after every dog, and at least after every two or three dogs. There must be at least three groups, preferably more, for rotation, except when the number of dogs is less than four, in which case there may be two groups. Lengthy rest periods must be provided. No animal may be used for more than four runs during the day; no more than three runs is preferred. Any animal being used more than three times per day, they must have at least a half-hour rest period between runs. Any animal that has been pressed too hard or stressed during its run must be given at least a half-hour rest period and a re-evaluation by the judge as to recovery before it can be used again.
6. Arenas must be well fenced, have good footing and be free from hazardous obstructions. If two adjacent arenas are being used simultaneously, visibility screens must be set up between them.
7. Safety and humane treatment of the animals are of utmost importance. There must be a separate, secure rest area for the stock, with shade and water. Food must be provided for stock kept overnight. Water must be available for dogs. During the event, animals are to be removed from the arena at any sign of stress and promptly given any necessary care. A veterinarian must be in attendance or on call.
8. Should an animal need to be removed during a run for a reason unrelated to the behavior of the dog (e.g. lameness, excessive stubbornness or flightiness of an individual), or should outside interference occur, time may be stopped for that run, then restarted.
9. Waiting dogs and people must keep a sufficient distance from the arena where a dog is being tested. There shall be no outside interference with a dog being tested.
10. No other dog shall be in the arena with the dog being tested (other than, under exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the tester, a well-trained backup dog).
11. Dogs may wear only plain buckle or snap-lock collars.

## **HERDING CAPABILITY TESTS**

1. HCT tests are to be held in the setting of a clinic. Such tests must be held at the facilities of a herding trainer, utilizing experienced stock regularly employed in training herding dogs. Special permission must be obtained for use of any other venue, and any such venues must be set up similarly to a training facility with sturdy fencing and stock regularly used for herding training; public venues such as fairs or similar general public events are not accepted.
2. Arena size for HCT tests must be a minimum of 50 x 50 ft., up to approximately 80 x 80 ft. Corners must be rounded; oval or round enclosures are preferred for first-leg HCT tests.
3. The tester may handle the dog during first-leg tests. For second-leg tests, the owner or owner's agent must handle the dog, with verbal assistance or brief intervention by the tester being acceptable.

4. In order to pass, dogs must be tested off-lead or with lead dragging in first-leg tests, off-lead in second-leg tests, and may not be held or physically touched by any person or tied to any object.
5. First-leg tests may take the form of a basic instinct test and are fairly free-form, with no set path of travel.
  1. The dog is brought in on a long line approximately 6 to 15 ft. in length. At some point while on the line, the dog must demonstrate a stop (down, sit or stand) and a recall before the line is dropped or removed. A dog which cannot be recalled shall not be let off line.
  2. Dogs may not be struck or have objects thrown at them with the intent to strike them during a test. If it is necessary to do this to protect the stock, the dog must be immediately removed from the arena and will not pass.
6. Second-leg tests require a more controlled passage from one end of the arena to the other (easily visible markers, such as ribbons or placards, may be placed on the fence at opposite ends of the arena to help indicate direction, or cones may be set on the ground 10 ft. in from the fence at opposite ends of the arena). The stock should be set out clear of the fence, well away from any corner.
  1. The dog is put in position and the lead removed; the dog should hold a brief stay (pause) before being sent to collect the stock.
  2. The stock are moved across the arena to the opposite end, then returned to the vicinity of the set-out point, then taken again to the opposite end of the arena, and brought back a second time to the vicinity of the set-out point (approximately four traverses of the arena).
  3. The dog is given a final stop command, and recalled.
7. Dogs are not to be allowed to harass, chase, rough up, trample or grip stock. Dogs evidencing aggression are not to be let off lead. Unruly, uncontrollable dogs or dogs which attempt to attack the stock must be taken from the test area immediately. Dogs which are excessively fearful of the stock should be removed. In second-leg tests, dogs showing lack of progress should be removed from the arena after five minutes.
8. Each dog's formal test session shall be a maximum of 10 minutes, within which time the session should be concluded upon the dog fulfilling the requirements for passing. Tests are to be conducted in a consistent and fairly standard manner as described in the guidelines.
9. The tester must provide detailed comments on each passing form, and spend time with each participant providing guidance and information regarding the particular dog and herding in general; comments and information should be presented to spectators also. Education is of great importance in herding tests.

## **QUALIFICATIONS FOR PASSING HERDING TESTS**

### **First Leg:**

A dog which, after a period of introduction, shows sustained interest in herding livestock, either going around them, gathering them and moving them toward the handler, or moving them ahead of the handler to drive them, or a combination.

A dog which works quietly, a dog which barks (a little or a lot), a dog which may feint as though to nip, or actually nips if on larger animals providing it is appropriate for the situation and not a threat to the health or safety of the livestock, are all acceptable. A dog may be loose-eyed or may show some degree of eye. A variety of approaches and styles are acceptable.

It is to be remembered that many dogs through inexperience will make mistakes in their early exposures to livestock, but at all time the tester must see clear-cut evidence of herding instinct, with the dog attempting to keep the animals grouped and attempting to control their movement. Dogs which merely chase, play or push stock around, not really herding, must not be passed; distinction must be made between herding behavior and chasing. Dogs should show some responsiveness to direction.

### **Second Leg:**

In addition to the above, the dog must exhibit the following: moving the stock in a controlled fashion from one end of the arena to the other; a stop; and a recall.

## **NOT PASSABLE**

### **First Leg:**

A dog which, after a period of introduction, fails to show sustained herding interest in livestock. A dog which repeatedly leaves or attempts to leave the working area. A dog which makes little or no attempt to control the grouping and movement of the stock.

A dog which shows aggression toward the livestock so strong and of a nature to be considered a threat to the health or safety of the livestock. Any dog which repeatedly splits the group and attacks one or several animals, or grips any animal and holds on. A dog which evidences chasing rather than herding behavior.

Any dog which, for whatever reason, cannot be tested off lead or with lead dragging.

Any dog which shows fear of the livestock in such a fashion that the dog cannot demonstrate herding instinct.

### **Second Leg:**

In addition to the above, a dog which fails to demonstrate the required additional skills, which does not move the stock in a controlled fashion, which constantly and

unnecessarily circles the stock, which cannot be tested off lead, or cannot be handled by its owner or owner's agent.

Dogs not passing may be retested at another time.