



# Great Pyrenees Club of Southern Ontario

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12. September 2016

Open Letter to the Sheep Farmers of Ontario,

Livestock guardian dogs can be a valuable asset for sheep producers. Their protective instincts serve well to keep their flocks safe from predators. However, these same traits can make them extremely unfit as pets, especially if the puppies are not well-socialized, or are sold to inexperienced people.]

Unfortunately, dogs are not livestock. They cannot just be put on trucks and sent to market. Unwanted dogs end up in the hands of rescue groups or humane societies who have to spend scarce resources on attempting to rehome or, sadly, euthanizing aggressive dogs.

How this can be avoided:

1. Spay and neuter your livestock guardian dogs. Neutered dogs will be better focused on looking after their flocks. Bitches in season can attract predators rather than deter them, and intact males are prone to roaming.
2. If you must breed your dogs:
  - a. Socialization is critical and cannot be emphasized enough. Puppies must be handled constantly and by many different people from a very young age, and have no negative experiences.
  - b. Be honest about the dog's genetics. A crossbred dog is not a Great Pyrenees. The *Livestock Pedigree Act* is clear that a purebred animal is registered or registrable and this act does apply to dogs.
  - c. Temperament is important. An overly protective dog does not make a good house pet and is a liability.
  - d. Be prepared to take dogs back. If you breed your dogs, it is your responsibility to ensure they go to appropriate homes. It should not be anyone else's job to pick up the pieces of irresponsible breeding.

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