The Importance of Working Dogs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

For centuries, dogs and people have worked side by side at a number of tasks.
Police and guard dogs

Police and guard dogs assist law enforcement personnel in their jobs. Some dogs have been trained to sniff out drugs or explosives, or track a person for miles.

Search and Rescue

The training of search and rescue dogs starts when they are puppies. They go through months of training to receive their first certification, and it may take years for them to become fully trained. They attend periodic refresher courses during their lifetime of rescue work. The handler and dog really work as a team, the handler needing to be aware of any subtle cues the dog may make.

Water rescue

The Newfoundland breed of dogs and others can be trained in water rescue. In the picture at the right, Barb, an employee at Drs. Foster and Smith is training her dog, Baci (pronounced ba'chee), in water rescue. The dogs are taught to bring floating devices to people, pull people to shore, and even haul a whole boat to land. The dog's instinctiveness for this work is truly amazing. A number of Newfoundland owners report that they find it very difficult to swim with their dogs since their dogs keep trying to haul them in to shore.

Herding dogs

Other breeds of dogs have an incredible instinct to herd other animals, such as cattle and sheep. Watching a herding dog trial, is something you will never forget. You will be amazed at the capability of these dogs. Some herding dogs are so obsessed with herding that they will try to herd anything including children in a playground and chickens on the farm.

Sled and cart dogs

Breeds like the Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute love to pull. Their endurance is phenomenal, they just want to keep going and going. Bernese Mountain Dogs, Newfoundlands, and Great Pyrenees are breeds that were often used to pull carts, and enjoy it.

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