

# Code of Ethics for The Danish Sheepdog Society

## Purpose and use

This code of ethics has been prepared as a professional and common basis to ensure that herding, training and competitions in the Danish Sheepdog Society are carried out in an ethical, animal welfare-friendly and professionally sustainable manner.

The code applies to the club's activities and should be considered a common guideline for members, trainers, judges, officials and organizers who work with sheepdogs and sheep in both training and competition contexts.

The purpose is not to replace current rules or legislation, but to clarify what the club stands for and what ethical level is expected in practice.

## Basic ethical principles

The Danish Sheepdog Society bases its work on the following principles:

- Animal welfare always has the highest priority in our work
- Herding must be carried out with respect, professionalism and responsibility
- We recognize ambition as a driving force, but never at the expense of animals or people
- The club wants an environment characterized by objectivity, decency and sportsmanship

## The sheep

### Herding as functional work

The type of herding practiced in the Danish Sheepdog Society historically stems from British herding tradition. For generations, sheepdogs have been an effective working tool that can move and handle sheep calmly and gently.

Ethical herding is about carrying out this work in a way that respects the well-being of the sheep, and where the cooperation between dog, sheep and handler is based on understanding and control – not pressure or power.

Competitions originate from the desire to raise the quality of this work and create a common professional level.

### Respect for sheep

The sheep must always be treated with respect.

- Sheep must not be kicked, hit or subjected to other unnecessary rough treatment
- Sheep must be healthy and in suitable physical condition
- During competitions, the sheep must not be touched by the handler, in accordance with applicable regulations

In the context of training, the work must be organized so that the sheep are moved with the least possible pressure and without unnecessary stress, taking into account the dog's level of training.

Gates, pens and training areas must be safe, and the handling of the sheep must be done responsibly.

### Stress, strain and rest

Training and competitions must be planned to avoid overload.

- Both dogs and sheep must have the opportunity for breaks and recovery
- Handlers should be able to recognize signs of stress and fatigue in both dogs and sheep and act accordingly
- If conditions are not justifiable, work must be stopped

A handler's frustration must never be directed at the sheep

## The dogs

### The origin and function of the breeds

Breeds such as the Border Collie, Australian Kelpie, Australian Shepherd and Australian Cattle dog are bred for herding work. Herding is therefore an essential part of their functional and mental characteristics.

When the work is done correctly, it supports the dog's disposition, well-being and ability to cooperate.

### Herding as a meaningful activity

Properly done herding gives the dog the opportunity for cooperation, movement and problem-solving and should be carried out in a way that strengthens the dog's well-being and the relationship between dog and handler.

### Training and progression

- Dogs must be in physical and mental balance
- Load must be adjusted to the age, experience and condition of the individual dog

Training should be built up gradually, and exercises with high intensity or complexity should only be introduced when the dog shows calmness, control and understanding.

### Control and safety

Training should only take place when there is sufficient control over the dog.

- The dog must be able to be stopped or called away from the sheep
- Irresponsible or uncontrolled training is not acceptable
- A handler's frustration must never be directed at the dog

### Chasing and biting

Chasing and biting the sheep is not acceptable.

- Herding work must be organised so that this does not occur
- If a dog is put in a situation where it bites or attempts to bite, the situation must be stopped immediately
- Training must then be adapted so that the dog can complete the task in a more appropriate way

## The club

### Trainers and responsibilities

People who teach or help others under the club should be aware of their role and strive to ensure that teaching and behaviour meet the club's ethical standards.

Respect should be shown for both animals and participants during all activities.

## Transparency

The club will strive for openness regarding training methods and principles.

At shows, competitions and training, it must be visible that animal welfare is a central part of the work.

## Evaluation and development

The club should continuously evaluate its guidelines in line with new knowledge about behaviour, learning and animal welfare.

## Reputation

The club's communication and activities should reflect responsibility and professionalism. A high ethical standard is crucial for the reputation and future of herding.

## Community and sportsmanship

The Danish Sheepdog Society wants a community characterized by sportsmanship.

- We will strive to support each other and rejoice in the results of others
- We will speak properly to and about each other
- Disagreements may occur, but should always be solved respectfully

Sportsmanship is understood as:

- to follow applicable rules
- to show respect for fellow competitors, officials and referees
- To be able to win and lose with the same mind

The club does not intend to define the motivation of the individual handler, but expects that ambitions never go beyond consideration for dogs, sheep or people.

## Speaking up – shared responsibility

For this code of ethics to have real value, it requires that we all contribute to complying with it.

At competitions, it is especially the responsibility of judges and course director to speak up if unacceptable behaviour is shown towards dogs, sheep or people.

Members are also encouraged to react objectively and responsibly when they experience conditions that contradict this code.

The purpose is dialogue, learning and prevention.

## Repeated violations and consequences

The Danish Sheepdog Society bases its work on dialogue, guidance and shared responsibility. The code of ethics aims to prevent unacceptable behaviour through clear expectations and shared understanding.

If there are repeated or serious violations of this code of ethics, the club can react.

- A violation will generally be met with dialogue and guidance
- In the event of repeated violations, or if the behaviour is assessed as particularly serious, a formal warning may be given
- In the extreme, violations may lead to temporary or permanent suspension from the club's activities, in accordance with the club's statutes and applicable rules

Decisions are made by the club's board of directors or authorized representatives and must always be based on a concrete, objective and proportional assessment.

The purpose of these measures is not punishment, but to ensure animal welfare, safety for the participants and an ethical level that the club can vouch for.

## Conclusion

This code of ethics has been prepared to clarify the values and expectations of the Danish Sheepdog Society.

It is a common starting point that will contribute to ensuring that both people, dogs and sheep can thrive in an activity that we all want to protect.