The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
as a Herding Dog:
Historical Heritage, Current Capabilities

A proposal to the American Kennel Club
To Recognize the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
As Eligible To Participate in AKC All-Breed Herding Events

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Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America (SCWTCA)

Video presentation of Wheaten herding capabilities will accompany this proposal.
**Introduction**

Those who witness close to 200 Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers (SCWTs), exhibited in conformation classes at the annual Montgomery County Kennel Club All-Terrier specialty show, are privileged to see beautifully groomed and exhibited dogs in full show coat the color of honey, flowing in the breeze. These graceful, handsome and well-balanced dogs are a far cry from their ancestors, the scruffy, utilitarian, all-around farm dogs of impoverished Irish farmers, who herded livestock and bagged the family dinner in the field.

In addition to conformation, the 21st-century SCWT’s performance capabilities are formidable, and range from agility, obedience and rally, to tracking. Herding capability, however, remains an instinct still active in the Wheaten DNA that is just now being rejuvenated. Heartening to the Wheaten enthusiast is that the versatility and instinct bred into these dogs from necessity in the mists of Ireland have not diminished over time and distance. Wheaten owners are now rediscovering and validating the herding instinct that permeates the breed, from its Irish heritage to the far-flung shores of the United States and Australia.

**History**

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier originated well over 200 years ago in Ireland, found in greatest numbers in the south and southwest. The history was not well documented, but *The AKC Complete Dog Book* states as follows:

“They whelped in barns, hedges, and haystacks, and only the fittest survived. Quite early in Britain’s history, the ‘laws of the forest’ were placed in force. These laws allowed only freemen and landowners to own hunting dogs. The poor tenant farmer or fisherman could not legally own any animal of greater value than five British pounds. Also, only wealthy landowners could own a hunting dog or sporting dog more than nineteen inches tall. Further, those dogs with ‘whole’ tails were for the landed gentry. Otherwise, a tax was levied, which was

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not affordable by poor farm folk. Docking was done to provide evidence that these dogs were within the bounds of the law. Thus was born the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier. This ‘poor man’s Wolfhound’ came to serve as guardians of the tenant farmer’s household and as all-purpose farm dogs. They were adept at herding and guarding sheep. They killed vermin and gave their family ample warning of intruders. They were keen of scent and might often be found with their owners, out for the hunt, bringing down small game.”

In Anna Redlich’s 1949 book entitled, The Dogs of Ireland, she states:

“Wheaten Terriers have been kept for generations on the farms of this country where they have been used for cattle work, for pursuing and destroying vermin, and, like their next-of-kin the Kerry Blue and Irish Terrier, have enjoyed a day’s shooting in the company of their master.”

Maureen Holmes, one of the early and legendary developers of the distinct breed as a renowned breeder, breed representative and judge in service to the Irish Kennel Club, describes the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier as follows:

“In a very dark period on the troubled history of Ireland, tenant farmers could not legally own any chattel or animal worth more than five pounds sterling… The Wheaten could have well been the poor man’s Wolfhound, the guardian of his household and general utility dog… For generations, Wheatens earned their living herding cattle, killing vermin, and being the general dog about the house.”

Margaret H. Bonham corroborates the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier’s heritage in her Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers: A Complete Pet Owner’s Manual:

“While the nobility in Ireland kept Irish Wolfhounds and other hunting and coursing dogs, they forbade the commoner such privileges; the Irish farmer instead bred medium-sized terriers as farm dogs. These versatile dogs killed vermin, herded livestock, hunted quarry to ground, and alerted farmers to intruders.”

In Margaret A. O’Connor’s How to Raise and Train a Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier (T.F.H. Publications, 1966), and the later Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers,(T.F.H Publications, 1990), the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is described as follows:

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3 Redlich, Anna, The Dogs of Ireland, Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1949, 159
4 Holmes, Maureen, The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Racom: Meppel, 1992, 4-5
“This indispensable terrier worked round-the-clock. He **herded cattle** and guarded them. He was the implacable foe of all vermin. He stood sentry over the family larder…He kept roving marauders from trespassing…The fittest survived and their influence is the Wheaten’s heritage.”

[Note: Ms. O’Connor was one of the founding members of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America after World War II, and along with her family, one of the most influential individuals in bringing about AKC recognition for the breed in 1973].

In a critique of a 2008 herding clinic conducted by Carolyn Wilki, owner and herding trainer of the Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm, and former AKC herding judge, Carolyn gives some background of the traditional herding role of the Irish farm dog as it relates to Wheaten Terriers.

“...In the 18th and 19th centuries, the dogs kept by the impoverished Irish peasantry earned their keep by performing a variety of useful tasks. Herding chores would have been among the typical farm dog’s activities. I would imagine that the best of these dogs herded in the working style of what the French refer to as **foot dogs**. A foot dog is attracted to livestock but unclear about exactly when and where to do what with them unless the dog is trained. The foot dog works on the handler’s command to do something around the livestock, returning to the foot of the handler to receive the next assignment. The primary herding jobs for the dog likely would have been to find, gather and fetch/chase/drove livestock back home when they got loose, to chase livestock out of fields where they were not supposed to be, to help move and corner individual livestock for a bleeding or other invasive procedure and then send the animal back to the shed or usual grazing field, and to protect the livestock from attack from bandits or vermin (including other dogs) by barking and chasing. The dogs’ bark and bounce could have enabled them to get the livestock’s attention in conditions of taller, denser vegetation – which can be described as working in the **huntaway style**. However,

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most of the dog’s work probably would have been performed at a trot, roughly matching the speed of the livestock.”

Although the actual origin of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier breed remains a mystery, there have been conjectures made, specifically regarding the derivation of the “soft flowing coat,” as well as the softer temperament, very unlike other terrier breeds. As referenced in Terriers of Scotland and Ireland by Bryan Cummins, Ph.D., Colonel David ‘Hancock, in The Heritage of the Dog (1990) notes that the breed ‘looks more like an old drover’s breed than an earth-dog.’”

Cummins states that the Polish Lowland Sheepdog, also known as the Polish Owczarek Nizinny Sheepdog, or Nizinny for short, who also contributed to the Bearded Collie, was introduced to the British Isles, specifically Scotland, in the 16th century.

“The coat is shaggy and comes in a variety of colors and markings. The breed is recognized as surprisingly strong and muscular for its size. The body, like that of the Wheaten, is rectangular.” He goes on to further conjecture, that in terms of the Wheaten, what all this means is that the possibility exists that en route to Scotland, the Nizinny could also have found its way to Ireland and helped create the Wheaten with its striking coat.”

Cummins goes on to say that this theory is not rooted in any substantial evidence. Yet in size, conformation and coat, the Nizinny is similar to the Wheaten. He continues that “while it remains in the realm of speculation, it is not totally unreasonable that lurking in the background of the Wheaten is a shaggy or long-haired sheepdog. From this ancestor the Wheaten inherited three characteristics: its coat, its herding instincts and a somewhat milder temperament than its cousins”.

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7 Wilki, Carolyn, Critique of 2008 Herding Clinic, Benchmarks, A Publication of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America, volume 36, number 2, 29.
8 Cummins, Ph.D., Bryan, Terriers of Scotland & Ireland, Phoenix: Doral Publishing, 2003, 275
9 Ibid., 278
10 Ibid., 279
11 Ibid., 280
CURRENT CAPABILITIES AND HERDING ACTIVITIES

As U. S. Wheaten owners became more active in AKC performance activities, e.g., agility, obedience and tracking, and realized their dogs were quite capable of successfully competing in these sports, they also developed a keen interest in herding as well. Wheaten Terriers and their owners have participated in all-breed herding tests throughout the United States, from Pennsylvania to Tennessee, to Ohio, Louisiana and California. In addition, some of our SCWTCA members extending all the way to Alberta, Canada, have entered herding tests and competitions. The general consensus from owners, participants and evaluators is that Wheatens have a demonstrated and robust herding capability that could be developed through training to compete and succeed in AKC herding events.

The American Herding Breed Association (AHBA) has accepted the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier as a multi-purpose breed with a herding background, allowed to participate in its herding capability tests and trials since the 1990s. As noted below, several Wheatens have earned AHBA titles and are currently continuing training and competition for more advanced tests and trials.

American Herding Breed Association: Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Titles

SHS’s Sunshine and Cinnamon, owned by M. Suzanne Sims, Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s), May 1, 1998

Trigo’s Fergus MacRoich, owned by Mari Phillips, Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s), May 9, 1999

Brigadoon’s Elmo Sara’s Joy, owned by Sara Schlough, Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s), May 9, 1999

Ch. Claddagh’s Star-Studded Ceili (“Ceili”), owned by Viviana and Ron Hetherington, Junior Herding Dog on Sheep (JHD-s), November 16, 2003

Lontree’s Ursa Minor, (“Teddi”), owned by Judith Downing, Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s), September 16, 2006

Marymore Point Mugu, (“Magoo”), owned by Constance Koehler and Mary Peltier, Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s), May 10, 2009

There may be more Wheatens who have earned AHBA titles in addition to those dogs listed above. According to our contacts within the organization, all records of titles earned prior to 2000 were archived entirely on paper, not in an automated database, as is the practice since that time. Some records were retained, such as for the Wheatens recorded above. However, many records were discarded once the certificate was issued.
A complete description of the requirements for earning AHBA test titles (HCT and JHD, with a variety of stock) may be found at the following links on the AHBA website:

- Summary descriptions of AHBA herding instinct tests:


There have also been many Wheatens who have passed herding instinct tests given by all-breed kennel clubs, or breed clubs other than SCWT. These have included “Tara,” qualifying with the Helena, Montana, Kennel Club, and an American-Bred Wheaten, “Caraway Show Me The Monet,” qualifying with the Canadian National Australian Shepherd Association.

In addition to North America, the “Land Down Under,” renowned for its sheep stations and herding as a way of life from the 19th century to the present day, corroborates the evidence that the SCWT is a recognized herding dog. The Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) is Australia’s analog to the AKC as its premier canine “coordinating body” for conformation and performance events, and the maintenance of breeding standards through a national stud register.

recognized herding as a performance sport since 2000. Herding trials are open to all dogs in the Working Group (Group 5), as well as the Bernese Mountain Dog; the Canaan Dog; Keeshond; Kerry Blue Terrier; SCWT; Norwegian Elkhound; Tibetan Terrier; and mixed breeds, provided that they are a recognizable mix of herding breeds.

The ANKC Herding Instinct Test (HIT) title is similar to its AKC HT or AHBA HCT analogs. The test consists of two legs qualified under two different judges to earn the title, with the goal to evaluate the dog’s demonstrated interest in stock, and without evidence of aggression or harm to the stock. Since the initial ANKC institution of herding tests and trials, one Australian SCWT has completed both legs of its HIT, and another has earned one qualifying leg. In the March, 2005, issue of Benchmarks, The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America quarterly, Angela Hervey-Tenneyson, an Australian Wheaten breeder, shares her experience taking her Wheaten, Australian Ch. Larnook Figjam (“Figgy”), to a Herding Instinct Test run by Central Highlands KC (Victoria, Australia), gaining a passing certificate. 

### U. S. Local and Regional Wheaten Club Herding Events: Training and Testing

Interest in herding among the SCWT community in the United States burgeoned in the 1990s, in various parts of the country. In 1997, the Motor City SCWT Club of Detroit conducted a herding instinct test, with 25 dogs participating. There have also been various reports of herding training and instinct testing in Florida since the 1990s, in connection with the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Greater Tampa Bay. In addition, a respected Wheaten breeder from Northern California, Marcia Weisman, was one of the original organizers of eight years of herding tests and clinics sponsored by the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Northern California (SCWTCNC) in the 1990s. Ms. Weisman has recently initiated herding lessons with a local herding instructor, Marian Pott of Miramar Dog Training, with the goal of pursuing titles and reinstating Northern California Wheaten training clinics in the near future.

The Delaware Valley Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club has sponsored a herding instinct test for Wheatens at The Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm for six consecutive years beginning in April of 2003, and added a Wheaten herding clinic in 2008 held the day following the test event. Another herding instinct test and herding clinic are planned for April 9-10, 2010. Suzanne Stone has personally participated with her dogs “Jeter” (Am/Can Ch Shandalee Daredevil, CD, AXP, AJP, CGC, TDIAOV, Versatility and Therapy Dog, HIC) in 2003, and “Gabby” (Lonestar Play By Play, OA, AXJ, NF, CGC, HIC) in 2008. She also helped Carolyn Wilki administer the test to the other Wheatens. Of the 22 Wheatens participating in 2008, 19 received Herding Instinct Certification, for an 86 percent passage rate.

12 Angela Hervey-Tenneyson, “Herding in Australia,” Benchmarks, the quarterly journal of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Assn. of America, March 2005, 87-88
Among the participants were rescue dogs, house pets, performance dogs and show dogs accompanied by several Wheaten breeders. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that the conformation dogs would not retain their herding instinct, nor be trainable for herding, they performed exceedingly well. They did have adequate training to take commands from their owners and qualified with ease.

There have been several eastern Wheaten owners who have worked with Carolyn Wilki in herding training with their Wheatens on their own. Bob Johnson did a great deal of herding training at the Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm with his Irish coated Wheaten, “Bridget.” Dr. Peter Barbour documented his herding training with his Wheaten, “Gus,” with Carolyn Wilki at the Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm, in the March, 2003, issue of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America quarterly, Benchmarks. Suzanne Stone has participated in herding training at the Raspberry Ridge Sheep farm with both her Wheatens, including six week-long all-day intensive training camp sessions utilizing positive reinforcement herding training. With her first Wheaten, Jeter, Suzanne also helped with the moving and grazing of sheep along with a variety of farm chores during her stays at the sheep farm. During her first herding camp with her second Wheaten in 2008, Gabby executed a simulated AKC Junior Herding Test in 4 of the 10 allotted minutes using a clicker, as well as returned escaped sheep to their pens from the large “C” course several times.
Continuing the example set by its NorCal and DelVal colleagues, the SCWT Club of Southern California (SCWTSC) has held four consecutive annual herding instinct tests from 2006 through 2009, culminating in an AHBA-sanctioned HCT-s leg-one event on Oct. 18, 2009. Under the expert evaluation of renowned AKC and AHBA herding judge Judy Vanderford, each annual event has continued to heighten the enthusiasm of club members for herding.

In 2006, 89 percent of the dogs evaluated passed Ms. Vanderford’s informal testing. Only two of the 18 SoCal dogs that participated failed to exhibit a suitable amount of interest and instinctive behavior toward the sheep. The 2006 group ranged in age from five months to nine years; the pup, now Ch. Starlight You Are My Destiny, turned in one of the strongest examples of instinct among the pack. In 2007, 18 of 23 dogs, or 78 percent that were tested, were honored with a certificate, issued by the club and signed by Judy Vanderford. In 2008, 11 of 15, or 73 percent, passed. Most of the dogs in all three years’ groups were trained for conformation, but many were also obedience dogs, therapy dogs, or pets as their sole occupation.
The 2009 event was the SoCal club’s first sanctioned herding event, again judged by Judy Vanderford. Of 13 SCWTs, 11 qualified for their first leg of the American Herding Breed Assn. (AHBA) Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s) title, an 85% passage rate for basic instinct testing. Even the stock dog was an AHBA herding-titled Wheaten, further showcasing our breed’s herding abilities.

- The majority of the 13 dogs tested—numbering 10—had been exposed to stock previously, and all 10 had either passed the club’s informal testing sessions or practiced moving sheep shortly before the event. Nine of those “experienced” dogs qualified for HCT-s Leg 1.
- Five of the dogs entered have earned conformation championships, and two more are being actively exhibited in class competition; only one of those dogs did not pass Leg 1.
- Three out of the total are juveniles, ranging in age from one year to just seven months; all qualified.
- Only two dogs failed to qualify.

Behind the scenes, a team of three—two human stock handlers and one SCWT—“refreshed” several groups of four sheep, which were used to test increments of three dogs before they were changed out. Connie Koehler’s Marymore Point Mugu, AHBA HCT-s (“Magoo”), stood duty in the sheep shed adjacent to the testing corral. Magoo, who completed his HCT-s between April and May, 2009, has trained with Judy since late 2007, and is currently preparing for JHD-s trials in 2010; this was his debut as a working stock dog.

Following the club’s event, an informal herding training group has formed among six club members—four of whom are board members—and nine dogs, to prepare for more
advanced AHBA titles—and the number of club herding enthusiasts in the group sessions is growing.

The following table lists the qualifying teams for SCWTSC’s AHBA HCT-s Leg One instinct test:

SCWTSC Qualifying Teams, AHBA HCT-s Leg One  
Lake View Terrace, CA, October 18, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner(s)/Handler(s)</th>
<th>Dog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn and Lauren Smith</td>
<td>Destiny Reach for the Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn and Lauren Smith</td>
<td>Kincora Tara Good as Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Johnson, Cecily Skinner and Kayce</td>
<td>Ch. Kincora Tara Gold O’West Isles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healy</td>
<td>Ch. Starlight Treasure Chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam Kahan</td>
<td>Ch. Kincora Tara Go for Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon and Kathy Apogee</td>
<td>Kincora Tara Life in the Fast Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon and Kathy Apogee</td>
<td>Destiny Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara and Bruce Darracq</td>
<td>Ch. Starlight You Are My Destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam Kahan</td>
<td>Harbour Hills Dirty Laundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryann Welker and Ron Tank</td>
<td>Bonney Apple of My Eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave and Vickie Gosnell and Bonita Snyder</td>
<td>Ch. Aisling Claddagh U2 Can Be Like Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viviana and Ron Hetherington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club-Sponsored Herding Instinct Tests and Clinics

The following list summarizes the most current SCWT herding activities conducted in the United States over the past 17 years:

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Northern California

Motor City Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club – serving metro Detroit, Michigan and Canada
Herding Instinct Test, June 28, 1997, 25 Wheatens participated

Sit & Stay Dog Training Center, Christiana, Tennessee
Herding Instinct Test, August 2004 (10 of 10 Wheatens qualified), 100% passage rate

The Delaware Valley Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club
Bangor, PA, Raspberry Ridge Sheep Farm
- Herding Instinct Tests, 2007, 2008 (19 of 22 qualified), 86% passage rate
- Herding Training Day-long Clinic, 2008
- Herding Instinct Test and Herding Training Day-long Clinic planned for April 9-10, 2010.

Ames Hollow Farm, Portland Connecticut
Herding Instinct Test, May 3, 2008 (17 of 19 Wheatens qualified), 89% passage rate

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Southern California:
- Herding Instinct Test, Sunland, CA, February 2006 (16 of 18 qualified), 88% passage rate
- Herding Instinct Test, Sunland, CA, March 2007 (18 out of 23 qualified), 78% passage rate
- Herding Instinct Test, Lake View Terrace, CA, March 2008 (11 of 15 passed), 73% passage rate

American Herding Breed Association/Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Southern California Sanctioned Event
Leg One of Herding Capability Tested on Sheep (HCT-s) title; Lake View Terrace, CA, October 18, 2009; Judith Vanderford, judge (AKC/AHBA herding judge).
11 of 13 Wheatens qualified for basic instinct testing, or 85% passage rate October 18, 2009
Special Wheaten appearance at the AKC/Eukanuba Herding Demo, Long Beach, CA, December 1-2, 2007

In addition to 11 dogs among the AKC-approved herding breeds, Ch. Claddagh’s Star-Studded Ceili, a Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier who earned her AHBA JHD-s title while only eight months old, was selected to participate in herding demonstrations conducted outside the main arena of the 2007 AKC/Eukanuba National Invitational and Eukanuba World Challenge dog show, held Dec. 1-2 at the Long Beach California Convention Center. Judy Vanderford was the catalyst for Ceili’s appearance at the AKC/Eukanuba invitational. She was contacted by Carol Delsman, western regional director of herding events in AKC’s Performance Events Division, for nominations from among Judy’s student herding teams to participate in the demonstration. Each dog was given a maximum of five minutes to demonstrate his or her capabilities. Handled by her owner, Ron Hetherington, Ceili proved herself more than equal to the task at hand. After beginning in a stay, Ron commanded her to execute a figure eight, a more complex maneuver than a simple sweeping go-by or away. The climax of Ceili’s turn in the ring was her penning and releasing the sheep back into the corral area. She had in fact never before released sheep from a pen, but did so with the confidence and skill of an old pro. Ceili was only one of two dogs to demonstrate penning – the second a Standard Schnauzer – and set the chinning bar for such close contact work, the sure sign of a stock dog that is comfortable with her abilities to move sheep.13

Conclusion

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier was an all-around farm dog helping Irish peasant tenant farmers to be able to survive in impoverished times. The Wheaten was called upon to accomplish many tasks, including the herding, droving, and guarding of sheep and cattle.

Today, the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier has proven to be a trainable companion and performance competitor in a wide variety of canine sports and activities. Despite their pristine appearance in the show ring, they can still get down and dirty in the herding ring and have not lost their instinct to move stock.

With an established performance committee in place in the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America, we are dedicated to promoting and expanding Wheaten herding under the auspices of our parent all-breed organization, the American Kennel Club, and its sanctioned herding events. With the AKC’s help and guidance, we can return the SCWT to one of the principal functions for which it was developed hundreds of years ago in its native land of Ireland: herding stock.
Figure 4. “Ewe Can't Win,” by Suzanne Stone, Pastel 1st place and "Best in Show," Dog Fancier's Art Competition 2005, New York, NY

Bibliography


Redlich, Anna, *The Dogs of Ireland*, Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1949, 159


*Benchmarks*, the quarterly journal of The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America, has published regular articles on herding dating back to at least 1988. The following citations list some of these articles. The most recent articles can be located on the SCWTCA web site (current issues dating back to September 2004) at the following link: http://scwtca.org/benchmarks/index.htm

**December 2009**, “Give Fleece A Chance, So Cal Wheatens Hold Their Inaugural Sanctioned Herding Trial” by Connie Koehler, California

**June 2008**, “Del Val SCWTC’s Annual April Herding Event” by Suzanne Stone and Carolyn Wilki, Pennsylvania

**March 2008**, “Star Studded Wheaten Shines in AKC/Eukanuba Herding Demo” by Connie Koehler, California

**June 2007**, “Have Ewe Herd? Southern California Wheatens Return to their Celtic Roots” by Connie Koehler, California


**March 2005**, “Herding In Australia” by Angela Hervey-Tenneyson, Australia

**June 2003** “Sheep Herding Update” by Ellen Dix, Pennsylvania

**March 2003**, “Sheep Herding With Gus” by Peter Barbour, Pennsylvania

**Summer 1998**, “A Herding Wheaten” by Shelly Monroe

**Winter 1993**, “Another Gem in the Wheaten Crown” by Dr. David R. Lincicome, Ph.D [author is both a Wheaten breeder and a sheep farmer whose Wheatens saved his sheep from a gray fox]

**Winter 1991**, “A Terrier?” by Judy Price
And in Canada:
*Wheaten Wags*: The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of Canada Quarterly

**Fall 2009**, “Celebrating Our Working Wheatens – Herding,” article by J. Ubbink and Joan Pizitz – Photos by Willie Moore and Michael Loftis
SHEEP HERDING WITH GUS
**DELVAL SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER CLUB ORGANIZATION HERDING INSTINCT TEST FORM**

**OWNER:** Suzanne Stone  
**DATE:** April 5, 2008

**DOG'S NAME:** Lonestar's Play by Play - Gabby  
**DOB'S BREED:** Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier  
**DOG TESTED ON (NO.) SHEEP:** 4  
**ELAPSED TIME:** 8 minutes

- **DOG QUALIFIES AS BEING HERDING INSTINCT TEST CERTIFIED:**  
- **RETEST RECOMMENDED:**  
- **DOG DOES NOT QUALIFY:**

### CONTROL
- **PAUSE:**  
  - [X] YES  
  - [ ] NO  
  - [ ] SUSTAINED
- **STOP:**  
  - [X] YES  
  - [ ] NO  
  - [ ] SOME
- **RECALL:**  
  - [X] YES  
  - [X] NO  
  - [ ] NO INTEREST  
  - **sometimes**

### INTEREST
- **MOVEMENT OF STOCK:**  
  - [X] KEEPS STOCK GROUPED  
  - [ ] DOES NOT REGROUP  
  - [ ] SINGLES OUT INDIVIDUALS  
  - [X] CHASES STOCK  
  - [ ] LOSES CONTACT WITH STOCK

### TEMPERAMENT
- **READILY ADJUSTS:**  
  - [X] EASILY DISTRACTED  
  - [ ] FRIGHTENED OF SITUATION
- **BALANCE/DISTANCE TO CONTROL STOCK:**  
  - [X] ADJUSTS POSITION AND/OR DISTANCE  
  - [ ] SOME ADJUSTMENT  
  - [ ] NO ADJUSTMENT  
  - [ ] MOVES EASILY ALONG FLOCK SIDE

### APPRAISAL
- **APPROACH:**  
  - [X] RUNS WIDE  
  - [X] RUNS MOD. WIDE  
  - [ ] RUNS CLOSE  
  - [ ] RUNS BORDER
- **EYE:**  
  - [X] LOOSE  
  - [X] MEDIUM  
  - [X] STRONG
- **WEARING:**  
  - [X] WEARING A LITTLE WEARING  
  - [X] NO WEARING
- **BARK:**  
  - [X] SILENT  
  - [X] FORCE BARKS  
  - [ ] SUSTAINED  
  - [ ] BARKING

### DRIVING TENDENCIES
- **DOG SHOWS READY ADJUSTMENT TO:**  
  - [X] FETCHING TENDING  
  - [X] DRIVING OTHER

### COMMENTS:
- Dog showed a lot of herding talent. Was quiet around the sheep.
- Showed fetching & driving & could be applied. Got back to sheep & handled with nice motion.

### TESTER'S SIGNATURE:
- **C. McIlw—**

**GREAT WORK!**
Roots

by Michael Fish

On Sunday morning, May 2, 1993, nine Wheaten Terriers complete with their owners and picnic lunches assembled at Daydream Farm near Elk Grove for the purpose of testing their herding instincts. By the afternoon, I'm sure there was no doubt in any of our twenty or so minds that Wheats were once herding dogs.

The Herding Clinic or Wheaten's Fun Day on the Farm was organized and directed by Marsha Weisman. The nine Wheats (1 bitches & 6 dogs) ranged in age from eight years down to three months. A few non-Wheats participated as friends of the club. The owners, their families and friends numbered about 20 and ranged in age from about four to fifty-something. We all brought our own picnic lunches.

The field of Wheats included Tater Beers, Brady Fish, Thistle deBeer, Bentley Sand-Newhouse, Marley Elkins, Tucker Weisman and Blossom, Rosie & Pistil Alexander. Non-Wheats were Tibetan Terriers Meeshia & Nugget Hawkins and German Shepherd Hussy Springer. Cattle observers were Airedales Juan & Jose Oghiev and Tibetan Terrier Sophie Weisman.

This was a day where all dogs were winners. A day in which the love for your Wheat and for all Wheats heightened to almost overwhelming proportions. A day for each owner to bust the buttons off his/her shirt. And a day for our Wheats to gain or regain confidence.

Picture, if you will... Your Wheat running at full tilt, gliding along as if his feet weren't touching the ground in hot pursuit of a small flock of sheep; Analyzing a sheep breaking from the flock and instantly altering his course to bring the errant critter back to the flock; Circling a flock counterclockwise and switching to clockwise because the shepherd or trainer directed him to do so; Moving slowly from side to side to keep the herd all moving in one direction; So excited about this newly discovered sport that no matter how hot the sun he wants to keep on participating. And, finally, picture your Wheatie almost swaggering with confidence as he exits the arena; one proud pooch. He has visited his Roots and he liked it.

The Tibetan Terriers were once used for herding goats. Today's sheep didn't seem much of a problem. Ten-month old Nugget did especially well in the arena. In fact, had there been a trailer, she would have taken the sheep home. Hussy, the German Shepherd, exhibited her and her owner's advanced herding talents by moving sets of five sheep from one arena to another.

What about the puppy? Pistil, three months old, entered the Duck Arena with five Indian Runners and immediately began to move them. Things seemed to be going well for the first two minutes -- until she was challenged by one of these killer ducks. She then decided there must be something, preferably outside the arena, that needed investigating. Better watch out ducks. She'll be back. Only next time, this little Pistil will be loaded for killer ducks.

This is an edited version of a story which appeared in PawPrints; June 1993.

SCWTCNC's 8th
HERDING CLINIC
Sunday  July 8, 2001

m. Roby 1982
ARE YOU READY FOR SOME OLD AND NEW FUN WITH YOUR WHEATEN

DEL VAL SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER CLUB INVITES YOU & YOUR DOG TO JOIN US ONCE AGAIN FOR OUR “FAMOUS” HERDING INSTINCT TEST AT

RASPBERRY RIDGE SHEEP FARM IN BANGOR, PA SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010 FOR 1ST TIMERS: 9AM – 4PM (CAN RUN LATER)

(LIMITED TO 24 DOGS)

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010 9AM – 4PM (MAY RUN LATER) PREFERABLE BUT NOT REQUIRED FOR DOGS THAT HAVE PASSED THEIR INSTINCT TESTING

Saturday April 10th-Instinct Testing

TESTER - CAROLYN WILKI, a nationally recognized herding author, has tested over 1000 dogs, all breeds. She has trained dogs to more than 100 herding titles.
In this test, **positive reinforcement testing techniques** are employed. Dogs must show at least 5 minutes of interest in sheep in some herding style within a 10 minute period in order to receive a certificate. Every dog will receive a written evaluation. Puppies should be no younger than 6 months of age. There is no upper age limit.

Runs start: 9:00 AM. 4 dogs assigned per hour. Tests will be outdoors unless weather is unduly inclement, then tests will be held indoors. Please wear appropriate weather gear. **Please check in with event secretary when you arrive.** Bring a snack or lunch for you and plenty of towels and wipes for your dogs. To get the maximum enjoyment out of the event, plan to stay to watch a number of runs and root for the other Wheatens and handlers.

Leash your dog! Dress your dog in all the normal collars, harnesses, or flat buckle collars you would use when training. Please pick up after your dog. Feed and water your dog as usual!

**Sunday-April 11th-Full Day Working Dogs**  
“Herding Training for Ring/Better Home Obedience/ Obedience Training for Herding & Field”

**Description of Clinic:**
Although all Shepherds start dogs in herding by having them chase livestock, it is only “chasing”, not herding, if the dog ignores his/her handler. However, it is only useless obedience, not herding, if the dog is only responsive to the handler while ignoring his/her environment and the sheep.

The Bottom line is that no Shepherd wants to squash the predatory behaviors of his/her dog. Instead, he/she wants to mold his/her dog’s predatory behaviors into responsive, flexible behaviors that are useful to herding work.

So, how do you establish a dog’s high degree of responsiveness and focus on the handler while maintaining the dog’s focus and responsiveness to the sheep?

At this clinic, owners will learn how to use and modify the dog’s predatory behaviors to gain calmer, more controllable dogs regardless of venue. Dogs can learn to be more responsive to their handlers and better behaved in the pasture, at home, in the ring, and in the field, regardless of distraction.

The workshop will feature training exercises around livestock, with and without dogs, as well as training exercises that involve no livestock. Positive reinforcement-operant and associative conditioning techniques will be emphasized. Positive reinforcement, toys, food, leashes, long lines, sight cues, aural cues, and sight barriers, physical and pens and fences will be used as appropriate to train animals/prevent them from harm.

Owners will be taught beginning techniques and exercises to elicit calm, appropriate canine behavior and focus for performance venues (and also for teaching their pets to be good at home), how to teach directional cues, how to establish fast lie down/stand stay behaviors and increase their durations, how to get strong, (reliable, and fast) recall from dogs. If any dogs are advanced in their herding training and are experiencing a herding weakness, training suggestions about how to deal with that specific issue will be made.
Give Fleece A Chance!
SCWTCSC’s 4th Annual Herding Day
AHBA Herding Capability Test on Sheep (HCT-s), Leg One
October 18, 2009
Premium List