

Serious Questions to Consider Before Purchasing an Anatolian Shepherd Dog

The Anatolian Shepherd Dog is one of the most majestic and noble animals in the service of man, still being used in the rural districts of Turkey and Asia Minor as the shepherd's indispensable companion and front-line defense of his flock from predators. It is a large, rugged, powerful and impressive livestock guarding dog possessing great endurance and agility. It is a fiercely loyal guard dog that demonstrates a possessive attitude towards family, property and livestock.

Selecting a livestock guardian breed is serious business. The wrong choice too often leads to unhappy relationships or even abandoned dogs. Ownership of an Anatolian Shepherd Dog requires a great responsibility. Because of the breed's large size and protective instincts, the owner needs to establish he is in control, not the dog. Much time must be spent in the early years "socializing" the dog so that it will be a good citizen in the home, on the farm and in the community. Before you purchase an Anatolian Shepherd Dog, you should carefully consider the following list of questions that should help you assess the advantages and disadvantages to owning an Anatolian Shepherd Dog.

- What is your objective in obtaining an Anatolian Shepherd Dog? Working? Show? Family guardian? Companion? Are you a person who can be a partner with a loving, protective, independent dog?
- Are you a person who is a strong leader since Anatolian Shepherd Dogs are often dominant and demanding and determined?
- Are you a person who cares how the dog behaves and consistently requires civilized behavior (*i.e.* **SOCIALIZATION**)? Are you a person who accepts a commitment to spend at least 10 hours per week socializing his young Anatolian Shepherd Dog? Do you have time to take your dog to weekly training (obedience) classes?
- Are you a person who works at establishing a positive relationship with his dog and provides the necessary, carefully managed (controlled) environment to keep the Anatolian Shepherd Dog healthy, safe and trustworthy.
- How does your family feel about obtaining a very large dog – one that will be as large or as or larger than the wife and children and very strong and powerful to handle?
- Do you have the necessary *housing/fencing* (5'-6' fencing including locked gates) to accommodate a large, protective guardian so the dog will not become a neighborhood liability? Do you have close neighbors who will not tolerate barking?
- Do you have adequate space to maintain a large working breed, space which will allow him plenty of exercise?
- Is there any possibility of a new *baby/family move/new job* in the future? If the answer is yes, are you absolutely certain the dog will not be a problem with a new family member or be able to make the move with you if a job transfer occurs?
- Do you have the financial means to provide quality veterinary care and to feed your Anatolian Shepherd Dog a good quality, *lamb/rice* diet to keep him in top notch health?
- Do you have the time each week to provide your dog a thorough brushing (especially during seasonal shedding) and standard care for eyes, ears, pads and nails?
- If you have small, well-behaved children, will you have carefully managed supervision of the dog, especially when other children (or even adult friends) come to visit?
- Do you have gorgeous furniture or the perfect yard and landscaping? Do you really want a large dog which may like to chew (especially puppies) or dig holes in the yard to keep cool in the summer?
- Do you have any other *dogs/cats/farm* animals at this time? How will you introduce these animals to the new puppy? Which would best suit your family, a male or female? Do you plan to breed? If you purchase a female, how will you deal with her heat cycles to prevent *unwanted/unplanned* litters? Are you willing to *spay/neuter*?
- What has been your experience with dogs? If you are to be a first-time owner, how willing are you to keep in regular contact with the breeder or other experienced Anatolian Shepherd Dog owners to make use of their expertise and guidance?

After giving careful thought about the serious responsibility of owning a large, independent-thinking livestock guardian dog and you have decided that the Anatolian Shepherd Dog is your breed of choice, start your search for a responsible, ethical breeder. Contact the AKC Recognized Parent Club, the Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America Inc. who can provide you with an up-to-date Breeders List. The ideal breeder uses only quality, sound foundation stock, healthy temperaments, and healthy bodies with no serious faults. The breeder's invaluable years of expertise should be made available to the novice dog owners, enabling the new owner to avoid the pitfalls the breeder has endured. The onus is on you, the buyer, to do your homework and find a breeder who will do his utmost to help you select the right puppy.