Border Collie Denice Radckley interview

**Beth**: How long have you had Border Collies?

**Denice**: I have had Border collies for 22 years.

**Beth**: What first go you interested in the breed?

**Denice**: I bought the for work, because I raise sheep. And I need a working dog

**Beth**: Do you breed them or purchase them from other people?

**Denice**: I breed them.

**Beth**: Okay, how long have you been breeding?

**Denice**: Probably 10 years

**Beth**: Okay. What should somebody be looking for when looking at getting a Border collie? What should they be looking for from a breeder?

**Denice**: Well, any working dog there are working lines and there are more pet cantered lines. So each breed was designed for a purpose. Some were designed for pets. Some were designed for some type of work: herding, protection, moving livestock, hunting. So, you have to take the history of the breed and what that breed was designed to do into consideration when you are looking for a dog.

If you want a dog for a pet, then you have to get a dog suited to become a pet and not one that wants to be active and busy 24hrs a day.

**Beth**: Yep.

**Denice**: So, there are lines of Border collies that work, from grandparents, great grandparents 100 lines back, you know, that are working. And then there are other Border collies that don’t have that working history.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: So if I were getting a pet Border collie, I would look for lines that aren’t necessarily a working line.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: If I wanted a sport dog to do agility and things, I would look for a dogs who are successful in that.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: If I want a herding dog, then you have to go to someone who actually uses the dog.

**Beth**: Okay. So, if someone is looking at getting a Border collie and they do want it to work stock, does it matter whether the parents worked sheep or goats or cattle? Or can they learn any if the parents were successful with one of the groups?

**Denice**: There is a difference in the way each of those different breeds of livestock work. And a dog has to adjust to those differences. Some dogs do it seamlessly and can work all of them other dogs are more suited to one or the other.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: So, if I was going to work cattle and only cattle, I would look for parents who are successful working cattle the way I want to work cattle.

**Beth**: Okay. Do you think that a Border collie requires somebody who has had dogs before, or could they be a good dog for a first-time dog owner?

**Denice**: There are some of them that are more suited for pet type homes, that are quieter, that would do well in a pet home, but Border collies are so super smart. They are not a dog to just get and want a dog to hang out and just sit on the couch.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: They are going to want to be busy. They want to be around their people. They don’t like to be alone.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: So, It is going to take commitment on the dog owner’s part to have a Border collie, whereas other breeds aren’t quite so… they don’t require as much of us.

**Beth**: Yep. Do you think that they would best in a place that has a fenced yard where they have space to run or is somebody taking them walking multiple times a day going to be enough for a Border collie.

**Denice**: Border collies need to be busy mentally.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: It’s not so much the physical.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: So, like I said, it is going to take commitment on a dog owner’s part to have a Border collie that is happy and well adjusted.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: Be that taking them for walks or going hiking or doing search and rescue… They need a job.

**Beth**: Do they get along well with other dogs?

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**Denice**: Border collies kind of seem to play a little bit different. At least mind do because of the herding instinct that is so prevalent. So they do really well with other Border collies. Some other dogs don’t quite get how they play.

**Beth**: Okay. So particular dogs. They are not going to just love every dog.

**Denice**: Yeah, they can be… they’re kind of snobs. They like other Border collies

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: (Laughs)

**Beth**: What kind of training should an owner be expecting to do if they get a Border collie. And is it something that takes a lot of repetition to teach them something or do they pick it up pretty quickly?

**Denice**: Border collies are smart. They pick it up pretty fast. They pick up the good stuff just as easily as they pick up the wrong habits.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: So if you let them get away with something 3 times, it is going to take some effort to break that habit.

**Beth**: Okay. House training, does that usually go fairly well for them?

**Denice**: Yeah, like most dogs, as long as you are consistent and explain to them what you want, they will pick it up pretty quick.

**Beth**: Okay. Do they do pretty good with kids or is it something that if you are going to have one you should get a puppy if you are going to have kids around?

**Denice**: That…Herding dogs like things that move. And have a tendency, more tendency to nip as opposed to other breeds.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: Because of that, kids’ movement can excite herding dogs in general, Border collies specifically. And that can be a problem. Also some of them are noise sensitive.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: And so they would not be my first choice if I was getting a family pet.

**Beth**: Okay. If there are other small critters in the home, are they one you can teach to not be chasing them all the time or does it take a lot to get them to get along with other small critters?

**Denice**: Again, because mine are working, they will want to work, be that chickens, cats… So you know again you are going to have to be on top of it from day one to teach them not to do it. It can be done But…

**Beth**: It takes a little more effort than maybe some other breeds.

**Denice**: It is going to take some effort.

**Beth**: How do they do with meeting strangers as far as people if you have strangers over?

**Denice**: Like other dogs, as long as you have done your work in raising them, you are fine.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: If they are socialized.

**Beth**: You mentioned that you use yours for working. Do you also do trials with them or is it just they are they kind of your help around the farm?

**Denice**: I have done both.

**Beth**: Okay. How does a trial work? Are you able to do more than one dog or…?

**Denice**: There are 3 different venues you can trial in. There is AKC. There’s the AHBA, which is the all-breed herding association. And then there are specific Border collie trials

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: Border collies were designed to gather big fields. So, the Border collie trials are out in pastures.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: The AKC and the all-breed herding association, have smaller fenced in lots, buildings. And the herding is suited so a lot of different breeds can compete.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: So, depending on… each venue has its rules and regulations, but the people that travel and trial and do herding trials usually take more than one dog. Because, they’re not… they’re not just around the corner. You have to travel.

**Beth**: Okay. What do you love most about Border collies?

**Denice**: Probably their willingness to be a partner. And their instinct to read stock and do what they do. They… They think through things and as long as you raise them to think and make good choices, I can send my dog and he can take care of his part of the process and I can do my part.

**Beth**: Okay. What do you think is the most frustrating thing about the breed?

**Denice**: Probably that if you allow bad habits to start, they are pretty tough to break.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: So, you’ve got to be on top of it.

**Beth**: Big… consistency is important.

**Denice**: Absolutely.

**Beth**: As far as health goes, are there any things that Border collies are prone to having that somebody looking into getting one should be asking to see if parents have been tested for? Anything along those lines?

**Denice**: Each breed has their thing. Border collies can have eye disorder. They can have hips and elbows just like any other breed. They are generally a really healthy breed. But, they don’t have much hip problems. They can have epilepsy. They can have deafness, but it is not prevalent.

**Beth**: Okay. So, they are pretty hardy. For the most part. Is deafness something that can be genetically tested for or it just sometimes it happens?

**Denice**: You can test and make sure the parents are both hearing in both ears

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: And there is a genetic component. But it is not clear on how it is passed on.

**Beth**: Okay. Not one that has been directly linked yet.

12.07

**Denice**: No. Actually, cattle dogs have more of a problem with deafness. But it is there. It…Some say it is linked to color like white ears

**Beth**: Mm hmm

**Denice**: are more of a concern

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: All that has not been figured out quite yet.

**Beth**: Yeah. Okay, would you consider them a watch dog or a guard dog where they would guard the home or the territory?

**Denice**: I would consider them a guard dog. They do alert like most dogs

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: They let me know what is going on

**Beth**: Okay, but they are not going to necessarily take it into their own hands to chase off whoever has come by?

**Denice**: No

**Beth**: Okay. Is there anything else somebody looking at getting one should think about or know before they decide to bring home a Border collie, if they’ve decided I do have an active lifestyle and I have time to spend with this dog teaching it things and keeping it mentally active?

**Denice**: You know, I think, I think with any dog you have to look into the future. So, depending on the breed it is going to be 10 to 15 years that you are going to have that dog. And if you’re going to be active for the next 10 to 15 years. It’s not just today or this summer.

**Beth**: Yep

**Denice**: It is a long-time commitment.

**Beth**: Okay.

**Denice**: And just because you know… your life changes, you’re at school or you get married, or you start having kids, you know you have made a commitment to that dog.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: And I think the biggest thing with any dog is look at the history of what that dog was actually bred to do. And make sure that those behaviors will coincide with your life.

**Beth**: Okay. Now if somebody wanted to get a Border collie from you, if they have sheep and they are wanting to get a Border collie to help them work, how would they get in contact with you or learn more about it?

**Denice**: I have a website. It is clearfieldbordercollies

**Beth**: okay

**Denice**: actually, it is Clearfieldstockdogs. But you know I do herding training. I have clinics and help livestock producers learn how to use working dogs.

**Beth**: Okay

**Denice**: Not just Border collies.

**Beth**: And all of that information would be on your website?

**Denice**: Yes

**Beth**: All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate you taking the time to chat with me about Border collies and a little bit about what you do with them. I sure appreciate it.

**Denice**: All right.

**Beth**: Thank you very much

**Denice**: Yep no problem

<https://www.clearfieldstockdogs.com/>

<http://www.ahba-herding.org/>

<https://www.akc.org/sports/herding/>