



Tips to keep livestock and your dog safe in the countryside

Did you know you can break the law by allowing your dog to worry livestock?

This includes:

- **Attacking livestock**
- **Chasing livestock**
- **Being at large – roaming freely and out of control**

Taking your dog on regular walks is an important part of keeping them happy and healthy. However, it is your responsibility to make sure your dog is walked safely where livestock are, or may be, present.

Dog attacks are not the only problem

Chasing or intimidating livestock can cause extreme stress for the animals causing abortions and ill health. Alongside upset for farmers as well as affecting their livelihood.

Top Tips ... for responsible walking in the countryside

Plan ahead

- **Check walking routes** – to see if there are alternative routes to avoid areas with livestock.
- **Check** – that your dog's walking equipment is in good order and fits properly, including their collar / harness and lead.
- **Identification** – check your dog's chip details are up to date and they are wearing visible ID.
- **Watch** - for signs that livestock are present. Call your dog back to you if you are entering a new area.

Walking near livestock

- **Lead Length** - keep dogs on short leads in areas with livestock or when entering unknown areas. Livestock are less likely to panic if your dog is close to you, so this is the safest option.
- **Keep your distance** – give livestock as much space as you can, they will feel safer the further you are away from them.
- **If you are approached** – remain calm and walk slowly. In the unlikely event you are chased, it may be safer to drop your dog's lead.

Remember

- Dogs who come back when called in the park may not do so in the countryside. The interesting smells, sights and sounds will be very exciting, and your dog may behave differently.
- Even if you do have 'close control' of your dog, livestock will still be more worried by a dog off lead than one on lead – we always advise a short lead.
- Dogs have an incredible sense of smell and will be able to detect livestock far sooner than you can see them – be aware of changes to their behaviour that may indicate livestock are near.
- Most livestock worrying incidents happen when dogs stray from home. Ensure you secure your property so they are not able to escape.
- Farmers are allowed to shoot dogs who worry their animals as a last resort.

For more pet advice please visit bluecross.org.uk

