

## **Out in the wild**

For your dog, a walk in the countryside is a great adventure. Being able to explore new spaces and discover new things meets your dog's psychological needs. Open fields, new smells and other animals are all part of what makes the countryside so enjoyable for dogs. Together, all these things provide your dog with an ideal environment for exercise and a high quality of life.

With so many new things to experience, it can sometimes be difficult to control your dog. You may find that countryside distractions means that they don't come when called, or that they chase wildlife. There's potentially a lot of damage that your dog could cause if they are not obedient.

In these situations, you as a dog owner need to take responsibility for the behaviour of your pet. Before you let them off the lead, you need to be completely confident that they'll return to you when called, and not worry livestock or damage crops. If you don't have confidence in your dog, consider training them so you can. Keeping a dog restrained on a lead can be a good solution in the short term, but in the long term it means that they won't get the freedom that they need.

As a solution, we recommend an Electronic Collar as a training aid. These collars work with a safe static stimulation, delivered to your dog by the collar, and controlled by remote control. With consistent training, a remote controlled collar will teach your dog to come when called and stay away from livestock and other animals.

Dog owners that don't monitor their dog's behaviour run the risk of running into conflict with farmers. It's understandable that a farmer's first priority is to protect his livestock, his crops and his land. Responsible dog owners need to be very vigilant to make sure their dog isn't threatening any of these things.

Chasing or worrying livestock is a particularly serious issue. There is a law in England and Wales that allows farmers to protect their livestock from disruptive dogs. The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, and section 9(1) of the 1971 Animals Act mean that if a farmer shoots a dog he believes is about to worry his livestock, he is protected from prosecution as long as he notifies the police within forty eight hours of the incident. This is a very sobering law, and means that not taking responsibility for your dog in the countryside can have very upsetting consequences.

There is another important issue to think about when you take your dog for a walk in the countryside. You may think that it's not as important to clean up your dog's mess in the countryside as it is in the city, but it definitely is! In some circumstances, dog mess can become infected and be very hazardous to cattle. This can be avoided by making sure you clean up properly after your dog every time.

Responsible owners with well-trained dogs will find a walk in the countryside a very rewarding experience. Walking and playing in a wide open space is a brilliant opportunity to

bond with your dog while you both get some exercise! Training your dog to behave appropriately while having fun will make sure you have a positive experience.