



LIVESTOCK DOGS

Founded in 1990, CCF is a Namibian non-profit incorporated association dedicated to the long-term survival of the cheetah and its ecosystems.

CCF Vision

To see a world in which cheetah live and flourish in co-existence with people and the environment.

CCF Mission

To be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research and education on cheetahs, working with all stakeholders to achieve best practice in conservation and management of the world's cheetahs.

CCF's activities include conducting international research, conservation and education programmes to ensure the survival of the cheetah for future generations.



For the cheetah to survive, it must have habitat, prey base, and a holistic approach in the farmlands incorporating land use, livestock, and wildlife. However, due to competition with other predators in protected areas, most of Africa's cheetahs survive on agricultural lands where they conflict with human livestock interests. This sometimes results in livestock loss. Many Namibian farmers perceive cheetahs as having an excessive economic impact on their livestock and wild game industries, however, few farmers know the facts about the cheetah and few attempt to control predators in a non-lethal manner. Farmers hold the future of the cheetah in their hands, so one of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) key programs is Human and Wildlife Conflict Resolution.

The CCF Human and Wildlife Conflict research team uses the findings of the CCF scientific cheetah research program to assess cheetah behavior, prey preferences, and home ranges to then develop 'predator-friendly' livestock and wildlife management strategies. These include establishing calving seasons, calving kraals, herders, dogs and donkeys as livestock guardians, electric fencing, and warthog swing gates. Research results are trialled on the CCF Model farm and other cheetah-friendly farms. The CCF education team then shares the research studies and non-lethal predator control techniques with farmers at farm association meetings, agricultural shows and through the media.

Livestock guarding dogs have been used in Europe for centuries to protect livestock. Many breeds originated across Europe that share the same basic characteristics but have been selectively bred for efficiency under local conditions. These different breeds share not only physical traits such as large size and a threatening bark, but also important behavioral characteristics, showing attentive, trustworthy and protective behavior to the livestock with which they were raised. They are not bred to herd or move the stock, which can trigger a predator to attack, but instead place themselves between the stock and the threat and bark loudly. If the predator persists the dog will attack, but often the mere presence of an intimidating guardian is enough to make the predator leave.

CCF began a Livestock Guarding Dog program in 1994, using the Kangal Anatolian Shepherd dog that has been used in Turkey for 6,000 years to protect sheep from wolves.

“ Farmers hold the cheetah's future in their hands. Together we must find viable predator-friendly farming solutions. ”

DR. LAURIE MARKER, CCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





The Kangal Anatolian Shepherd breed were chosen in preference to other livestock guarding dog breeds as they are able to work unsupervised in vast open spaces, are short-coated (making them well adapted to working in a hot, arid climate) and are large, imposing dogs that bark loudly.



The CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog program has generated much interest among farmers, communities, tourists and the media since its inception. To date, over 300 dogs have been placed on livestock farms and farmers have reported up to an 80% decrease in livestock losses.

CCF breeds, places and monitors dogs, scoring for effectiveness using methodologies developed for guarding dog behaviour. Monitoring includes investigating livestock losses to predators on farms with and without guarding dogs. CCF supports the veterinary and medical care of puppies by vaccinating and sterilising them prior to placement. After placement, CCF provides continued care for dogs on communal farms, and monitors all other dogs monthly for the first six months and bi-annually thereafter.



The objectives of the program are to continue evaluating the dog's effectiveness and monitor how they adapt to the Namibian environment over time. To examine their effectiveness, CCF monitors the reduction of livestock losses, and thus develops an appropriate method for diminishing the level of conflict with farmland predators, in order to foster a sustainable co-existence of predators and people. The hypotheses being tested are that traditional farmers are amenable to changes in livestock management practices to mitigate predator conflict and that guarding dogs will reduce livestock loss to predators, thus reducing the numbers of predators killed by farmers.

Due to the success of this program in Namibia, CCF is assisting in the development of Livestock Guarding Dog program in other countries where large carnivores are in conflict with livestock.



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