

A New Puppy on the Farm

I have always loved dogs. Growing up we had some great canine companions. One was named Lassie and she lived around the time when the television show by the same name was going strong. Our Lassie was as loyal as any dog could ever be. She was always with us boys as we explored the woods, walked out to the pasture to bring up the cows for milking, or worked in the fields. She used to trot along behind the tractor and plow in the dead furrow back and forth round after round all day long while we worked in the field tilling up the soil the old-fashioned way. Sadly, Lassie came to an untimely end one warm summer day. I remember it quite clearly even though I was only eight years old. She was with us as she always was in the field as we were baling hay that day. We each had a job to do when it was hay making time. Someone was mowing the alfalfa with a sickle mower using our old Ford Jubilee. Somebody else was running the freshly cut alfalfa through the crimper/conditioner with the Super M to get the juice out. Another person was raking the dry hay with the M. We had the 706 IH on the baler with someone driving and someone stacking the wagon. Then, of course, others were hauling wagons up to the barn and unloading them onto the elevator and a couple people were up in the hay mow stacking. It was quite an operation when all of this was working like a finely tuned machine. It took all six of us boys, my Dad, Grandpa, and usually a few cousins to make it go.

Lassie loved to hunt and kill small animals like wood chucks, squirrels, racoons, rabbits and opossums. Many times, she would hunt at night and leave the bodies outside the front door for us to stumble on in the early morning hours. This day she was out there with us making hay, as she usually always was, when she caught sight of a rabbit and decided to take a short cut under the baler to catch her prey. The plunger arm came around and caught her and she was killed. It was a sad day as all of us had to continue to work with tears running down our cheeks that afternoon. We had an emotional funeral for her that night after chores.

Dogs have always been a part of my life. We have had a couple really wonderful Labrador retrievers in recent years. Our five-year-old Duke likes to hop in the truck with me every day when I go to get dairy cow feed. He stands on the floor looking out the windshield like he's big stuff. Recently, we added a new puppy to keep Duke company. Her mother is a purebred Akbash Turkish herding dog. I'm hoping she'll help bring the cows up from the pasture someday. Duke has taken to her very nicely. We call her Duchess, Dutchie for short, so now we have a Duke and a Duchess. I'm sure she is going to be a fine farm dog.

I've heard it said that one can tell a lot about a person by how he treats a dog. The Bible agrees. Proverbs 12:10 *Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast.* I don't claim to be righteous except through the righteousness of my Savior, who was perfect. II Corinthians 5:21 says that *He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God.* That means when we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, His perfection covers us, and we are free to live in relationship with God. That's some great stuff and available for any and everyone who wants true joy and peace in their life. Until next week, God bless.