

ANATOLIAN SHEPHERD LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG PROJECT



PROGRESS REPORTS

JULY 2008



Progress Report Anatolian Shepherd Guarding Dog Project

South Africa

In order to assist farmers in the reduction of livestock losses the following Anatolian Shepherd dogs were placed on selected farms as a means of non-lethal predator control:

First set of placements (2005):	Second set of placements (2006):	Third set of placements (2006):	Fourth set of placements (2007):	Fifth set of placements (2007):	Sixth set of placements (2008):
1. Uthaya (Botriver) 2. Boleyn (Thabazimbi District) 3. Gillian (Lepalale District) 4. Inca (Brey District) 5. Tau (Musina) 6. Jedi (Thabazimbi District)	1. Kiwi (Thabazimbi District) 2. Warrior (Stockpoort, Limpopo)	1. Jo (Brey District) 2. Simba (Musina) 3. Guardian, renamed Beska (Lephalale)	1. Themba (Botriver) 2. Alpha (Baltimore, Limpopo) 3. Bravo (Thabazimbi) 4. Charlie (Thabazimbi) 5. Delta (Limpopo) 6. Echo (Limpopo)	1. Fox (All Days, Limpopo) 2. Gia (Tolwe, Limpopo) 3. Pego (Vhembe, Limpopo)	1. Kilo (Jakkelsfontein) 2. Juliet (Gregory) 3. Hank (Klipvlei) 4. Lema (Krokodilpan) 5. Mike (Maastroom) 6. Issy (Matopi)

To assess the progress of these dogs, continuous monitoring has been done during 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 by means of visitations, telephonic discussions and questionnaires.

A. First set of placements (2005)

Of the first set of placements the following results were obtained:

Uthaya is a very successful and well-established Anatolian placed on farm Paardenkloof in the Western Cape near Botriver. He guards a herd of approximately 500 sheep and also moves freely within the herd of cattle in the next enclosure without any anxiousness from the cattle.

Since his workload has increased dramatically over time the decision was made to place a second dog on this farm to assist with the guarding duties. The second placed dog, Themba, has displayed some roaming behaviour and it was decided to remove him from the farm and place him with another herd on a farm in cheetah range.

No livestock losses have been suffered since *Uthaya*'s placement and the farm owner is extremely satisfied.

Boleyn is working brilliantly and displays all the characteristics necessary to deem her an effective

guarding dog. She has successfully protected her herd from resident brown and spotted hyena, leopard and nomadic cheetahs. She is currently guarding a herd of 90 goats in an area of approximately 400 ha. Even after the traumatic experience of getting caught in a snare, Boleyn has kept on delivering good work. This is a testament to her strong bond with her herd. She is currently in very good condition. No livestock losses have been suffered since the placement and the farm owner is extremely satisfied.

Jedi still works as an ambassador at De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust and is doing excellent work in promoting the project to visitors at this world-renowned facility.

Tau was the first dog placed on Martiens Opperman's farm, Hartjiesveld, in the Limpopo Province. He unfortunately disappeared when he was one year old, presumably to snakebite. He was an effective and reliable guarding dog and no livestock losses were suffered during his time with the herd. The farmer was extremely happy with this placement and immediately requested another Anatolian to replace Tau.

Gillian adapted well when moved to a new farm and bonded well with her new sheep herd, but has of late started to accompany the other Anatolian (Simba) with his goats to the veldt. This might be as a result of a weak bond between her and the new sheep herd. Alternatively she might have gone looking for company and found it with Simba and his herd. Corrective measures will be implemented. No livestock losses have been suffered and the farmer is very happy with the placement.

Inca was removed from her farm because of inadequate bonding with her herd and undesirable play behaviour. This could not be corrected even after numerous attempts at corrective training. She is now a guarding dog at Mr Valli Moosa's house and she is doing an excellent job.

B. Second set of placements (2006)

Kiwi's placement has encountered little behavioural problems and she has proved herself to be an effective and reliable guarding dog. She has bonded very well with her herd of a hundred goats and sheep and guards them daily while the herd grazes in a 600 ha area.

Since a family member has installed a camera trap to do game counts footage of resident cheetah on the farm have been seen repeatedly. It is clear that there is significant cheetah activity in the area. The farm owner is extremely satisfied with *Kiwi's* placement and has seen significant economic benefit from this placement.

Warrior has developed into a very effective guarding dog and has adjusted well after being moved from his familiar surroundings to a new farm and new animals. He has bonded well with his herd and is very reliable in following the daily routine expected of him. Currently, he is guarding a herd of approximately 300 sheep in a grazing area of 150 ha. The farmer has not had any livestock losses and is very happy with the placement.

C. Third set of placements (2006)

Jo was removed from his farm near Bray in the Northern Cape after the farmer made it clear that he was not willing to commit the necessary time and commitment during the training period. *Jo* was in the care of the same farmer with whom *Inca* was placed and that was regarded as a failed placement. We suspect that farmer negligence contributed to both removals.

No livestock losses have been encountered during *Jo*'s placement and the farmer, interestingly, has shown interest in buying an Anatolian from Cheetah Outreach in 2008. Cheetah Outreach/De Wildt will invite him to buy a dog but no more dogs will be placed on this farm.

Jo has successfully been placed with new owners where he is now a family guarding dog.

Simba was the second dog placed on Mr Martiens Opperman's farm to replace *Tau*. He has bonded very well with his herd of 70 goats and escorts them while they roam over an area of up to 2400 ha. No livestock losses have been suffered since *Simba*'s placement and the farmer is extremely happy with the results. *Simba* had to have an operation on one of his front legs to correct a misaligned section of bone. He is doing well after the operation and is back with his flock as guardian.

Guardian (Beska) has displayed some serious behavioural problems as a young dog, but has now settled well with his herd and has shown that he is reliable in the face of danger. There is a strong likelihood that some of the undesirable behaviour stem, at least in part, from a lack of proper monitoring and appropriate disciplining on the farmer's part.

Beska can certainly be considered a good and reliable guarding dog and with better involvement from the farmer, could develop into an excellent working dog.

D. Fourth set of placements (2007)

Themba was placed on farm Paardenkloof, Botriver, in February 2007. He was the second dog placed on this farm to assist *Uthaya*, the established Anatolian, with the workload since the herd has grown considerably over the last few years. *Uthaya* started to push *Themba* out of the flock and *Themba* had to be removed from the farm. He was placed on a sheep farm within the free ranging cheetah area of South Africa. He is going through the bonding process on the farm, and is doing well.

Alpha has developed into a very impressive looking dog. He continues to do very well and displays no serious behavioural problems. He is still shy of other people but will as before let Mrs Brandt handle him and she reports he has now become accustomed to her sons as well. He will not approach the field workers and barks at them during visitations. He also does not like anyone unfamiliar approaching the kraal. No livestock losses have been suffered since the placement and the farm owner is very happy with *Alpha*'s progress so far.

Bravo had corrective measures implemented for undesirable behavior. These were not successful and the decision was made to remove *Bravo* from the farm. He was placed on a new farm where he never bonded adequately with his new herd and the decision was made to home him. He has since bonded with his new owners and has adjusted well to being a family guarding dog.

Charlie died of an unknown illness recently. De Wildt/Cheetah Outreach is still awaiting the official veterinarian's report to confirm the cause of death.

At the time of his death Charlie was a fully functional part of the flock and the owner was very distressed when Charlie died. He saw the impact Charlie had on his farming operation and has shown interest in acquiring a new dog when available.

Delta has adjusted well and has become an integral member of the herd of cows. Her guarding skills are developing well and after a troublesome cow was removed from the herd she has shown an even stronger bond with the remaining members of her herd. The farmer is satisfied with the placement and the progress shown.

Echo was placed on a farm in the Limpopo Province in mid August 2007. He had bonded exceptionally well with his cattle herd of 46 members and accompanied them daily in a 200 ha camp.

He was fully integrated into the herd and had shown aggression towards perceived threats to his herd. The farmer has been very happy and impressed by the independence shown by *Echo* at such an early age.

Unfortunately *Echo* was shot by an irresponsible neighbour while protecting his herd. During a leopard attack the herd stampeded through the border fence onto a neighbouring farm and *Echo* was shot while on this property. We have since had an outpour of anger about the unnecessary action taken and an insert on this will be shown on a respected and popular local wildlife and conservation programme.

The placements of these two dogs with cattle have gone exceptionally well, and this success will allow us to place more dogs with cattle. This initiative has made it possible to explore a new avenue in terms of cheetah conservation in South Africa.

E. Fifth set of placements (2007)

Fox has developed into a well-adjusted guardian. He has come through the training phase without displaying any serious undesirable behaviour and the farmer is happy with the positive effect *Fox* has had on his farming operation. Some normal play behaviour has been encountered, but with corrective measures this will be rectified easily.

Gia was placed on farm Drinkeling near Tolwe in the Limpopo Province on 25 October 2007. He was allocated to guard a herd of approximately 150 Kalahari red goats from caracal, black-backed jackal, leopards, brown hyena and cheetah. *Gia* was killed in the kraal by a snake within two weeks of placement. Cheetah Outreach/De Wildt will be placing another Anatolian on this farm to replace *Gia*.

Pego is accompanying his goats to the veldt every day and is an integral part of the flock. The indications are that he is progressing well since no behavioural problems have been reported. The farmer has indicated that he is very satisfied with the placement. *Pego* has recently displayed his protectiveness when he chased off hunters that were guests on the farm and got too close to his flock.

F. Sixth set of placements (2008)

Kilo was placed on the 28th of January 2008 on the farm Jakkelsfontein in the Swartwater area. *Kilo* was placed to assist the farmer in protecting a herd of approximately 50 sheep on a 6000 ha farm against

leopard, cheetah, caracal, jackal and hyena. Kilo progressed well and all indications were that he was developing into a well-adjusted and effective guarding dog. Kilo was unfortunately poisoned by one of the farm workers on the farm, after the last inspection visit. The farm worker was successfully prosecuted and got a suspended jail sentence.



Juliet was placed on a farm in the Gregory area on the 28th of January. She will be guarding a herd of 116 sheep and goats on a 600 ha farm. She is also still in the bonding and training period and is being held in a small kraal with a small group of members from her herd. Once more mature, she will have to protect her herd against a variety of predators in the area. The farmer is pleased with this placement. *Juliet* was seriously injured by a very aggressive goat and had to have her pelvic bone reconstructed. She is currently doing fine and is still with her flock. She is expected to make a full recovery after her operation.



Hank was placed on a farm in the Tugela area. The farm covers an area of 2000 ha, and has resident cheetah, leopard, caracal, jackal and hyena. After the initial bonding stage, Hank will accompany a flock of 300 goats to the veldt. The farmer is very excited about the prospect of Hank protecting the entire herd and has shown him to be very dedicated to the process.



Lema was placed on the 28th of January on a farm in the Maastroom area. He will guard a herd of 300 sheep on a 4000ha farm against cheetah, leopard, caracal, jackal and hyena. *Lema* is making good progress and no behavioural problems have been reported so far. The farmer is satisfied with the placement.



Mike was placed on a farm in the Maastroom area. As part of the bonding stage, he is currently still kept in the kraal with his new flock of young sheep. He is in good condition and seems to be adjusting very well to life as a guarding dog.

Issy was placed on a farm in the Tshipise area on the 28th of January 2008. She was progressing well in her training and the farmer was happy with the placement. Unfortunately she was injured severely by a goat ewe and died at the veterinarian clinic during treatment.



All the puppies from the newest placements are progressing very well. Their healthcare is up to date in terms of parasite control and vaccinations. Visitations to assess their development and to discuss the placements with the farmers are done once a month

Future Placements

We are hoping to place 20 puppies this year with approved farmers in free ranging cheetah territories. Several farmers have shown interest in the programme and a long list of hopeful candidates has been compiled. All applicants are assessed in terms of their farming management system, livestock losses, predators responsible for losses and other guidelines such as the farmer's attitude and commitment.

Nine farmers are currently on the waiting list for new puppies (see Attachment 1). Eight of the farms have already been approved and one is on hold awaiting inspection. The first six have been identified as recipients of the puppies awaiting placement at Cheetah Outreach and include a replacement for Echo.

Woolworths pilot programme

We are also supporting the first South African retailer, Woolworths, who is planning to make available in their stores a predator friendly meat product. This will expand on their current free ranging lamb product offered already in their stores countrywide. The farmers that have been selected to form part of a pilot programme during 2008/9 have all agreed to certain terms and conditions including using non-lethal methods of predator control. The placement of Anatolian Shepherd Dogs have been included as one way of achieving this and Cheetah Outreach and De Wildt has taken up the role of sourcing and monitoring these dogs.

As part of the pilot programme 5 puppies have already been placed in June this year on farms near Middelburg and Cradock in the Eastern Cape. Since these are very recent placements the puppies are all still kept in a small kraal with a small group of stock as part of their bonding stage. Early indications are that the puppies are all adjusting well to their herds and seem to be progressing well. Five more puppies will be placed later this year on similarly selected farms.

This initiative has potential to make sweeping changes in South Africa in regard to leg hold traps and poisons, benefiting biodiversity on farmlands.

Future Breeding

Breeding Stock

The Anatolian Shepherd Guard Dogs that currently represent Cheetah Outreach's breeding animals include the following:

- Two 2-year-old females that were born at respected Anatolian Shepherd breeders, Liebenberg Anatolians, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Angel and Melda have undergone rigorous medical examination and testing for hip dysplasia and related problems and have been declared free of any such conditions.
- Two females, one six and the other seven, were bought from Grootfontein Research Trust, with all the necessary health requirements for the breeding program. Helen and Woody have been housed at the breeding facility on Eikendal Wine Estate near Stellenbosch. Unfortunately Woody died on her way to the vet from unexpected complications during birth of an unexpected litter.
- Due to the death of Woody another six-year-old female, Lucy, has been brought from Grootfontein.
- A 3-year-old male, War Dance, was also bought from Grootfontein and is one of the new additions to this breeding program.
- The 18-month-old male imported from the States had to be removed from the breeding stock due to Hip Dysplasia. He was placed in a good home where he will receive a lot of love and attention.

Breeding

The first litter of six healthy and strong puppies was born on the 2nd of July to Melda, a first-time mom. Wardance is the father of the litter. These puppies will all be placed in cheetah range and will play a significant role in cheetah conservation in this country.

Expected breeding timeline and production

Cheetah Outreach anticipates the breeding schedule for 2008 to proceed as follows:

Angel and Melda will be mated with one of the breeding males. Since these females are young and inexperienced, difficulties may be expected with the mating process.

Six puppies have already been produced by Melda and with Angel possibly also producing a litter of 6 puppies; we are hoping to get a total of 12 puppies from these two young females.

Helen, the second dog bought from Grootfontein Agricultural College, is also expected to produce an average of 6 puppies.

With the purchase of Lucy, a third female from Grootfontein, the original target may still be achieved, since she will also be expected to produce an average of 6 puppies.

This would thus mean that the four females could produce an estimated total of 24 puppies in 2008.

There may be a second breeding depending on whether any of the females come into heat again towards the end of the year. Any puppies bred in excess of current programme needs will commercially be traded and funds invested in the breeding programme.

Breeding facility

Currently Eikendal Wine Estate supports Cheetah Outreach and De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust by providing the use of a converted veterinary facility to hand raise cheetah ambassadors.

Eikendal has demonstrated their commitment to conservation issues by donating half a hectare of land for exclusive use by Cheetah Outreach to house our breeding female dogs. This is essential, since newborn puppies need to be reared in an area free of predators as to cultivate expected and desirable behaviour. If the puppies were housed at the Cheetah Outreach facility where cheetahs live in close proximity, the puppies might accept this as the norm.

One living enclosure of 18m by 15m have been built where Angel and Melda are housed with their small herd of livestock. Four additional female camps have been developed of 15m by 9m each. A small wooden house was built in each camp for the dogs to sleep in. Additional shade is also provided. We are also developing two more camps to house more breeding females. With the current design of the camps all the dogs have access to a big area for play and energy release. This area is also used for grazing for the sheep and in doing this all the dogs have contact with the livestock.

In addition to the housing camps we have also developed a whelping area where females can be kept in isolation from the other females. This area provides shelter for the mom and puppies in a separate concrete area closer to the veterinary facility, thus enabling easier and better hygiene and monitoring. The shelter area has been constructed in such a way as to prevent the livestock from approaching and trampling small newborn puppies, but providing close enough proximity to expose puppies to the sounds and smells of the stock. When puppies reach a certain age and size, they would be able to scale a small barrier and interact more directly with their stock.

Cheetah Outreach currently house Merino and Dorper sheep and plan on acquiring a few Boer goats as to expose young puppies to all types of livestock they might be placed with eventually.

Future Plans for Breeding Programme

Two older females bought from Grootfontein College are expected to be retired from the breeding programme in one year to eighteen months time. Currently a juvenile puppy has been identified in America and is due for import to Cheetah Outreach during September 2008. Annie Beckhelling visited the breeding facility of this puppy during her fundraising visit to the States in June this year. Three other females and one male are currently being sought for import as insufficient founding dogs and bitches are currently in South Africa to provide sufficient genetic diversity for this breed. As there are plans to extend the breeding facility to accommodate these extra dogs, additional enclosures will be constructed during the summer season. (For budget see Attachment 2).