Recall Training

Many owners tell me that their dog does not come back to them when they call it. Well I say what training have you given the dog? The reply usually goes along the line of," I keep on taking it to the field to practice it".

However the training should begin the home before even taking the dog outside. The dog should be taught in stages and theses are simply broken down.

Step One

Have your dog in the house with you wait until the dog is disinterested in you and not in the pre-set training mode. Call his name and the word ' Come' or 'Here'. Only produce the reward following the action of Coming. Hold onto the collar and then give the reward. Dog's can very quickly learn that the response is only worthwhile if you have food on show first, and therefore only return if you are waving food at them.

Repeat this exercise several times throughout the day until you are able to achieve a 10 out of 10 response. Do not tire your dog though. It will be far more effective to train 2-3 recalls in one session several times a day rather than 10 all at once.

Step Two

Wait until your dog is out of sight of you in the house and paying little attention to you, (Don't Set up a training session. Impromptu training is far more effective), and recall him with his name and again the chosen command. When he rushes to you and is within easy reach, hold onto the collar and reward him as previously. Avoid making a quick snatch or grab for the dog he should be confident with your hand / arm going towards him without him feeling the need to retreat away. If this is the case go back a few\ stages and re-teach a solid collar hold before progressing further. A maximum 10 out of 10 response will be needed before progressing to stage three.

Step Three

Wait until a family member entering the room, which creates an incentive for the dog to go away from his trainer, distracts your dog. Call your dog away in pleasant manner as you have don4e previously. Hold the collar and once again reward the dog. This stage is the final indoor stage, however we can

add the essential ingredient at this stage, which strengthens the whole recall response. At this point we begin to use 'Random Reward'.

In human terms random reward is the exact same reason that you or I play the lottery each week. You pay a £1 and win £10. You play & lose, you play & lose, you play & lose.........but this does not stop you from playing, because there is always the chance of getting the Jackpot.

To the dog the Jackpot could be his favourite treats or that extra few treats, or that piece of fresh chicken that you included in his treat bag today. Rewarding only the quickest recalls, the fastest recalls, the recalls when he came away from people petting him all encourage him to put in a little more effort. Consistent reward each and every recall can be just as bad as no reward at all. The dog could then make a choice of when to return and still be sure of earning a reward