



Chicken Training Is No Picnic... Except at a **HEART** Picnic!

*Melissa Laub Demonstrates Clicker Training For Chickens
And Hosts the Annual **HEART** Potluck*

Kansas City, MO – Sept 28, 2015

Melissa Laub, owner of KC K9 Coach, demonstrated use of clicker training techniques with chickens to HEART members at the September 27 meeting of the HEARTland Positive Dog Training Alliance (HEART). Laub, a member of HEART, hosted the meeting as well as the annual member potluck picnic at her Kansas City area farm.

In 2001, Laub attended a “chicken camp” taught by Bob and Marion Bailey. The Bailey’s “chicken camps” were designed to teach intermediate and advanced operant conditioning techniques using chickens. According to Laub, “Training a chicken improves your dog – or really any animal – training skills by teaching you to focus on the fundamentals of training – capturing starting behaviors and then shaping desired behaviors using rewarding of successive approximations in such a way that the animal isn’t overwhelmed, frustrated, or confused by what you are asking him to do.”

As HEART members listened and practiced clicker training techniques with Laub’s chickens, Laub spoke to the participants about other key learnings from the “chicken camp” experience as well as from the experience of training her own chickens. From chicken training, she has learned:

- (1) To keep the rate of reinforcement high in order to keep your animal interested in playing the training game, and in turn, learning what you are trying to teach.
- (2) Timing is crucial. The use of a marker (participants used clickers) is helpful to accurately communicate exactly what behavior is reinforced. If your timing is off, the training will suffer and the animal will become confused.
- (3) Power of competing reinforcers and stress. Laub observed, “For my hens, the desire to rejoin their flock was much more reinforcing than the food I was using as training treats, and the stress they felt because of the separation caused them to have decreased food drive and focus solely on leaving the training session.”

After the chicken training session, HEART members and their families – human and canine – spent the evening enjoying hot dogs and hamburgers, as well as various potluck offerings.

About Melissa Laub. Melissa Laub, CPDT-KA is owner of KC K9 Coach serving the Southern Johnson County KS area. Melissa is active in shelter work and offers private dog training consultations. For more information, visit www.KCK9Coach.com

HEARTland Positive Dog Training Alliance is a group of like-minded individuals comprised of dog trainers, pet professionals and dog enthusiasts aligning themselves to create an awareness of the importance and benefits of positive reinforcement, force free dog training. For more information, visit www.trainerswithheart.com.

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