

## **Leaning T Ranch Puppy Packet**

Bringing home a new puppy is exciting, a little chaotic, and honestly one of the most rewarding things you'll do. At Leaning T Ranch, our goal is to set both you and your pup up for success from day one. Whether your dog is headed toward working cattle, becoming a ranch companion, or just being a solid, well-rounded partner, the foundation you build in the first few weeks matters more than anything else.

When your puppy first comes home, give them a little time to settle in. Everything is new to them- the smells, the people, the routine. Try not to overwhelm them right away. Let them explore at their own pace while still maintaining structure. Puppies do best when they understand there's a routine, so start establishing feeding times, potty breaks, and quiet time early on.

Speaking of feeding, keep your puppy on the same food we've been using for at least the first couple of weeks. Sudden changes in diet can upset their stomach and create unnecessary stress. After they've settled in, you can slowly transition to a different feed if you choose, but

gradual changes are key. Fresh water should always be available, especially with active breeds like Border Collies that tend to run, think, and burn energy all day long.

Crate training is one of the best tools you can use, even if you don't plan to crate long term. It gives your puppy a safe space, helps with potty training, and prevents destructive behavior when you can't supervise. At first, they may not love it, and they'll probably let you know... but- consistency is everything. Keep the crate a positive place. Feed them in it, give them a toy, and don't use it as punishment.

Potty training comes down to timing and consistency. Take your puppy out frequently- first thing in the morning, after meals, after naps, and before bed. When they go outside, reward it immediately so they start making that connection. Accidents will happen, and that's part of the process. Don't make a big deal out of it. just clean it up and stay consistent moving forward.

Socialization is another big piece, but it doesn't mean throwing your puppy into every situation all at once. It means controlled, positive exposure. Let them see new environments, hear different sounds, meet calm people,

and eventually be introduced to other animals. For those planning to use their dog on livestock, introductions should be slow and intentional. A bad first experience can stick, so keep early interactions calm, controlled, and short.

With working breeds especially, mental stimulation is just as important as physical exercise. These dogs are built to think. Simple things like basic obedience, learning their name, recall, and even small problem-solving games will go a long way. You don't need to overdo it- short, consistent sessions are far more effective than long, overwhelming ones.

You'll probably notice your puppy testing boundaries as they get more comfortable. This is normal. Stay consistent, stay fair, and don't let things slide "just this once," because that's what turns into habits later. Clear expectations early on create a dog that's easier to live with and train down the road.

Vaccinations, deworming, and regular vet care are your responsibility once your puppy leaves us. Make sure you stay on schedule with your vet, especially in those early months. A healthy dog is a trainable dog, and small issues can turn into big ones if they're ignored.

At the end of the day, remember that this is still a baby. They're learning everything from scratch, and they're going to make mistakes. Be patient, keep a sense of humor, and enjoy the process. The time you put in now is what creates a dependable, solid dog later on.

If you ever have questions, need guidance, or just aren't sure about something, don't hesitate to reach out. We stand behind our dogs and are here to help you along the way.

Welcome to the Leaning T program.