

## Dog owners have responsibilities

I rarely write anything to anyone, but your headline regarding the dog that was shot while off the owners' property, and the investigation for animal cruelty, had me scratching my head. Animal cruelty?

In rural areas, any animal that leaves its owners' property, and is perceived to be a threat to another property owner, may be shot. I just read this fact recently, and I've read it elsewhere. My husband, a retired farmer, has told me the same thing.

Loose dogs are not welcome in farm country. I don't doubt the owners are heartbroken, but they lost the dog. German Shepherds are large, and can be perceived as a threat. Not everyone on the planet likes dogs, indeed, many dislike dogs.

This dog (and I don't condone the shooter's actions) was ?wandering,? aka as ?loose,? aka ?out of its owners' control.?

The onus is on the owner of the wandering animal. This dog lived on a ?100 acre farm,? yet the owners couldn't train it to stay on its own property? Rural areas also have neighbours with their own animals, and they can definitely feel threatened by a wandering dog. It's polite, to keep your dog on its own property, in my opinion.

I lived on a 50-acre rural property for almost 20 years, and my own herding type dogs were never allowed to wander out of my care and control. They are trained to stay with me. You take your chances when you let them wander loose.

Owning any dog means you must work to give the dog a fulfilling job. That is what the Shepherd was bred for. Train the dog well. A Shepherd will never tire, but giving them a mental workout is more important, anyway.

Spay and neuter your pets. This cuts down on wandering behaviour, although it doesn't eliminate it, especially if the dog is bored.

**Name Withheld On Request**