

Blue Lacy Breed Dates Back To Frontier Days

Marlo Ondrej's great-great-grandfather Frank Lacy and his three brothers developed the Blue Lacy breed in the 1800's. Since 1997, she has maintained the registry for the breed, and she is a board member of the Texas Lacy Game Dog Association.

"The breed was developed to meet the needs of frontier life and be an all around working dog," Ondrej says. Those needs included everything from driving cattle and hogs to the stockyards to hunting for game to feed the family.

Research indicates that Blue Lacy dogs were bred from greyhounds, scent hounds, and wild dogs. They are 18 to 22 in. tall at the shoulder with very short hair. The coat colors vary from a bluish light grey to dark red. They often have white markings on the toes and chest.

"They are good family dogs with training and lots of exercise, not as hyper as a bird dog. They are more like a border collie in personality – without all the hair," Ondrej says. "They are so intelligent and need interaction and training starting at a young age. You need to give them something to do."

People who don't hunt or use them to herd livestock often give them agility training, and they do well in competitions.

The Blue Lacy breed is also popular with trappers who use them as decoy dogs or to find where coyotes travel, by watching where the dog marks his territory when it smells a coyote marking.

"I've always loved hunting, and it's important not to lose a wounded animal, so recovery is important," she says.

Though the breed's numbers dropped when herding dogs were replaced by ATV's, they are coming back. Currently about 5,600 dogs are in the registry. The breed is hardy and average lifespan is 16 to 17 years.

Registered pups range from \$350 to \$800, depending on the breeder, Ondrej says. Trained adult dogs range from \$1,500 to \$8,500.

To see the dogs in action she suggests attending a Lacy Fun Day event with exercises in treeing, herding, baying and blood trailing. One is held in Georgia in the spring and three others are held in Texas. The next one is Sept. 6 at Bay City Fairgrounds in Bay



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City, Texas.

Check out the website (www.lacydog.com) for more information.

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Blue Barrel Fence Rises And Falls

Anyone trying to contain livestock where gullies are dry in some seasons and filled with water in others will appreciate Gil Alexander's fencing idea. His blue barrel fence keeps cattle in all year long.

"The main thing is that when we get high water, if there's moving trash (limbs and debris), the barrels tend to roll right over it," explains the Colbert, Okla., rancher. The barrel fence solves the problem of trash catching in wire and other types of fencing.

With five gullies and low areas on his ranch where cattle have escaped, the barrels have worked perfectly for 3 years, says Alexander. One fence includes more than 35 barrels to cross a pond that dries up.

Keeping the barrels watertight so they float is key. Alexander drills holes in the center of each end of the barrel so that a 3-ft., 4-in. long piece of 3/4-in. pvc pipe fits tightly when slipped inside. He seals the gap between the pipe and barrel hole with a silicone seal and cements a pvc coupler on the 2-in. end of the pipe sticking out.

"That prevents the pipe from dislodging and sliding into the barrel," he explains. "The barrels are then threaded onto a steel cable like beads on a necklace, each independent of the other."



Barrel fence solves the problem of trash catching in wire and other types of fencing. The threaded-together barrels tend to roll right over it.

He ties the ends securely to trees or anchored fence posts that are above the highest waterline. The cable and barrels must be long enough to rest on the ground when there is no water.

"Cattle approach the barrels, but won't step over them," Alexander notes.

He recommends blue barrels instead of white barrels, because the white ones have less UV resistance and deteriorate faster. Alexander also suggests using food grade barrels so there are no contamination issues.

He is fortunate to have access to lots of barrels because his daughter is in the liquor manufacturing business and ingredients are shipped in barrels. He's working on a movable train of barrels cut in half horizontally to hold feed cubes for his herd pulled by an ATV. He also sells the barrels for \$10 apiece.

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