

Colorado Mountain Dog Pups, and Food Aggression

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Colorado Mountain Dog pups are food aggressive. This is part of their guarding aptitude, and also a great adaptation for living with livestock, because if they didn't have this trait, you couldn't feed them in with goats because the goats would get it all. With our 5 month old, Melian, the goats don't get any of her food, and I am grateful for this trait.

Food aggression was how Melian learned not to be intimidated by livestock. She is a very intelligent girl, and I sat with her and I both praised her for driving them off, but cautioned her when she got too tough. CMDs love to learn and if you don't have an older dog to mentor, you can do it. I showed Melian that it's okay to drive the goats off when they want her food, but to let them eat their own food and not drive them off for that. She learned after one lesson.

Food aggression will be translated into aggression against predators around livestock which a CDM regards as their own. So it is an aptitude that we want, but we want to direct it. Just tell them what you expect, and they are delighted to please and proud to step up to the plate.

Sometimes food bowl aggression can be a problem in the house with other pets. I have seen in several of our dogs that if a dog lives in a household with pets, they will become more accepting after they get older, and they will also respond to your training. The trait is stronger when they are young. But initially you need to be aware of this trait and careful of other pets. I have not seen dogs defend food from people, but you should be careful of children near the food bowl while your CMD is young.

One easy and practical way to avoid problems is simply to feed them in a private corner. But we've always fed ours in the middle of household activity and just asked them not to go after other pets.