Hi, Xanadu,

Greetings from Alabama!  I am inquiring as the the temperament of the above breeds of dogs, and feel

you are perhaps the best to advise.

We are a farming family, raising chickens in a farm-to-table environment, so no large poultry houses that would prohibit contact with the outside.  Rather, it is a free-range situation.

Because of what we have experienced in the past with Retriever's, we have questions about how the mix with other breeds within one dog would influence the tendency to Retriever's to, well, retrieve!  We would need an dog, obviously, that would fit with our overall farm plan.

If you could shed some light on how these dogs would behave in our situation, we would be very

appreciative.

Thank you,

Well...you are asking about prey instinct...and all dogs (and cats) have a prey instinct, no matter the size. If your terrier brings you a trophy mouse, that's prey instinct, and if your Deerhound or Saluki or German Shepherd or Carolina Dog takes down the neighbor's prize bull, well, that's prey instinct, too. Even a sheep dog's herding ability is a modification of the prey instinct. And certainly Retrievers love to retrieve birds!

IF your dog is raised around these animals from the very first few days you have him/her and exposed to animals (and especially cats and chickens and rabbits), you will probably have no trouble at all. Get your puppy as early in life as you can and take it everywhere with you.

I've got a Saluki--fastest middle distance mammal in the world. Nothing gets away from Alice, and because we live in the Wild Kingdom out in western slope Colorado, I had to teach her not to chase deer. That wasn't easy, because the gazelle, the buzzard, and rabbits are the Saluki's main diet; I had to use a remote-control collar with 15 levels of "stimulation," or rather, a shock collar. Alice is an extreme case, but all sighthounds and foxhounds and coon hounds, etc. are extreme. The Poodles aren't quite so bad. The lapdogs aren't either--like the Maltese, for example. Maybe the guard dogs aren't too bad either, but I don't really know about them...

This is not as impossible as you might think, Jackie--really, but it is something that everyone needs to be aware of. I've been meaning to write up a document for XANADU owners, because we use Retrievers and Poodles and some Spaniels and Huskies, etc. in our breeding program, and some of these breeds can still fend for themselves when it comes to dinner.