

AKC Farm Dog Certified (FDC)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you don't see the answer to your question here, please email us at: herding@akc.org or give us a call 919-816-3908.

What dogs are eligible to participate in the FDC program? The FDC test is open to all dogs, at least 9 months of age, that are individually registered with the AKC, recorded in the FSS program, dogs with [Purebred Alternative Listing Number](#) (PAL) numbers or dogs enrolled in the AKC [Canine Partners](#) program.

Where can I learn more about the FDC test or learn about the required elements to earn a title? An entire section of the AKC website is dedicated to the Farm Dog Certified program. Here you can view Regulations, Test Descriptions, an FDC Brochure and even an Introductory Video.

Where can I find out about upcoming tests in my area? Visit the AKC [Events Calendar](#).

Are there training classes or instruction for Farm Dog Certified? Check your local training listings. Many instructors are offering complete class programs and some herding facilities also offer training and practice options.

Can food or treats be given to my dog during the test? Food is not permitted during the test. However, you can provide words of encouragement as well as general commands.

I do not know how my dog will react to livestock, do I need to worry that the livestock may be injured? This should never be a concern. The safety of the livestock is always a priority and the test is designed with this in mind. Dogs are always on leash and livestock are always behind safe fencing, and in some cases, double fencing. No direct contact between dog and livestock is allowed.

My dog is a herding dog, what if he/she wants to herd the livestock? The AKC recognizes and celebrates that dogs of different origins may react differently to livestock. Herding dogs may show herding tendencies and we have even seen pointing dogs point at ducks! None of these behaviors are penalized or discouraged, rather, the judge will be evaluating that your dog can exhibit the good manners and co-operation required of the test.

I am worried that my small dog cannot jump up on a hay/straw bale, is this a requirement for small dogs? Yes, all dogs, regardless of size, are required to jump up on the bale of hay/straw with no assistance. We have witnessed some of the smallest dogs have no difficulty with this task, and indeed, many tiny dogs easily jump into their handler's arms!

My large dog may not fit on a hay/straw bale, will my dog not pass the test? If very large dogs are entered, two bales can be placed side by side to safely accommodate the larger dogs.

Does my dog need to have a Farm Dog Certified title before entering a herding test or trial? No, the Farm Dog Certified is separate from herding and should not be considered as an indication of herding ability. Rather the FDC emphasizes good manners and cooperation in a rural and farm setting, and showcases a set of skills that can benefit all dogs.

If the FDC is not required for herding, and is similar to a CGC, why is it associated with the herding program? Quite simply, the FDC involves livestock. Even though your dog will not directly interact with the stock, the welfare of the livestock is paramount. Those hosting and judging the event must be knowledgeable about the care and management of any farm animals used for the test. Our herding community is the most experienced and best prepared to ensure good care of livestock. They also work their dogs on farms!

ABOUT HOLDING AND JUDGING AN FDC EVENT

Who can hold a Farm Dog Certified event? All AKC recognized clubs (breed or performance) as well as youth organizations such as 4H and FFA can hold FDC events. In addition, FDC approved judges can hold FDC events.

Does the FDC test need to be associated with another event such as a dog show, or a herding or agility trial? The FDC test can be held in conjunction with an existing event (dog show or trial) or can be held as a stand-alone event.

If holding a 'Stand Alone' event, is it necessary to have an event committee or an event premium? It is not necessary to have a full event committee or event premium for stand-alone events. However, it is important to assign an event Secretary to manage event paperwork and report results to the AKC. Additionally, providing an overview and run order for participants is also encouraged.

How do I apply to hold an FDC event? Download the appropriate FDC event application at the AKC website under the [Farm Dog Certified](#) section.

Is there a fee to hold an FDC event? Yes, for ‘Stand Alone’ events, there is a \$35.00 application fee per event.

How much in advance does the application need to be received by the AKC prior to the scheduled event date? Applications must be submitted 12 weeks (3 months) in advance of the scheduled event.

Can more than one FDC event be held in one day? Absolutely, each must be independent events (i.e. separate event numbers) and applied for separately.

How long does it take for one dog to complete a test? Since every test ‘course’ will vary based on the configuration of the facility or farm setting being used, the time per test will vary as well. However, it is reasonable to assume a test time of 6 to 10 minutes per dog.

Does the test need to be run in the same order as listed in the official test description and judging form? No, only the first and last elements (greeting judge/examining dog) need to be first and last respectively. The other test elements can be configured in any order that best suits the farm facility.

Are recording fees required for each entry? Yes, the host of any FDC event must submit a recording fee of \$4.50/per dog (starting 1/1/26) to AKC at the time the event paperwork is submitted.

Can “day of” entries be accepted for the FDC test event? Yes, and it must be listed in the event application and in the event program where applicable.

Can only herding judges judge an FDC event? Both herding judges and FDC judges can judge an FDC event. All herding judges are automatically approved to judge FDC events. Non-herding judges must apply independently to become an AKC approved FDC Judge.

What are the requirements needed to apply to be a FDC judge? To be eligible to be an FDC judge, you must be able to document experience with dog activities, dog training, and, importantly, experience with the handling and care of livestock/farm animals.

I am already an approved CGC Evaluator, can I judge FDC tests? You will need to apply to become an FDC judge and demonstrate livestock experience.

How do I apply to be a FDC judge and is there a fee? Simply download the [Application to judge FDC](#) from the AKC website and submit back electronically by email or send via regular post. Most applications are reviewed within two weeks. There is no fee to apply.

I am an FDC judge, can I hold an FDC event? Yes, FDC judges can hold an FDC event. Indeed, many trainers are offering a series of classes and hosting the test as a graduation process.

Can I judge dogs that I have helped train for FDC? Yes, but remember to be eligible for a title, the dog must pass under two different approved FDC judges.

I lead a youth group, such as 4H, can we hold an FDC event? Absolutely. Youth groups are expressly encouraged to participate in FDC events and we believe the FDC complements the farm and agricultural heritage promoted by 4H, FFA, and similar organizations. *To further encourage youth participation the AKC Performance Events Department has waived the event application fee and title fees for all junior handles at junior and youth events.*

I am already listed as a Junior Handler with the AKC, will it help me to participate in the FDC? All AKC activities provide great opportunities for Junior Handlers. Additionally, earning a title in FDC can add points toward the new [Junior Recognition Program](#).

I would like to participate as a Junior in AKC events, what do I need to do to be listed as a Junior? E-mail: juniors@akc.org

If the FDC is similar to a “CGC on the farm” why is it listed under the herding program? Quite simply, the FDC involves livestock. Even though your dog will not directly interact with the stock, the welfare of the livestock is paramount. Those hosting and judging the event must be knowledgeable about the care and management of any farm animals used for the test. Our herding community is the most experienced and best prepared to ensure good care of livestock. They also work their dogs on farms!

ABOUT THE FDC TITLE

What is the cost to apply for the Farm Dog Certified title? \$32 per title.

If the FDC is similar to a CGC on the farm, why does my dog have to pass two times under two judges, when my dog only has to pass once for a CGC title? The keyword when comparing the two is “similar”. Both the [CGC](#) and FDC emphasize good behavior and basic training. However, different programs have developed elements that best represent the evaluation process. Farm sites vary greatly and consistency of behavior under diverse conditions is a key skill required of farm dogs.

I believe my dog already is mannerly on the farm and can perform most of the required elements, why would I want to try for an FDC title? That’s great that your dog has good skills. As with any AKC event, the choice to pursue a title is entirely up to you. However, thousands of

dogs and dog handlers enjoy participating and competing in a wide variety of AKC activities nationwide. Further, titles allow for you to set goals and document achievement for you and your dog. In some cases, having an FDC title can attest to farm or ranch facility owners that your dog will be well behaved if allowed on the premises.

My dog doesn't have any type of number, what do I do to be eligible for a title? For anyone applying for a title for their dog, the dog must have either an AKC Registration Number which comes from the breeder via a puppy registration form or the previous owner via a certificate that must be transferred into your name. If you do not have an AKC Registration Number and you know your dog is a purebred, you may apply for a Purebred Alternative Listing Number (PAL). If you are without an AKC Registration Number or PAL Number, you can simply apply for a Canine Partners Listing Number. The application fee for a Canine Partner Listing Number can be submitted together with the [Farm Dog Certified Title Application](#).