



A New Pet for the Holidays? Think Twice!

Holiday cards are filled with images of irresistible pups and kittens poking their heads out of stockings, but the reality of adding a new pet to a household during the busy holiday season is quite different. The final weeks of the year are filled with decorating the house, making cookies and other delectable foods, buying gifts, entertaining, and visiting; a cheerful, busy time filled with anticipated and unanticipated events. It is wonderful and exciting for friends and family, but frightening to a pet trying to acclimate to a new environment.

The acquisition of a pet is for its lifetime, and a good beginning will set the tone for mutual companionship for the rest of its life---about 10 to 15 years. Whether you are thinking of giving a pet as a gift or adding one to your own household there are certain guidelines to follow.

Giving the surprise of a living, feeling, being to someone who is not prepared to, able to, or who wants to take on the long term commitment of pet ownership is inhumane and irresponsible. Do speak to the intended recipient of the gift of a live animal, and allow them to decide if pet ownership is right for them.

Now is the time to decide on specifics. Does the recipient want a dog or cat? Both come in all sizes and temperaments, breeds, mixed breeds, colors, and coat lengths. Do they want an active pet or one which is more likely to lie at their feet and cuddle? The time to make decisions is before they bring that pet home. Do allow the recipients to select their individual pet.



Then instead of bringing that new pet home to the frantic holiday environment, get a good book on pet care and training, wrap up some pet supplies, and leave them with an IOU under the tree. After the New Year, when everything has calmed down is the time to introduce the pet to a new environment and household routines.

Puppies and kittens grow up to be adults. While we know the adult size of a cat, that pup might grow much larger, but needs human companionship always. It's not fair to bring love home, tie it on a rope, and banish it to solitary confinement in a backyard for the rest of its life.

It's not fair either, to bring that pet home, and after it reaches its maturity turn it in to the municipal facility for someone else to end its life because the owner has changed his mind.

The new owner will be responsible for providing a safe environment, food and clean water, veterinary care, dishes, leashes, tags, toys, and beds and having the adequate funds to do so. Responsible ownership means neutering and spaying at the appropriate time. A pet eats and eliminates waste products. Owners must clean up after their pet and safely dispose of these waste products.



Has the new owner thought about the arrangements they will need to make before they consider going on vacation?

Dogs need to be taught to walk on leash and be allowed to run free only inside a securely fenced yard. Pets should not be allowed to roam at will. A good neighbor is the responsible owner who creates the good pet citizen.

It is now the New Year. You have carefully considered the pet you want and have brought him home.

Congratulations!

Keep Pets Safe During the Holidays

A measure of caution will keep your pets safe this holiday season. One rule to follow: do not let your guests feed your pets human food. There are many holiday foods, including fatty meats, gravies, poultry skin, bones that can cause illness or diarrhea; and chocolate is toxic.

Keep holly, mistletoe, poinsettias and lilies out of your pet's reach

The extra cords and plugs of holiday lights and other fixtures can look like chew toys to pets. Tape down or cover cords to help avoid shocks, burns or other serious injuries. Unplug lights when you are not home.

Anchor Christmas trees to the ceiling with a string to keep it from falling on pets.

Do not let pets drink the holiday tree water; it could be harboring bacteria. Read the labels of any preservatives for tree water – some contain fertilizer - and the labels for artificial snow; buy only those that are nontoxic.

Keep other ornaments and tinsel out of reach of pets. Ingestion of any ornament, which might look like toys to pets, can result in life-threatening emergencies.

Put away toys after children open their gifts. Small plastic pieces and rubber balls are common causes of choking and intestinal blockage in dogs.

Do not try to introduce your dog to a visitor if the dog seems agitated. It is never good to force a dog into a behavior. If the dog's hesitation is based on fear, forcing the dog forward will not address the problem. Instead, you want to demonstrate to your dog why he should trust you as his leader while gradually introducing him to someone or something new...doing it gradually enough not to trigger a fear response. Dogs may respond to fear by attempting to flee or even through aggressive display (such as growling, lunging or nipping) in an attempt to repel the stranger.



While a houseful of guests may be a joy for you and your family, it could be stressful for your dog. If your dog is not used to a lot of visitors or is distrustful of strangers, a solution is to crate the dog in a separate room. You could also choose to place a baby gate across a hallway or adjoining room which will give the dog a chance to observe your company from the other side. This gives the dog a chance to watch and calm down, and also prevents the dog from accidentally slipping out the door while visitors are walking in and out.

Charities & Holiday Giving

As the holiday season approaches, many thoughts turn to helping those less fortunate. In fact, surveys have indicated that over 50 percent of all donations to charity are made between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's important, however, that you don't make charitable contributions indiscriminately. By following a few precautions, you can ensure your generosity provides maximum benefits for the organizations who need your help.

The Federal Trade Commission suggests you follow these guidelines:

- Be wary of appeals that tug at your heartstrings.
- Ask what percentage of the donation is used to support the causes and what percentage is used for administrative costs.
- If the solicitation claims that the charity will support local organizations, call the local groups to verify.
- Don't provide any credit card or bank account information until you have reviewed all information from the charity and made the decision to donate.
- Ask for a receipt showing the amount of the contribution and stating that it is tax deductible.
- Understand that contributions made to a "tax exempt" organization are not necessarily tax deductible.

Before you donate make sure your money supports a cause that meets your approval. For example, some people still believe that because of its name the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) operates and funds local shelters. This is not the case, as HSUS is an animal rights advocacy / lobbying group. In 2004 HSUS spent \$34.5 million on their media department, magazine, and the animal channel out of approximately \$78.5 million income for the year.

Before making charitable donations to animal-related causes, thoroughly investigate and understand both the issue and the programs or ideals that your donation will support. Will your donation go directly to help animals or will it be used for administrative costs and campaign funds?

Suggestions for donations to benefit animals and people:

American Veterinary Medical Foundation to fund VMAT (Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams). This group is the first line of defense in responding to animals and their owners in the event of a disaster. Monies could be used for training and instituting SART (State Animal Response Teams) and CART (County Animal Response Teams) programs. Without this team, in North Carolina after Hurricane Floyd, thousands of abandoned animals would have died. With SART in place, their physical and medical needs were taken care of, and once owners were allowed to come home, animals were reunited. Animals that were not reclaimed were adopted out quickly. The SART program made that happen.

Donating to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation could make this program a reality in more states, and directly affect those in the greatest need. More information on the Foundation and what they have accomplished can be found at: <http://www.avmf.org/html/index.asp>

Canine Companions for Independence - a national nonprofit that enhances the lives of children and adults with disabilities by providing highly-trained [assistance dogs](#) and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. For more information visit <http://www.caninecompanions.org/>

AKC Canine Health Foundation - The foundation works to develop significant resources for basic and applied health programs with emphasis on canine genetics to improve the quality of life for dogs and their owners. The foundation funds research and supports canine health scientists and professionals in their efforts to study the causes and origins of canine disease and afflictions in order to formulate effective treatments. http://www.akcchf.org/index.cfm?nav_area=homepage

The Winn Feline Foundation - a non-profit organization established by the Cat Fancier's Association, Inc. to support health-related studies benefiting cats. <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/index.html>

Local rescues and shelters – normally work on very tight budgets and have extensive wish lists and needs in order to better care for animals waiting for new homes.

Animal Extremist Law Bolstered

President Bush yesterday signed legislation designed to give federal authorities expanded powers to prosecute animal rights militants, whose activities the State Department says eclipse terrorism as a security problem for U.S. companies operating in Western Europe.

Mr. Bush signed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act without fanfare at the White House before an early morning flight to Estonia. The bill is designed to make it easier for federal agents to wiretap and prosecute animal rights extremists who have mounted successful campaigns of harassment against researchers both in the commercial and educational sectors.

"Although incidents related to terrorism are most likely to make the front-page news, animal rights extremism is what's most likely to affect your day-to-day business operations in Western Europe," read the speaker's notes for a Nov. 15 presentation at the Overseas Security Advisory Council's annual briefing.

The presentation warns that such groups as the Animal Liberation Front "cause fear and distress, major property damage, and in some instances ... physical injury, and often put lives at risk."

Victims of one campaign have been assaulted with baseball bats, had their homes and cars vandalized, had obscene messages painted in their streets, received late-night telephone calls threatening the lives of their families and endured nonstop bullhorn protests in front of their homes.

Frankie Trull of the Foundation for Biomedical Research, a lobby group that supports medical experiments on animals, said many universities and other academic institutions had swung behind the bill after protests against one researcher at the University of California at Los Angeles culminated over the summer in an arson attack against his home.

"This is the kind of thing that we hope will now stop," she said.

Will Potter, a freelance journalist and animal rights sympathizer, said the bill would chill legitimate protest but not discourage real extremists.

"These people have shown that they are not going to stop doing these actions," he said, pointing out that after the successful prosecution and jailing of campaigners against a research firm in New Jersey earlier this year, other militants staged a break-in at a laboratory in Massachusetts and dedicated their action to their jailed comrades in an Internet communique.

The act strengthens federal legislation that protects animal researchers and other businesses using animals from "physical disruption."

The new law expands federal offenses under the law to cover campaigns of threats and intimidation that might financially cripple a company without any "physical disruption" and increases penalties. It also expands the law to cover employees and secondary targets -- companies that conduct business with animal enterprises, like their bankers or stockbrokers -- neither of which were protected by law.

<http://washingtontimes.com/national/20061127-103714-5725r.htm>

The World Pet Market Exceeds \$56 Billion

The worldwide market for pet food and pet supplies has grown about 3 percent annually since 1998 to about \$56 billion (44 billion Euro), according to Eric Combelles, an analyst with research firm Euromonitor International.

The firm projects the market will continue to grow, hitting \$65 billion (51 billion Euro) in 2009.

Factors driving the market include increasing pet ownership (especially among growing demographics such as singles and seniors), the humanization of pets, a continual upgrading of quality (whether adopting super-premium foods in developed countries or switching from table scraps to processed pet food in developing countries) and more effective marketing programs.

Combelles unveiled the latest statistics at Interzoo in Nuremberg, Germany, in May. Broken regionally, North America accounted for about \$21.8 billion in 2005 and will account for about \$24.3 billion by 2009, followed by Western Europe (\$21 billion in 2005, \$23 billion in 2009), Asia Pacific (\$6.4 billion in 2005, \$7.8 billion by 2009) and Latin America (\$3.9 billion in 2005, \$5 billion in 2009).

Rebuilding Veterinary Infrastructure in Iraq

News.NCSU.edu

When you think of nation building – as in rebuilding a war-torn nation such as Iraq – you may think of infrastructure, social structures and government. But, very few people would think of veterinary skills and knowledge for public health and food production.

Against the backdrop of war and shrouded in secrecy and heavy security, six American veterinarians traveled to Northern Iraq recently to meet with about 90 of their Iraqi counterparts. This was not a relief effort, but a first initiative within any professional sector for helping Iraqi veterinarians make plans for re-establishing what could be thought of as their veterinary infrastructure.

“When most people think about rebuilding a nation, they naturally think of roads, buildings, electricity, water and social services,” says Dr. Prema Arasu, Associate Professor of Parasitology at North Carolina State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “But, think about it. Animals are so much a part of any society. Typically, in war-torn countries, we see a rise in animal diseases, which, of course, affects the food supply. Helping them rebuild their food supply and improve their national health plan will be important to their ability to again become a self-governing nation.”

Other issues the team addressed included the transmission of animal diseases to humans. For example, a major problem in Iraq is brucellosis, a bacterial disease transmitted through non-pasteurized milk and cheese, which can cause headaches, fever, weight loss and general weakness in humans.

Arasu notes that Iraq has a rich history of animal production and agriculture. Iraq was once self-sustaining and exporters of meat and animals, but the country now imports about 80 percent of their food, largely from the United States.

Arasu recently spent a week in Erbil with veterinarians from Colorado State University and the University of Kentucky, along with veterinarians from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Army Veterinary Command. With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the objective was to help the Iraqis establish goals and priorities for veterinary public policy, including legislation, targeting of scant resources and ways to work across regions and public/private sectors to re-establish a platform for best veterinary practices.

“We’re talking about a society that is used to getting its direction from a very strong central government, not one where public policy is made locally or broad decisions are based on consensus among individuals,” Arasu said. “But during the workshop, you could see people setting aside their geographic and religious differences and sharing ideas. We could see their excitement and commitment build each day as they began to develop tactics and goals that could essentially help rebuild the foundation of their country.”

By the third and final day of the workshop, the Iraqis were voting to establish their major priorities, planning for a follow-up scientific conference and creating a committee to develop a national organization for veterinarians.

“When the needs are so great, planning and creating committees may not sound like a major solution, but these veterinarians went away with some unity among themselves, a sense of partnership with their central ministry administrators, focus on the greater needs of the nation and the rudiments of a strategic plan for meeting their needs,” Arasu said. “It was a privilege to work with them as well as the U.S. Army Civil Affairs veterinarians led by Lt.Col. Deanna Brown and Drs. Linda Logan, Mo Salman, Paula Cowen, Craig Carter and Max Coats.” http://news.ncsu.edu/faculty/102006_arasu-iraq.htm



North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws.