

October is National Animal Safety and Protection Month, as well as Adopt a Shelter Dog Month, to remind us of the responsibility that come with ‘owning’ domesticated animals and pets. Please share this with others to help all of us be the best animal/pet owners we can be.

- Do your homework before getting whatever animal you are thinking of to make sure you can provide the kind of environment it will need to be healthy and happy. Know the ‘source’ of your pet so as to not support inhumane breeding practices.
- Think about the lifespan of that particular species to make sure you are willing to commit to it for its entire life or have a solid plan for its care and well-being if it outlives you.
- Make sure you can afford the food, water requirements, living area, veterinary care, coat care, handling equipment & transportation requirements for whatever animals you choose to join your life.
- Secure a Veterinarian knowledgeable about your species of animals BEFORE you add them to your home/farm or before there is an emergency.
- Keep your animals up to date on all necessary immunizations, use appropriate internal & external parasite control, ensure routine coat, skin, nail, hoof & dental care is maintained.
- Provide your pets with a diet & exercise to promote physical & mental health.
- Pet-proof your home and property. Remove or secure choking hazards and toxic chemicals. Fix or build fences so they will safely contain your dog, horse, cow, donkey, pig, etc. Check fences routinely and especially after storms to look for downed trees and damaged fence lines. Ensure gates are always securely closed.
- Don’t allow indiscriminate breeding of any of your animals. There are simply too many unwanted dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, etc.
- Make sure your pets have identification. Microchips are perfect for dogs, cats, horses, donkeys and more but you ALSO have to make sure your pet’s microchips are registered and your contact information is kept current.
- Take photos of your pets/livestock and be able to access those photos, especially during times of emergencies.
- Know the local and state laws in regard to owning/caring for your animals.
- Learn basic pet/animal first aid to cover those times until a Veterinarian can help your pet.
- Have a disaster plan that includes your pets/livestock.
- Learn how to watch for changes in physical and mental conditions as your animals age and seek Veterinary assistance as necessary to help them age with dignity.
- Train your pets to walk on a leash, or stay calmly in a crate, or stand tethered (horses), or respond to your calls/treats so as to enhance the ability to calmly control them in emergencies.
- Protect your pets from roaming and people that may harm them; conversely do not let animals that can harm people or other animals roam or cause problems for your neighbors/community. Be especially careful with all interactions with children.
- Know your animal so you are aware of behavior changes that may indicate a medical or behavioral issue and get help before it progresses.
- Have a plan and be prepared for the costs of letting your pet/livestock die with dignity and then the required burial/cremation/disposal costs.