

# Owning Animals

**Objective:** Students will identify the importance of properly caring for a pet.

**Concept:** Owning and caring for a pet is a great way to teach responsibility to children. Children can also have fun in the process. This experience can help youth become better caregivers of livestock.

**Targeted Age:** Elementary

Have students brainstorm what responsibility means.

List all the duties or responsibilities that accompany pet ownership, such as cost factors:

<b>Purchase</b>	<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>Health</b>
Pound fees	Food	Neutering/Spaying
Registration fees	Collar	Immunizations
	License fees	Unexpected problems
	Dog house	Pest/parasite problems
	Yard fencing	Veterinary fees

Role play the scenario of an animal rescue adoption. Have one student be the adoption counselor and another be the person adopting a cat or dog.

The adoption counselor should ask questions, such as:

- ▶ Who will feed your pet?
- ▶ Who will clean up after the pet?
- ▶ Who will take care of your pet if you go on vacation?
- ▶ How will you pay for the upkeep of your pet?
- ▶ What will you do if your pet bites you or one of your family members?
- ▶ What precautions will you take to ensure the safety of others around this pet?
- ▶ Who will exercise the pet?
- ▶ Will your pet live in the house or outside? If outside, how will it stay warm in the winter?

Have the students perform their discussion in front of the group. Have the audience discuss the answers given and other possible options.

Students could be encouraged to bring their own pets and discuss their time commitment and associated costs with caring for animals.

**Q: What are the differences and similarities of pet ownership and owning a whole herd of animals?**

**A:** In both cases, the owner is responsible for the health and well-being of the animals. When a farmer owns a whole herd of animals (cattle, hogs, poultry, etc.) his livelihood depends on the health of the livestock. If livestock become ill, are not fed properly, not vaccinated, or mistreated, they will not provide income when sold.

**Q: Where could you find additional information about specific animals?**

**A:** Veterinary offices, pet stores and animal rescue shelters can give you additional information about the characteristics of specific breeds of animals.

