

Animals as Gifts and Prizes

Position: The Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) supports the practice of animals being given as gifts or prizes when:

- The animals can be appropriately cared for and have their Five Freedoms met before, during, and after the transition to their new home;
- The recipient has indicated a serious desire for an animal;
- The recipient has or can make the necessary accommodations to provide for the animal;
- The animal is sourced from an ethical and responsible source.

Summary

- EHS recognizes that the decision to give a pet as a gift can be a well-thought-out decision involving a future guardian who has specifically expressed a desire to home an animal and can responsibly care for a pet.
- EHS does not support the practice of animals being given as unsolicited gifts or prizes. Recipients of unsolicited and/or unexpected animals may not have the immediate ability to provide for the animal's welfare needs.

Rationale

- Animals are given as gifts and prizes in multiple scenarios, including but not limited to special occasions, fundraisers, carnival game prizes, pig scrambles, sheep scrambles, and events in agricultural shows.
- EHS does not support scenarios where animals are acquired in a manner that causes undue stress to the animal, are subjected to improper transport, or where they are kept in housing or environmental conditions which compromise their welfare.
- Animals should come from ethical sources. As an alternative to giving a live companion animal, EHS suggests giving a gift certificate or promise to acquire an animal from a responsible, reputable animal shelter. This allows for the recipient to adequately prepare for the animal and gives them the opportunity to be matched with a shelter animal they have met.
- EHS does not support "surprise" gifts – meaning the recipient has not expressed an interest in having an animal and has not made the necessary changes and commitments necessary to care for an animal.
- Recipients of unsolicited animals may be unaware of the needs of that animal, may be unwilling or incapable of providing appropriate care to the animal, and/or may be unable to access resources needed to care for the animal.
- In the scenario that an adult is acquiring an animal for a child in the family, the role of ultimate caregiver should be established as an adult who understands the necessary care and duties involved in caring for the animal in order to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Research shows that:
 - Pets given as gifts are at no increased risk of being surrendered to animal shelters;

- Pet guardians who received pets as gifts do not report lesser attachment or love for their pet.

Therefore, EHS supports adoption policies which support the responsible the responsible giving of animals as gifts.

References

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