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Advocating and promoting veterinary medicine, while enriching animal and human health

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Pet, Horse Owners Urged To Avoid Animal Abandonment

Abandonment of pets and horses is on the rise in Wisconsin. Even in tough economic times, abandonment is a poor solution that compromises the health and welfare of the animal, is a danger to human safety and is a violation of the law (Wis. Stats. 951.15).

“There is never a reason to abandon or neglect an animal,” says Dr. Yvonne Bellay, State Humane Veterinarian with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, “Many humane options are available for unwanted animals.”

Local humane societies are a major outlet for unwanted companion animals and some, like the Dane County Humane Society, have programs to “Re-home Your Pet.”

Horse owners finding it difficult to locate resources to care for their horse should contact their county livestock extension agent to help find sources of feed and hay. Horse rescue facilities, therapeutic riding facilities, leasing programs and donation options are also available, but limited. Owners are advised to research these facilities thoroughly, given that they are not all regulated.

Euthanasia is also a humane option for horses and companion animals when re-homing options have been exhausted and care cannot be given.

If owners are unable to care for their animals, they should communicate their concerns with a veterinarian or a humane society that could provide information regarding local resources or re-homing options.

Citizens are advised to consider the responsibility and financial commitment of ownership before purchasing an animal.

For additional resources, contact the Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies (www.wifedhs.org), the Unwanted Horse Coalition (www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org), or the American Association of Equine Practitioners (www.aep.org).

This message is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Division of Animal Health, University of Wisconsin Extension, Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies and Dane County Humane Society.

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