

## From the Vet

### *Commitment of Animal Ownership*

Owning animals is a big commitment of your time and money. This commitment can be a wonderful experience, but far too many good intentioned people see a cute kitten or puppy and purchase them without thinking about how this animal will fit into their lives. When an animal is added to your family you have to consider that this animal now depends solely on you to provide for him or her for the rest of their life. Dogs often live to the age of 10-14 years, cats living until 12-20 years, and horses can often live until their 30's.

In 2010 over 1000 animals were surrendered to the Kamloops SPCA for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons for animals to be surrendered to any shelter are: allergies, the owner is moving, unable to afford the animal, a change in the owner's situation (divorce, having children), and lack of time/ability to care for the animal. Before you consider acquiring a new animal, consider if any of the above situations will or already apply to you or your family, or if any big changes will be occurring in your life in the near future.

While money is only part of the equation, an estimate of costs (medical and otherwise) can be helpful to determine if a pet will fit into your life. Part of these costs can be reduced by pet insurance depending upon the policy which is purchased. An estimate of costs of animal ownership can be found at the BC SPCA website: <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/pet-care/adoption/5-steps-to-adoption/cost-of-care.html>

Remember that monetary costs are only part of what is required to provide for an animal as a great deal of your time is also required in ownership. An animal is a long term commitment and all of the costs and care should be considered before purchase or adoption.

If animal ownership doesn't fit into your life right now consider some other options in order to spend time with animals. Local SPCA/shelters often require volunteers to spend time walking the dogs, or playing with cats. Many SPCA/shelters also require foster homes for dogs or cats. Another option is dog/cat sitting for a friend or family member. The option of leasing a horse or taking lessons can allow you to spend time with horses without the commitment of ownership. Sometimes loving animals means not getting one until you are fully prepared.

If you are considering getting a dog or cat, please look for our next article which will detail the best way to pick out the right animal for you and your family.