

## 6. Animal Care Practices for Some Common Animals

### Overview

We are providing a set of care guidelines for the various types of animals generally involved in cruelty complaints. We have presented the minimum conditions that should be present to ensure that the animals are receiving basic care. In addition, we have added recommendations that ideally should be followed.

We also have described what to look for in terms of the appearance of the animals and the environmental conditions that are symptoms of neglect and cruelty. If these are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animal(s).

In some cases the neglect and cruelty will be obvious even to an untrained eye. In others it may be more subtle, but if you become familiar with the following animal care practices, you will be better prepared to recognize it.

It is important to note that animal care practices can vary from breed to breed, and even from animal to animal, depending on many different factors. These guidelines are intended to give you a basis with which to make an informed decision about the care and health of the animals in your investigation, but they are not mandates of state law. Any divergence from these recommended practices may not – in and of itself – constitute a violation of Title 13. For example, pet owners are not required by law to neuter their animals.

The term “adequate” is used in Title 13, Section 352 (4) in reference to supplying animals with “adequate food, water, shelter, rest or sanitation . . .” “Adequate” is not specifically defined anywhere in the statute, so its meaning remains up to interpretation.

In most cases, educating animal owners about proper care and nutrition for their animals is enough to rectify the situation, and these practices can be used for that purpose as well. Title 13 outlines its purpose under Section 351 (a), which is to “prevent cruelty to animals.” It goes on to say that “in implementing this subchapter, enforcement officers are encouraged to educate the public on requirements of the subchapter and, when appropriate, to seek voluntary resolution of violations.”

# DOGS

Terminology

Female - Bitch

Male - Male

## • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Fresh, clean water (in a spill proof container) should be accessible at all times (See also Title 13, Section 351 (17) for new definition of "adequate water").
- Should be fed at least once a day with a good quality dog food, based on feeding instructions on package (See also Title 13, Section 351 (16) for new definition of "adequate food").
- Even if the dog is outside for short periods, it should have shelter available to protect it from the elements (See also Title 13, Section 365, Shelter of Animals).
- Important - with regard to being outside in winter weather, the breed of dog must be taken into consideration. Short haired dogs (Dobermans, Dachshunds, Pitbulls, etc.) and thin haired dogs (Afghan Hounds, Borzois, etc.) should not be left outside for extended periods in cold weather because they were not bred to withstand the cold. They should only be let outside for a short time to relieve themselves.
- Keeping a dog outside – We do NOT recommend that dogs be constantly kept outside alone because dogs by nature are social "pack" animals and have a psychological need to be with their human packs. However, if for some reason a dog is kept outside, the owner should provide a dog house that meets the following standards (see also pg 260 in Appendix IV, Fact Sheets and Articles, "Dog House Plans Adaptable to House Any Size Dog").
  - The dog house should accommodate the size of the dog; that is, it should be large enough to allow the dog or dogs to get inside and move about. However, it should not be too large because in

cold weather it must permit the dog's body heat to accumulate inside the structure to provide some warmth. The dog's breed, physical condition and age must be considered when determining whether a dog house meets its needs. The structure should:

- Be raised at least two inches off the ground to prevent it from sitting in pooled water.
  - Be shaded during the hot weather months; during the winter, the doorway should have a flap of windproof material to cover it.
  - Contain sufficient bedding, such as straw or wood shavings, that are changed often enough to remain dry and clean.
- To ensure that a dog's water does not spill, a water pail should be securely attached to the dog house.
  - Food should be increased during the winter months to provide the extra calories necessary for warmth, and water must be offered frequently to counteract its freezing.
- Tethering (chaining) a dog — any tethering should be done for brief periods of time to allow a dog some exercise. While state law does not specifically restrict the length of time an animal can be tethered or the type of restraint used, it does restrict the length of the chain. Title 13, Section 365(f) states that ". . . A dog chained to a shelter must be on a tether chain at least four times the length of the dog . . ." The dog should also have access to shade and protection from rain and snow. (see also pg 268 in Appendix IV, Fact Sheets and Articles, "The Facts about Chaining and Tethering Dogs").

Problems associated with constant tethering:

- Abnormally restrictive and can result in behavior problems (like an increased tendency to bite).
- Chains can get tangled and result in the dog's being strangled or dangerously restricted.
- Exposes dogs to attack by other dogs and wildlife.
- Owners forget to check dog collars and they sometimes become imbedded in the dog's neck. (This is a case of neglect and the

owner can be charged with cruelty under Section 352 of Title 13).

As an alternative to tethering—to provide exercise only—we recommend placing a long cable between two trees or poles. A ring can be attached to the cable and the dog's chain or lead attached (clipped) to the ring.

- **Additional recommendations**

- The dog should have yearly veterinary exams to ensure their proper health and to provide preventative shots and medications, such as rabies shots, heartworm blood tests, medication, etc. A rabies vaccination—for both dogs and wolf hybrids—is required by law (See Title 20, Chapter 193, Section 3581a (a))
- The dog should be spayed or neutered. This will prevent the birth of additional litters and improve the health and behavior of the dog. Check with your local shelter (See Appendix I, Animal Shelters and Rescue Organizations in Vermont) about available low-cost spay/neuter programs.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: dull hair coat; thin (ribs showing, sunken-in flanks); hair loss; diarrhea; chronic cough; heavy flea infestation with hair loss and scabs; bare ear tips and other body areas, which could indicate sarcoptic mange or frost bite. (see also pg 280 in Appendix IV, Fact Sheets and Articles, "Tufts Animal Care and Condition Scale" and pg 264, "How to Tell if a Dog or Cat May Need Veterinary Care").

**IMPORTANT**: Remember to check for a collar which is too tight, and for overgrown or ingrown nails, especially dewclaws, i.e., the "thumb nails" on the first digit, which tend to overgrow since they don't contact the ground.

Housing Conditions: overturned water bowl (water should be in spill proof container); no evidence that dog has been fed; no shelter from elements; ground covered with fecal matter.

Behavior: listless; depressed - the animal does not respond to attention; excessively fearful; aggressive; shy; constant scratching, biting at body, indicating heavy flea infestation or sarcoptic mange.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## CATS

Terminology

Female - Queen

Male - Tom

### • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Fresh, clean water in a spill proof container should be accessible at all times (See also Title 13, Section 351 (17) for new definition of "adequate water").
- Should be fed at least once a day with a good quality cat food, based on feeding instructions on package (See also Title 13, Section 351 (16) for new definition of "adequate food").
- Indoor cats must be provided with litter pans and litter material, cleaned daily to prevent urine and fecal buildup and odor (See Title 13, Section 365 (g) for new living space requirements for cats).

### • Additional recommendations

- Although not required by law, cats should have yearly veterinary exams to ensure their health and to provide any necessary medications and vaccinations against feline distemper, rabies, and (optional) feline leukemia. A rabies vaccination is required by law for "domestic pets", which includes cats. (See Title 20, Chapter 193, Section 3581a (a))
- The cat should be spayed or neutered. This will prevent the birth of additional litters and improve the health and behavior of the cat.
- We believe that a primary responsibility of a cat owner is to protect cats from outdoor hazards by keeping them inside; however, if a cat is let outside or kept outside, it should have access to proper shelter,

such as a barn, garage, etc. Feline leukemia testing and vaccinations are strongly recommended for outside cats.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: runny nose and eyes; congested breathing; ear mites; sores from fighting; thin body; matted fur; vomiting; diarrhea; parasites or allergies; hair loss (possibly from frost bite or mange). (see also pg 264 in Appendix IV, Fact Sheets and Articles, "How to Tell if a Dog or Cat May Need Veterinary Care").

Housing Conditions: no clean litter boxes; no clean water; no food available; no shelter; overcrowding - overcrowding causes stress and infectious disease.

Behavior: excessively aggressive; fearful; listless; unresponsive; self-mutilation; constant scratching, biting at self.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine animals.

## HORSES

Terminology

Female - Mare

Young female - Filly

Male - Stallion

Young male - Colt

Castrated male - Gelding

- **Basic Animal Care Practices**

NOTE: Feed and water requirements will vary considerably depending on the age of the animal, its size, amount of exercise or work that it performs, and physiologic status (e.g. whether pregnant or lactating, climate, etc.)

Remember that The Department of Agriculture must be consulted before any enforcement action is taken involving livestock or poultry (Title 13, Section 354 (3) (a))

- It is recommended that fresh, clean water be available at all times.
- Should be fed as follows:

- A complete hay diet consisting of good quality hay (a 1000 pound horse will eat between 1/2 and 3/4 bale of hay per day; (for pony or small breed, 1/3 bale); As a general guideline, one can estimate a dry matter intake of between 2-3% of body weight for maintenance depending on forage quality.

OR

- A partial hay diet consisting of a sufficient supply of good hay (1/6 to 1/3 bale), along with either oats, sweet feed, or other grain;

OR

- A "complete" grain type feed for those horses who cannot eat hay because of health problems, as advised by veterinarian.

- It is preferable that hay and grain not be thrown on the ground, which could lead to infection/reinfection from parasites, but rather placed in a manger or hay rack, or in case of grain, in a bucket or suitable container. All feed should be rotated and kept dry to avoid mold.
- Salt blocks are recommended — either white salt or preferably trace mineralized salt (red blocks).
- Should be provided with shelter that affords them protection from heavy rain, snow, and high wind. The shelter should also provide sufficient shade in the summer. (NOTE: According to Title 13, Section 365 (Shelter of Animals) ". . . all livestock . . . must be provided with . . . adequate natural shelter or a three-sided, roofed building with exposure out of the prevailing wind and of sufficient size to adequately accommodate all livestock maintained out-of-doors . . .")
- Stalls can be box stalls (minimum 10' by 10' per horse) or straight or tie stalls (only permits the horse to stay in a straight alignment, that is, it can stand and lie, but cannot turn around.) If confined to a straight stall, daily turnout should be provided. Natural light should be available and horses should not be overcrowded.

## • Additional recommendations

- Should be wormed every three months ideally, but minimally in the spring and fall.
- At a minimum, should be vaccinated for rabies and tetanus on an annual basis; other vaccinations as recommended by veterinarian.

- Should receive proper hoof care. Hooves require trimming approximately every 8 to 12 weeks. A horse does not always require horse shoes. Shoeing depends on the condition of the horse's feet, the type of work the horse does, the road surface it travels on, and how often it travels. Teeth should be checked annually and floated (filed down) if necessary.
- Need to "graze" (i.e. have access to grass or hay). Ideally, hay should always be available whether inside or outside. The total time devoted to grazing and chewing hay should amount to approximately 18 hours a day. (This should minimize wood chewing.)

NOTE: See also loose May/June 2000 Animal Sheltering reprint, "Investigating Animal Cruelty: How to Educate, How to Enforce".

#### • Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for

Appearance of animal: thin (ribs and vertebrae prominent); halter and other harness or saddle sores (check to see if halter has grown into the horse's head); halter should not be kept on constantly; excessive hoof length (possibly with tips of hooves turned up); a hoof which is spongy on the bottom side and has a foul odor; bite wounds from constant fighting possibly resulting from stallions or overly aggressive animals pastured together or with mares.

Housing Conditions: no fresh water or food available; no shelter; overcrowded; no place to lie down; excessive manure and urine build-up; standing on muddy ground with no dry areas. NOTE: Insufficient manger space for the number of horses can result in a competitive situation which causes the weakest animals to be excluded from the food source.

Behavior: head down and unresponsive; inactive; indifferent to surroundings and visitors; excessively fearful; displays excessive aggression toward other horses; odd standing behavior, such as standing on one forefoot while holding the other forefoot up so that only the toe touches the ground, lying on the ground excessively, standing with weight on hind quarters, resting chin on fence rail to get weight off forefeet can all be signs of lameness, founder or laminitis and indicate the need for veterinary care.

If any of the elements above are present, arrange to have a veterinarian examine animals.

# CATTLE

Terminology

Female - Cow

Young female - Heifer (has not yet had a calf; often considered less than 2

years of age)

Male - Bull

Castrated male - Steer

Young animal, either sex - Calf

## • Basic Animal Care Practices

NOTE: Feed and water requirements will vary considerably depending on the age of the animal, its size, amount of exercise or work that it performs, and physiologic status (e.g. whether pregnant or lactating, climate, etc.)

Remember that The Department of Agriculture must be consulted before any enforcement action is taken involving livestock or poultry (Title 13, Section 354 (3) (a))

- It is recommended that fresh, clean water be available at all times.
- Should have good quality forage or mixed ration available or be able to graze adequate pasture. Supplemental grain should be provided if needed to meet the additional nutritional demands of lactation, gestation, growth, cold weather or to compensate for poor forage or pasture quality. As a general guideline, one can estimate a dry matter intake of between 2-3% of body weight for maintenance depending on forage quality.
- It is preferable that hay (with the exception of big bales) and grain should not be dumped on the ground, but rather placed in a manger or hay rack, or in case of grain, in a bucket, or other container.
- Dairy calves have a limited ability to digest hay, grass or forages until after weaning at about 2-3 months of age, so must be on milk and/or "calf starter" grain until then.
- All feed should be kept dry to avoid mold.

- Unless already provided for in a mixed or complete ration, salt blocks should be available — either white salt or preferably trace mineralized salt (red blocks).
  - Should be provided with shelter that affords them protection from heavy rain, snow, and sun. Facilities should be well ventilated. Some form of natural shelter, such as a wooded area, may be adequate for certain acclimated and hearty breeds of cattle. (NOTE: According to Title 13, Section 365 (Shelter of Animals) “. . . all livestock . . . must be provided with . . . adequate natural shelter or a three-sided, roofed building with exposure out of the prevailing wind and of sufficient size to adequately accommodate all livestock maintained out-of-doors . . .”)
  - Confined cattle should have dry bedding - can be sand, sawdust, shredded paper, straw, packed manure (if dry). In the winter, there should be enough bedding to provide insulation from the cold floor/ground.
- **Additional recommendations**
    - Hoof trimming is not necessary unless the hooves are excessively long.
    - Should be vaccinated annually for rabies and other diseases, and dewormed according to veterinary advice.
- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: note that dairy cows are by nature “bony” in the hip area and may normally appear thin during early stages of lactation; however, one sign of an emaciated dairy cow may be a protruding back bone and sunken eyes.

Housing Conditions: no place to exercise for adult animals (although tie stalls and stanchions are acceptable housing systems); no dry place to lie down; no water or food; overcrowded; strong ammonia odors (not just a manure odor) from lack of ventilation. Insufficient manger space for the number of cattle can result in a competitive situation which causes the weakest animals to be excluded from the food source.

Behavior: weak; minimally responsive; note that cattle who receive minimal handling (i.e. beef cows) will be naturally fearful of humans. Loud and

frequent bellowing from many of the animals may occur when cattle are hungry and feed has not been provided.

If any of the elements above are present, arrange to have a veterinarian examine animals.

## SHEEP

Terminology

Female - Ewe

Male - Ram

Castrated male - Wether

Young sheep of either sex - Lamb

### • Basic Animal Care Practices

NOTE: Feed and water requirements will vary considerably depending on the age of the animal, its size, amount of exercise or work that it performs, and physiologic status (e.g. whether pregnant or lactating, climate, etc.)

Remember that The Department of Agriculture must be consulted before any enforcement action is taken involving livestock or poultry (Title 13, Section 354 (3) (a))

- It is recommended that fresh, clean water be available at all times.
- Should have good quality forage or mixed ration available or be able to graze adequate pasture. Supplemental grain should be provided if needed to meet the additional nutritional demands of lactation, gestation, growth, cold weather or to compensate for poor forage or pasture quality. NOTE: grain can be oats, corn, or various mixtures, but the mixture must say SHEEP feed because cow feed mixes have too much copper, which is poisonous to sheep.
- White salt or "sheep salt" block should be available at all times. Avoid red salt block because it contains excess copper.
- Should be provided with shelter that affords them protection from heavy rain, snow, high wind, and sun, and a dry place to rest. (NOTE: According to Title 13, Section 365 (Shelter of Animals) ". . . all livestock . . . must be provided with . . . adequate natural shelter or a three-sided, roofed building with exposure out of the prevailing wind and of

sufficient size to adequately accommodate all livestock maintained out-of-doors . . .")

- **Additional recommendations**

- Should be wormed about 2-4 times a year to prevent disease. Lambs may need routine worming over the summer about every six weeks, based on veterinary advice.
- Veterinary care should include being vaccinated for rabies, enterotoxemia (over eating disease), and tetanus once a year.
- Should have hooves trimmed once a year.
- Should be sheared each spring to prevent matting and infestation with maggots known as flystrike.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: thin - note that, with an unshorn (unclipped) sheep, you must feel the body of the animal to determine if it is underweight; maggots in genital area of unshorn female sheep; excessive hoof length - look to see if sides of hoof have overgrown and curled under the bottom of hoof; limping; animal "walking" on knees.

Housing Conditions: lack of food, water, and shelter; overcrowding (insufficient manger space for the number of sheep, a condition which causes the weakest sheep to be excluded from the food source).

Behavior: dull, minimally responsive; drooping head; animals rubbing up against objects in an effort to relieve itching from lice (wool on objects that sheep rub against). Note that sheep are naturally fearful of strangers.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine animals.

## GOATS

Terminology

Female - Doe

Male - Buck

Castrated male - Wether

Young animal, either sex - Kid

- **Basic Animal Care Standards**

NOTE: Feed and water requirements will vary considerably depending on the age of the animal, its size, amount of exercise or work that it performs, and physiologic status (e.g. whether pregnant or lactating, climate, etc.)

Remember that The Department of Agriculture must be consulted before any enforcement action is taken involving livestock or poultry (Title 13, Section 354 (3) (a))

- It is recommended that fresh, clean water be available at all times.
- Should have good quality forage or mixed ration available or be able to graze adequate pasture. Supplemental grain should be provided if needed to meet the additional nutritional demands of lactation, gestation, growth, cold weather or to compensate for poor forage or pasture quality.
- Salt block should be available - either white salt or trace mineralized salt (red block).
- Should be provided with shelter that affords them protection from heavy rain, snow, sun, and drafts. There should be enough air circulation to control humidity without being drafty. According to Title 13, Section 365 (Shelter of Animals) “. . . all livestock . . . must be provided with . . . adequate natural shelter or a three-sided, roofed building with exposure out of the prevailing wind and of sufficient size to adequately accommodate all livestock maintained out-of-doors . . .”)
- Sanitary conditions should be maintained (that is, dry, clean bedding). Kids are especially susceptible to unsanitary conditions.

- **Additional recommendations**

- Should have hooves trimmed at least once a year.
- Should be vaccinated for rabies, tetanus, and other diseases once a year.
- Should be dewormed 2-4 times a year to prevent disease.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: excessive hoof length (look to see if sides of hoof have overgrown and curled under the bottom of hoof); limping; animal

“walking” on knees; very thin (normally should feel slight padding over bony areas.)

Housing Conditions: too many animals to permit free movement; lack of food, water, and shelter; overcrowding (insufficient manger space for the number of goats, a condition which causes the weakest goats to be excluded from the food source); wet conditions with no dry bedding or dry areas to lie down; filth.

Behavior: dull, minimally responsive, not interested in surroundings (well-cared for goats are very friendly and curious); drooping head; significant hair loss with biting at themselves and rubbing on objects to relieve itching from lice or mange; if overcrowded, and bucks are present, can butt each other.

If any of the elements above are present, arrange to have a veterinarian examine animals.

## PIGS

Terminology

Female - Sow

Young female - Gilt (female that has not yet given birth)

Male - Boar

Castrated male - Barrow

Young weaned pig, either sex – Shoat

### · Basic Animal Care Practices

NOTE: Feed and water requirements will vary considerably depending on the age of the animal, its size, amount of exercise or work that it performs, and physiologic status (e.g. whether pregnant or lactating, climate, etc.)

Remember that The Department of Agriculture must be consulted before any enforcement action is taken involving livestock or poultry (Title 13, Section 354 (3) (a))

- It is recommended that fresh, clean water be available at all times.
- Should be fed complete pig ration at least twice a day; many complete pig rations are available on the market today. Vermont state law prohibits the feeding of food waste or garbage to swine without a permit (See Title 6, Chapter 113). They can be fed table left-overs only from one's own household that are free of any plastic spoons, wrappers, animal bones, etc. Area should be large enough to allow all animals access to food.
- Don't need a salt block as long as they get a minimum of 1 to 2 pounds daily of a complete swine ration.
- Should be provided with shelter that protects them from rain, snow, and drafts. Concrete, sloped pens that can be hosed down, expanded metal or slotted floors, or a clean, bedded pen are necessary for housing. Straw should be used in cold weather to help keep them warm.

IMPORTANT: In the summer, shade is extremely important; if they are not provided with sufficient shade, pigs may die of heat exhaustion. It is NOT acceptable to have them in the mud constantly because of the parasite potential. An occasional mudbath is very enjoyable for them, but pigs should have a dry area available to them.

- Shelter should allow enough room so that the pigs are not overcrowded.
- Hoof care is not needed.

- **Additional recommendations**

Should be wormed twice a year and receive shots based on veterinarian's recommendations (including rabies in endemic areas).

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: thinness; scratching and reddened or scabby skin may indicate the presence of lice or mange; limping. (If you see any of these signs, contact a veterinarian to examine animals.)

Housing Conditions: filthy, muddy, sloppy, manure and trash-laden pens; lack of ventilation; lack of light; no dry areas for them to be dry and clean; overcrowding can lead to disease and sickness in pigs, and will prevent the weaker ones from gaining access to food sources.

Behavior: dull, minimally responsive, listless, not interested in surroundings; drooping head. Note that pigs are shy with strangers.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## RABBITS

Terminology

Female - Doe

Male - Buck

### • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Fresh, clean water should be accessible at all times. Water should be placed in water containers especially made to hang on side of hutch. In the winter, if rabbits are outside, water should be changed often (2-3 times daily) to prevent freezing.
- Should have constant access to food. Should be fed pelleted rabbit food, along with small quantities of raw carrots and pieces of apple; alfalfa and other hay should also be provided. They may be fed fresh grass or lettuce, but too much may cause rabbits to suffer from severe diarrhea, which could lead to death. Rabbit pellets must be stored to prevent exposure to moisture and light which causes vitamin loss.
- Must have access to pieces of hard wood or dog biscuits to gnaw on so that they can keep their teeth worn down to a proper size to allow them to chew properly.
- Should be provided with shelter that protects them from snow, rain, extreme cold, and wind. Wintertime sub-freezing temperatures can cause death by freezing. In the summertime, shade is extremely important - direct sun and heat can kill rabbits quickly.

- Rabbit hutches should be cleaned daily. Hutch should have a box approximately 12" by 12" with dry bedding. The rest of the hutch should have a wire mesh (1/2") floor. The hutch should be raised off the floor to allow the feces to fall through. This is necessary because rabbits eat their feces, and in captivity, parasite levels can become fatal.
  - To prevent overcrowding and further breeding, each hutch should only contain one adult rabbit, or two adults of the same sex if they get along, or an adult female with her litter.
  - Veterinary care as needed to check for diseases, parasites, and intestinal impaction due to hairballs or other foreign matter, also check for mal-alignment of teeth and "lumps" of the skin.
- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**
- Appearance of animal: thin; fur in poor condition; sores from scratching; portions of ears missing because of frostbite or because they were bitten off from overcrowding.
- Housing Conditions: overcrowded conditions; must be sufficient space to permit all rabbits (including smaller ones) access to food.
- Behavior: dull, minimally responsive, not interested in surroundings, depressed. Most rabbits are naturally shy of strangers.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## BIRDS (parakeets, canaries, parrots, etc.)

Terminology  
 Female - hen  
 Male - cock

- **Basic Animal Care Practices**
  - Fresh, clean water should be available at all times.
  - Should have access to appropriate seed mix or pelleted diet at all times. Seed container should be checked to ensure that it really

contains seed and is not filled with the empty seed hulls. Fresh fruits and vegetables should also be provided daily for most birds.

- Should have a perch or several perches to rest on and to move about.
  - Should have access to “cuttlebone” or some other type of material that allows the bird to sharpen its beak. Also provides a source of calcium.
  - Should be provided with a cage that allows them to move about freely. Cage should be placed in area free from drafts. Room in which birds are kept should be temperate in temperature - not too hot and not too cold.
  - Cage should be cleaned on a regular basis to prevent buildup of feces and to prevent diseases.
- **Additional recommendations**
    - Veterinary care for routine beak trimming as needed; also to check for respiratory and intestinal diseases.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: feathers fluffed up (indicates fever, illness, or that room temperature is too low.); hard to tell if emaciated, but best indicator is to feel the bird’s breast bone to determine if it is too prominent.

Housing Conditions: overcrowding (weaker birds bullied and pecked by dominant ones); filthy cage; no fresh water or food.

Behavior: dull, minimally responsive, not interested in surroundings, depressed; drooping; “hunched” with feathers fluffed.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

# CHICKENS/DUCKS/GEESE

## Terminology

	<u>Chickens:</u>	<u>Ducks:</u>	<u>Geese:</u>
Female	hen	duck	goose
Male	rooster	drake	gander
Young	chick	duckling	gosling

## • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times.
- Should have commercial chicken/duck food available at all times. All domestic poultry should be provided with a source of calcium, such as ground oyster shells. Chickens, turkeys, quail, and pheasants should have access to gravel to aid in digestion of food.
- Should be provided with shelter that protects them from snow, rain, extreme cold, and wind. In the summertime, shade is extremely important - chickens/ducks/geese can die of heat exhaustion. Shelter should be properly ventilated to minimize ammonia odor; fans can be used to cool the birds. In the wintertime, must be kept warm enough to prevent chickens' combs from becoming frost bitten. This can be done with heat lamps to keep the temperature above 32 degrees - if the water doesn't freeze, the temperature is okay.
- Shelter should provide chickens and turkeys with a place to roost and should be cleaned on a regular basis.

## • Additional recommendations

- Poultry raised on the ground need to be wormed at least once a year.
- Veterinary care as needed. Look for respiratory diseases (eyes seem half shut, breathing sounds raspy or rattling) and for diarrhea. Healthy birds should not have fecal matter matting the feathers around their hind quarters.

## • Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for

Appearance of animal: thin (feel the breastbone to see if it is prominent); unkempt feathers (healthy birds keep their feathers clean); frostbitten

combs and wattles (red skin under chicken's chin); feather picking; abrasions because of overcrowding.

Housing Conditions: overcrowding - this can be fatal in chickens; too hot or too cold for safety of birds.

Behavior: dull, minimally responsive, not interested in surroundings, depressed; open-mouth breathing if respiratory diseases are present, if conditions are too hot, or when stressed.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## GERBILS/GUINEA PIGS/HAMSTERS/MICE/RATS

Terminology (Guinea Pigs)

Female - Sow

Male - Boar

Young - Piglets

Terminology (Gerbils, Hamsters, Mice, Rats)

Female - Sire

Male - Dam

Young - Pups

### • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Should have access to fresh, clean water at all times, preferably from water bottle hanging from side of cage.
- Should have a good quality food as appropriate for the species, usually a seed/pellet mixture. Guinea pigs require a pelleted food fortified with Vitamin C. Rabbit food should not be used for any of these small animals. Fresh vegetables are important in a guinea pig diet, but should be given in very small amounts to others.
- Should have an odor free, dry, commercially prepared absorbent bedding or shavings. If guinea pigs are housed on wire mesh, it should not be larger than 1/2" x 1/2" mesh.

- Should have something to gnaw on, such as a piece of untreated wood or branches from fruit (unsprayed), willow or maple trees.
  - Females should be kept separate from males, except for breeding purposes.
- **Additional recommendations**
    - Should have a small box to hide in, especially guinea pigs.
  - **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: fur - standing on end, or wet, or matted; runny eyes and nose; thin; wet rump; evidence of fighting, such as bite marks around eyes, ears or rump; diarrhea.

Housing Conditions: filthy cage; wet bedding and strong odor; lack of water and food (look under bedding, as all but guinea pigs may take food from dish and hoard it); overcrowded quarters; too hot a location. NOTE: After they are 3 months old, hamsters should be housed alone.

Behavior: unresponsive; animals fighting with each other.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## SNAKES

- **Basic Animal Care Practices**
  - Should have access to fresh, clean water at all times.
  - All snakes are carnivores. They swallow their prey whole and utilize the entire bodies of their prey in their diet. Most snakes feed on small rodents, amphibians, birds, and insects. Providing a hiding place is essential, since most snakes will refuse to feed otherwise. A normal, healthy snake can be fed every week to ten days.
  - The optimum temperature for most New England snakes is 75-80 degrees Fahrenheit. Boas, pythons and other tropical and semi-tropical species require slightly warmer conditions (78 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit). If exposed to direct sunlight and not afforded an opportunity to escape, the body temperature of a snake will rise dramatically and death can result.

- The cage floor should be covered with a dry, absorbent material such as newspaper, cloth towels, indoor-outdoor carpeting, or astro-turf.  
NOTE: Never use kitty litter.
- A cage measuring 3 feet by 18 inches by 18 inches is normally adequate for most snakes up to six feet in length.
- All snakes periodically shed their skins. During the opaque cycle, when they are preparing to shed, the snake becomes inactive and the skin colors take on a dulled appearance. The eyes will become clouded to the point they appear milky.
- **Additional recommendations**
  - If live food is being offered, never leave it in the cage unattended. A snake that is not hungry may be mutilated without ever attempting to defend itself.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: abnormal bulges, backbone irregularities or kinks, gross skin lesions or missing scales, loose skin along the body, wheezing, mouth kept slightly open at all times, small red inflamed spots on the gums accompanied by excess amounts of mucous.

Housing Conditions: filthy cage; wet bedding, lack of water.

Behavior: Reluctance to move or feed over prolonged periods of time.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## TURTLES/TORTOISES

- **Basic Animal Care Practices**
  - Aquatic species of turtles need swimming water to swallow their food. The water should be deep enough for swimming and proper feeding (as deep as the animal's shell is long), and the temperature should be between 75 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit; terrestrial species of tortoises should have a non-metal water dish large enough to soak in and drink from. The water should be lukewarm and shallow, and offered at least once a day.

- Depending on species, young turtles and tortoises feed on small worms, insects, grubs, chopped lean meat, poultry, or fish; most turtles are carnivores . Most tortoises are herbivores, eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. NOTE: It is not harmful or unusual for a turtle or tortoise to go on an unexplained fast for short periods of time up to one week.
- Sunshine is necessary for the synthesis of vitamin D, which is necessary for their health and the growth of a strong skeleton and shell.
- A terrarium for a tortoise should be large enough to provide an ample exercise area along with an area in which the tortoise can hide. A bedding of indoor-outdoor carpeting, newspaper, or cloth towels is appropriate. NOTE: Avoid the use of kitty litter and wood chips.
- **Additional recommendations**
  - Bonemeal, which provides calcium and phosphorous, is a must in the diet for a healthy shell.

#### • Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for

Appearance of animal: soft or cracked shell, swollen eyes, pock marks on bottom of shell, white growths on the shell or skin.

Housing Conditions: Dirty substrate, dirty water, presence of uneaten or spoiled food.

Behavior: Reluctance to move or extend head/limbs from shell.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

## LIZARDS

### • Basic Animal Care Practices

- Lizards are the most varied of all reptiles, ranging in size from less than an inch to over ten feet. They are carnivorous, insectivorous, herbivorous, and omnivorous. NOTE: Do not feed lizards cat food because they can't digest the fish oil properly.
- More lizards are killed due to improper heating than any other single cause. As for all reptiles, the three elements affecting the body

temperature include radiant heat from the sun, indirect radiant heat from the rocks and surface layer of the ground, and ambient heat of the air.

- Again as for all reptiles, it is best to house the lizard in a cage large enough to allow a thermal gradient, by locating a heat source at one end and providing a cool retreat at the other. NOTE: Never allow lizards to be subjected to direct sunlight in a glass enclosure without the ability to escape. They will quickly die from heat exposure.
- Captive lizards acquire water in several ways: from plants, twigs, rocks or any other surface such as the cage walls (mist the cage or area around the lizard with water twice a day), from a container (usually prefer to immerse themselves while drinking), and through the liquid contained in their natural diet.
- Flooring varies with each species. NOTE: Avoid kitty litter because it will cause impaction. Acceptable substrates for most lizards are newspaper, indoor-outdoor carpeting, or cloth towels.

- **Additional recommendations**

- Ultraviolet light is necessary for iguanas.

- **Signs of neglect/cruelty - what to look for**

Appearance of animal: sunken eyes, wrinkled skin, protruding hip bones in conjunction with a thin or sunken tail at the base, damaged mouth, bumps, cuts, sores, and poor coloration.

Housing Conditions: Should provide adequate space and be sufficient to the needs of the particular species.

Behavior: Judging behavior to determine animal cruelty is difficult because many lizards will "suffer in silence" long before they show any physical symptoms. The physical condition of the animal and its surroundings can be indicative of improper management (poor diet, unsanitary conditions, incorrect temperatures and overcrowding), which may constitute animal cruelty.

If any of the elements above are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

