

## Caring for Animals

**Subject Area:** Science

**Unit Title:** Animals

**Grade Level:** 4th & 5th grade

**Objectives:** Each student will gain an understanding for caring for pets and agricultural animals.

**Colorado Content Standards to be covered:**

### SCIENCE:

**Standard III - Life Science:** Students know and understand the characteristics and structure of living things, the processes of life, and how living things interact with each other and their environment.

**Anticipatory Set:** Ask students what pets or animals they care for. As the students give you answers, fill in a concept map you have on the board (see last page).

### Input:

Do you have a pet at home? If you do, you probably love it and take good care of it. Your pet may even be your best friend. Or maybe you don't have a pet of your own, but a relative or friend has a pet that you enjoy or help take care of.

When you own a pet, you are responsible for its health and well-being. This means you feed your pet, clean up after its messes and watch for signs of illness. You need to keep your pet safe from traffic, attacks from other animals and other dangerous situations. It's important to get vaccinations and veterinary care when needed, too.

A collar with I.D. tags will help you identify your pet if it runs away.

Most animals raised on farms and ranches are not pets, but the people who care for them are also responsible for making sure their animals are fed, have water, are kept safe and watched for signs of illness or injury. These people are in the business of raising animals. Usually, the better job they do in providing good care for their animals, the more profit they will make. Caring for animals is an important full-time commitment. It takes time, work and commitment. It isn't right for everyone. But for most owners, the rewards outweigh the challenges.

### **Animals and people...we depend on each other!**

*Adapted from the Foundation for Animal Use Education*

The relationship between humans and animals is ancient. It goes back thousands of years to the time when wild animals were drawn to the campfires of humans. Animals and humans came to trust each other, and to depend on one another. Humans provided animals with food, shelter and protection from predators. Animals, in turn, provided humans with food, clothing and companionship.

Today, people and animals still rely on each other. We depend on animals for the food we eat and the milk we drink. We bring animals into our homes for love and companionship. We survive illness and live longer, healthier lives because of biomedical research on animals. We use house-

hold products and cosmetics made from animal by-products. We use products that are proven safe through animal testing. We enjoy hunting and fishing as ways of reconnecting with nature.

In addition, we go to zoos, aquariums and nature preserves to learn about animals. We benefit from specially trained dogs that detect drugs and sniff out explosives. Guide dogs assist the blind and disabled. We enjoy horse and dog racing and taking our children to the circus.

Animals depend on people to treat them well. This includes providing a proper place for them to live, nutritious food to eat, and good health, care such as vaccinations and treatment of disease. Most people work hard to do the best possible job of animal care.

### **Animal Welfare**

Animal welfare means being responsible for all aspects of animal well-being. In the U.S., the Animal Welfare Act protects animals in medical research labs, zoos and circuses, as well as pets raised in professional kennels and sold through pet stores. In addition, most states and communities have laws to protect animals from abuse. These laws cover everything from the proper care and treatment of pets to regulated hunting and fishing, food production, and other forms of animal use. Each one of us should treat animals with care, because it is our responsibility.

**Checking for Understanding:** At the end of this section choose one of the following for a quick check: ask the students to partner share and think, pair and share, do a quick 3 word write up as an exit slip, do a quick sketch or give each other a quick thumbs up or down to check for understanding. Determine the level of mastery for each student and provide individual remediation as needed.

### **Procedures/Activities:**

#### **Classroom Pets**

Many animals are not well suited to life in a classroom. Some small rodents including guinea pigs, mice, rats and gerbils adapt well and are relatively easy to care for. Taking care of a pet in the classroom gives students an opportunity to learn how to treat animals and teaches the concept of responsibility. However, the teacher must be the person ultimately responsible for the animal's care. Make sure your classroom pet is one that you can take home over breaks and summer vacation.

#### **Discussion About Pets**

- Ask your students, "Who owns a pet?"
- Ask them to bring a photo of their pet to class. The photo may be part of a presentation to the class in which they describe the animal.
- Ask them to describe in detail the care they provide for their pet and the benefits they feel they gain from owning a pet.
- Brainstorm with the class a list of expenses associated with their pets. These should include not only food but supplies, vaccinations, licenses, spaying/neutering, grooming and boarding fees.
- The photos can be pinned on a bulletin board display, "Our Pets & Their Needs." Then have the students compare various pets and their expenses.

#### **Animals in Other Places**

- Ask students to identify any animals they have seen, domestic or wild, other than pets.
- Have them describe the animal, where they saw it, what it looked like and how it behaved.
- Does the animal provide humans with food, clothing or other products?
- What responsibilities do humans have to this animal and others?

**Working with Animals**

- Have students identify a job that relates to animals (farmer, rancher, veterinarian, pet shop owner, mounted police officer, dog trainer, etc.) and interview an individual in that job.
- Some of the questions should be:

Why did the person choose a job working with animals? What does he/she like and dislike about working with animals? What kind of training or education was needed for the job? What duties does the person perform as part of his/her job?

- After reviewing all the jobs with the class, ask students to choose one of these careers, research it and write a job description for it. Their research may involve reading books, magazines or the interview they did earlier. Have them describe the basic responsibilities of the job as well as any special skills, training or education required. Finally, have them write an application letter explaining why they believe they would be suited to the job.

**Closure:**

Wrap up the lesson by giving the students this silly quiz:

**Silly Quiz about Farm Animals**

How much do you know about farm animals? Take this quiz to find out.

(1) It's been reported that cows give 35% more milk when listening to the music of which artist?

- A. Britney Spears
- B. Aerosmith
- C. Elvis Presley

(2) Pigs wallow in mud because:

- A. They like getting dirty
- B. Pigs can't sweat and use the mud to cool their skin
- C. They just love mud wrestling

(3) True or False: Sheep can recognize up to 50 friends in a flock.

(4) Chickens have more bones in their neck than what other animal?

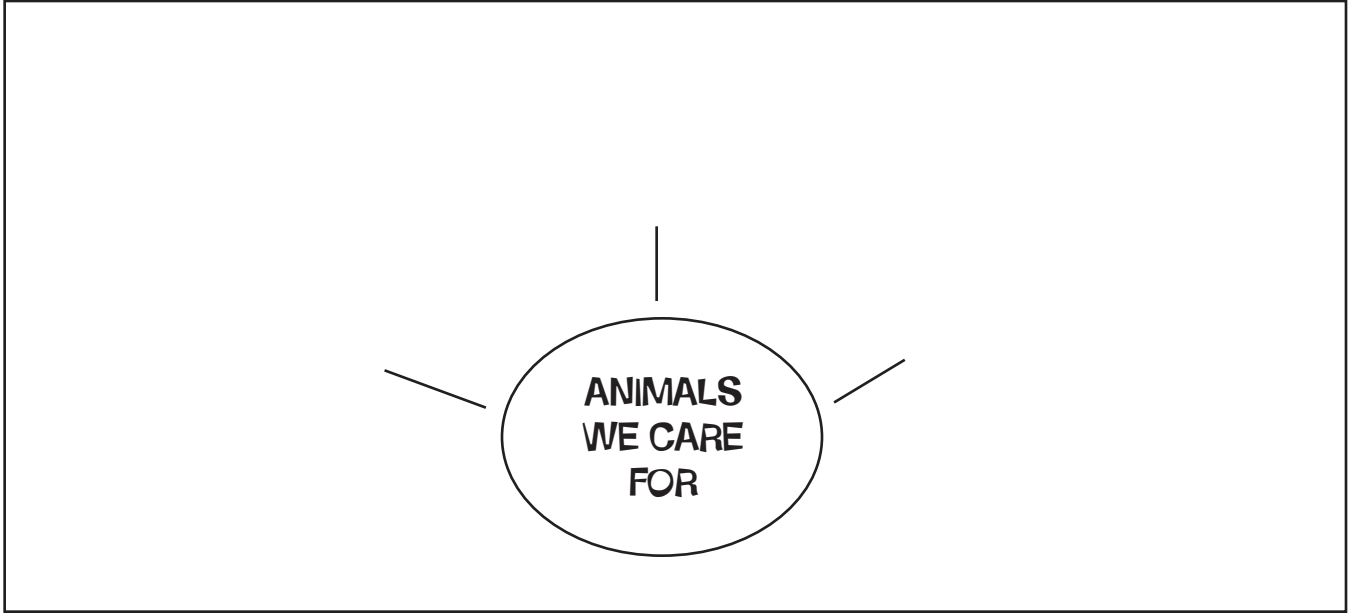
- A. Dog
- B. Giraffe
- C. Cat

(5) What farm animal likes swimming and frolicking in the moonlight, especially when the moon is full?

- A. Cow
- B. Chicken
- C. Pig

Answers: 1.C, 2.B, 3.True, 4.B, 5.A

**Concept Map:**



**Possible Answers:**

