

# Companion Animal Outcomes

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*For more information, contact:*

*Jennifer Richards, Curriculum Specialist, University of Tennessee Extension*

*Maria Sabin, Extension Agent, Tennessee State University Extension Hamilton County*

*Aaron Fisher, Extension Specialist, Department of Animal Science*

*Maria Prado, Assistant Professor of Practice, College of Veterinary Medicine*

*Ethan Harvill, ARBA National Youth Liaison*

## Choosing the Right Companion Animal

### Life Span

- Define the average life span of the companion animal you are interested in owning.
- For animals with life spans longer than 5 years, create a plan for how you will care for this animal after you finish high school.

### Start-Up and Maintenance Costs

- List all items you need to care for a companion animal you are interested in owning and determine how much of each item you will need per year.
- Calculate the cost of purchasing items of care for one full year of care for your companion animal.
- Develop an annual budget that is balanced (sources of income equal or are greater than costs) for caring for your companion animal.

### Fit

- Evaluate the amount of time needed to care for a companion animal per day, week and month.
- Interview other members of your family about their opinions of the companion animal you are considering.
- Research ways to responsibly find another home for the companion animal you are considering owning, in the event that you are unable to care for it for its entire life span.

### Care Needs

- Identify a veterinarian in your area who will treat the companion animal you are considering owning and create a schedule for yearly exams (including vaccinations, sick visits and spay/neuter).
- Research the reproductive cycle of the companion animal you are considering owning to determine if the animal should be spayed or neutered to prevent overpopulation.



## Dogs

### Breeds/Classification

- List the seven breed groups recognized by the American Kennel Club.
- Identify at least two breeds of dogs within each breed group.
- Identify major characteristics of dogs within each breed group.
- Identify the major dog shows that are held annually.
- Choose a dog of interest (yours or one you would like to have) and learn about its breed(s).

### Anatomy

- Identify the main external parts of a dog.

### Care

- Understand the importance of spaying and neutering dogs to prevent overpopulation.
- Identify the major nutritional requirements for dogs.
- Identify the major exercise requirements for dogs.
- List the major vaccinations that are required for dogs.
- Understand the importance of proper care for dogs.
- List five diseases and their symptoms that are common for dogs.

### Training

- Learn about dog body language.

## Cats

### Breeds/Classification

- Compare and contrast the characteristics of four breeds of cats.
- Describe the process for competing in a major cat show.
- Identify major categories judges look for when judging cats.
- Describe the breed standards for two breeds of cats.
- Value the differences and similarities between domestic cats today and the wild cats from which they descended.

### Anatomy

- Describe the function of each major body part.
- Correctly identify the major bones of the cat.

### Care

- Understand the importance of spaying and neutering cats to prevent overpopulation.
- Describe the nutritional requirements for cats.
- Describe the exercise requirements for cats.
- List the common vaccines cats receive and the function of each vaccine.
- Identify the most common diseases and their symptoms that can affect cats.

## Rabbits

### Breeds/Classification

- List the major categories of rabbit body types and their characteristics.
- Identify at least one breed of rabbits within each category of body types.
- Locate the major rabbit shows that are held annually.
- Explain proper rabbit showmanship.
- Describe the differences between domestic rabbits and wild rabbits.

### Anatomy

- Identify the main body regions and body parts of a rabbit.
- Understand that different breed groupings of rabbits have different requirements for different body parts.

### Care

- Identify the major nutritional requirements for rabbits.
- Explain the importance of spaying and neutering rabbits to prevent overpopulation.
- Understand husbandry practices proper care for rabbits.
- List five common diseases for rabbits.

## Snakes

### Breeds/Classification

- List the five major families of snakes.
- Identify at least two types of snakes within each of the five major families.
- Identify which of the five major families of snakes include venomous snakes.
- Understand what characteristics snakes have in common in the more than 3,000 different species of snakes found throughout the world.
- List examples of types of snakes that make good pets for beginning snake owners.
- Identify characteristics that make snakes good companion animals.

### Anatomy

- Identify the main body parts of a snake.
- Understand how to distinguish between venomous and nonvenomous snakes found in Tennessee.

### Care

- Understand what it means for snakes to be *ectothermic* and how this affects their care.
- Understand the importance of washing your hands after handling snakes or their food.

## Lizards

### Breeds/Classification

- List three types of lizards commonly kept as pets.
- Identify characteristics that make these lizards good companion animals.
- Understand what characteristics separate lizards from snakes, even though both lizards and snakes are in the same order of reptiles (Squamata).

### Anatomy

- List the major body parts of a lizard.
- Understand that differences in body types of the different lizards affects where they can live in the wild.

### Care

- Understand what it means for lizards to be *ectothermic* and how this characteristic affects their care.
- Understand the importance of washing your hands after handling lizards or their food.



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