

Remember Your Pets this Season

With all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, Madison County Dog Warden Dep. Gary Kronk wants to make sure residents don't forget pets are part of the family. "This time of year, you really need to take care and make sure you think about your pets," said Kronk.

The first step, Kronk said, is to make sure all dogs have licenses. "Yes, it is the law, but more importantly, a dog tag is by far, the best way to make sure a lost dog gets reunited with its owner," said Kronk. Even people who never let their dogs out of the house need to purchase a license, not only because it is the law, but also because "sometimes things just happen." The warden noted that sometimes dogs escape or a door accidentally gets left open. "If the dog has a tag, finding the animal's owner is pretty easy. Without tags, it can be really difficult to find a way to get them home," said Kronk.

If the animal is not licensed, the dog warden will ask area residents if they recognize the animal. If they don't, the dog is taken to the animal shelter. Many times, when a family loses their dog, the warden's office is called. Sometimes an unlicensed dog can be reunited with its family, "but it helps me get dogs home much, much quicker if a found dog has a license on," he said. He wanted to remind residents that just buying the license is not enough. "You have to make sure you put the license on the dog's collar," Kronk said.

Dog licenses purchased between Dec. 1 of this year and Jan. 1, 2008, will cost the buyer \$12. When February gets here, the cost doubles to \$24. "It's really a bargain anytime," said Kronk comparing the price with the \$95.00 fine for an unlicensed dog citation. He estimates he averages two citations a week. Kronk said he issued 7,130 dog tags for this year. He said sales have nearly doubled since he began as deputy/dog warden in April 2005. "I think everybody is now more aware of the need to have their dogs licensed, and that's a good thing," the warden said. He estimates the county has between 8,500 and 9,000 dogs that should be wearing the new green tags. The warden said even new dog's received from Santa need to be licensed. "Any dog older than three months must be registered," Kronk said.

In addition to licensing your animals, Kronk said it is important to keep an eye on your animals as the Christmas season poses many dangers. Holiday decorations can be irresistible to animals. Many people have their own variations of tales involving Fluffy ingesting tinsel or batting glass ornaments off the lower branches of the tree while Fido chewed through the Christmas tree's extension cord. Humane Society officials also warn that many holiday foods, can be especially dangerous for animals. While winter won't officially arrive for a couple of weeks, cold weather has already arrived and the really cold weather is just around the corner and will stick around until spring. While many people are busily preparing for the holiday season, it is also important to remember pets' needs as part of the family, Kronk said. "One thing I'd like to stress is that all animals should have shelter and plenty of food and water," Kronk said. "Make sure if they're outside, their water doesn't freeze. They need to stay warm too."

If anyone notices any evidence of any kind of animal abuse, canine or otherwise, the number to call is (740) 845-1749 or residents can go to www.madisonsheriff.org and fill out an anonymous report. "The response from the public has been great," Kronk said, noting that calls to his office have risen from 950 in 2005 to 2,300 for 2007. "I do my best, but I am only one man. It really is the people who know their neighbors, see something and give us a call who are the biggest help."

You may purchase you Madison County Dog License Tags at the Madison County Auditor's Office in the Courthouse or at any of the following approved vendors:

CHOCTAW LAKE
1585 CHICKASAW DR.
LONDON, OH
740-852-2593

RAPP'S HARDWARE
2 WEST MAIN STREET
MOUNT STERLING, OH
740-869-3553

DWYER BROS.
150 SOUTH MAIN STREET
LONDON, OH
740-852-0725

RICK'S CARRY OUT
4701 SR 56 SE
LONDON, OH
740-852-9413

FIRST COMMUNITY BANK
13760 MAIN STREET SW
SEDALIA, OH
740-874-3336

VILLAGE OF SOUTH SOLON
7120 NORTH STREET
SOUTH SOLON
937-883-2151

SHEFFIELD'S VET. HOSP.
221 LAFAYETTE ST.
LONDON, OH
740-852-9151

YODER'S TRUE VALUE
625 WEST MAIN STREET
PLAIN CITY, OH
614-873-8211

PLAIN CITY ANIMAL HOSP.
245 WEST MAIN STREET
PLAIN CITY, OH
614-873-5659

WEST JEFF ANIMAL HOSP.
121 EAST MAIN STREET
WEST JEFFERSON, OH
614-879-8250

HUMANE SOCIETY
1357 SR 38 SE
LONDON, OH
740-852-7387