

Animal Protection Guide
... for children and their families

Hesse Ministry for Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Protection
State Officer for Animal Protection Hesse

Edition notice

Editor: State Officer for Animal Protection (LBT) at the Hesse Ministry for Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Mainzer Straße 80, D-65189 Wiesbaden

Editorial team: Dr med vet Madeleine Martin, LBT (Chair)

Text: Dr med vet Madeleine Martin, Vivian Junge, Gabi Sparkuhl, Office LBT

Illustrations: Andreas Unkart (page 4), Agnes Fiedler (page 21)

Photos: Tim Liß (Pages 1, 15, 16), Alexandra Golly (pages 1, 9, 12, 13, 15), Ulrike Behre (pages 1, 8, 10, 11), Mirjana Lasic (page 7), Lisann Wenz (pages 11, 13), Gabi Sparkuhl (pages 12, 14), Rainer Wahl (page 16), Omika/Fotolia.com (page 1), frenta/Fotolia.com (page 5), shot99/Fotolia.com (page 5), DoraZett/Fotolia.com (page 6), chelle129/Fotolia.com (page 7), Gregory Johnston/Fotolia.com (page 7), aerostato/Fotolia.com (page 8), 3532studio/Fotolia.com (page 9), kharhan/Fotolia.com (page 14), Herby Me/Fotolia.com (page 17), Boris Djuranovic/Fotolia.com (page 17), crimson/Fotolia.com (page 17), Andrzej Solnica/Fotolia.com (page 18), Magdalena Kucova/Fotolia.com (page 19), midosemsem/Fotolia.com (Page 19)

Layout: GRAFIKWERK 21, www.grafikwerk21.de

This guide shall give you a quick overview on why it is important to protect animals and to treat them with respect and appreciation!

Dr med vet Madeleine Martin
State Officer for Animal Protection Hesse

On the following pages, we will look at some information about the history of humans and animals and we will learn a lot about the behaviour and the language of different animals. Moreover, we will take a look at different religions to see how animals are treated there.

A word on the history of humans and animals

Thousands of years ago, people took wild animals in their custody and cared for them. This way, these wild animals could get used to humans. This is how pigs, dogs, horses, cats, cows, chickens, sheep and goats came to humans. The animals became a great help with the humans' work. They served as food, clothing or hunting assistants and some of them even became humans' closest companions.

We let animals get used to us, we have bred them and thus made them depend on us. This is why we owe it to these living creatures to treat them with respect and responsibility. Just like us, our pets feel grief, fear, happiness, hunger, thirst or pain. Scientists have shown that when experiencing pain or fear, animals show the same measurable reaction that humans do.

Because they have the same nervous system that we do and the corresponding feelings. If they are treated badly - for example if they are kicked or hit - they show pain or fear by screaming, hiding or running away. For instance, an animal that hurt its leg will lump or scratch a hurting spot on its body repeatedly.

They are so similar to us and that's why nobody is allowed to torture animals, to make them feel pain, or let them starve or suffer from thirst. Compassion and care must apply to animals, too.

Sheep and goats

Goats are real gourmets. They especially love fresh twigs and shoots. Trees, bushes, high mountains or cliffs - they can get anywhere. Goats are climbing experts because they originate from high mountain regions.

Contrarily to goats, sheep are very undemanding animals, they prefer grass and herbs. They can remember up to 50 different faces of other sheep. Both goats and sheep prefer to spend their time with fellow animals of their species, because they don't like being alone. With their specific way of eating, they are important for landscape maintenance.

Donkeys

Slow, stubborn, stupid...? Nothing could be more wrong. We all know that this animal is said to be stubborn, but in fact, it is merely very patient and good-natured. Donkeys are very strong and have a lot of stamina, which enables them to carry loads over long distances. These animals can tread safely on narrow and rocky paths. This still makes them indispensable in some countries. Thanks to its characteristic large ears, the donkey can hear very well and they also keep it cool when it's very hot. Similarly to elephants, the ears cool down the donkey's blood so that their body temperature is lowered.

Pigs

The pig is one of the most intelligent mammals; it can even recognise itself when it looks in the mirror. Pigs can smell very well, up to 20 times better than humans can and up to 10 times better than dogs can.

In their natural habitat, they rummage through all kinds of soils with their snouts and their teeth in order to find food. Pigs can eat almost anything from roots and mushrooms to snails, insects and worms.

Moreover, pigs are very clean. Just like us humans, they like to have separate sleeping and eating spots. Wallowing in the mud cools them down in the heat and protects them from sunburn and biting insects. Pigs love to move around and they are very social.

Cows

Cows are very social animals and they like living in groups. Most of them - males and females - have impressive horns.

Cows are also very curious and intelligent. They can learn new skills by observing other cows around them. For example, if one cow gets an electric shock from a fence, all the other cows will stay away from that fence.

As herbivores, they prefer to spend the entire day in the meadow, eating fresh grass, herbs and other plants. They walk slowly and cover many kilometres so that they can eat in peace for 8 - 10 hours a day.

In between these phases, cows like to lay down so that they can ruminate. Since plants are difficult to digest, cows - just like sheep and goats - ruminate the already-eaten food by re-heaving up the chewed plant mash and chewing it again.

Cows like to caress each other and they like being stroked or simply standing next to each other.

Chickens

The ancestors of our chickens were dinosaurs! It was quite a long way from those times to our house chickens of today!

Chickens are interesting and very curious animals. Just like us humans, chickens can be shy, brave or even adventurous. They live in a clear hierarchy.

Chickens recognise each other and different noises help them to get along. Chickens are much more than just egg and meat suppliers!

Cats

Cats came to us because humans mainly needed them to keep rats and mice out of the settlement areas. They are gentle, but also highly developed little predators and very quick and skilled hunters. They can smell and hear much better than we can, they are very good climbers and can keep their balance almost anywhere. As terrific hunters, they stayed independent from humans, even though many of us see them as “cuddling partners”. Many cat owners know the calming and cosy purring of their cat.

Dogs

Since the earliest of times, humans and dogs have helped each other, particularly in hunting. Dogs too can hear and smell a lot better than us humans can. With their sensitive nose, they can detect smells from all directions and they can hear sounds that we can't perceive at all. These special skills mean that humans can use dogs in many different areas of work.

“Working” dogs such as seeing-eye dogs, avalanche dogs, police dogs, track hounds or shepherd’s dogs are irreplaceable for us humans.

Animals in Religion

In religion, animals have an important role to play. Many religions say that animals must be treated well. For example, in the scriptures of Judaism, Islam and Christianity we find the following quotes:

“One may not purchase a domestic or wild animal or a fowl unless one is able to feed it properly”
(Jerusalem Talmud Yevamot 15:3)

“If animals lose their young, they suffer great pain. There is no difference between the pain of a human and the pain of other living beings” *(Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, 3:48)*

“The righteous care for the needs of their animals”
(*Proverbs 12,10*)

“He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man”
(*Isaiah, 66:3*)

“A good deed done to a beast is as good as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to human beings”
(*Muslim and Bukhari, Mishkat al-Masabih, Book 6, Chapter 7, Section 8:178*)

And Mohammed underlines:

“All creatures are like a family of God: and he loves the most those who are the most beneficent to His family.”
(*narrated by Anas. Mishkat al-Masabih, 3:1392*)

Animals can be:

- A playmate
- A friend/buddy
- A comforter for the soul
- A sports partner
- A family member
- A helper in life

But they are definitely not:

- a toy
- a cuddly toy
- exchangeable goods

Animals speak without words

“I am friendly and attentive”

“I want to play”

“I am angry; leave me alone”

“I am scared”

What all animals need every day:

- Food and fresh water
- A clean shelter with a (*soft*) place to sleep
- Care and treatment by a vet if they are sick
- Activity and occupation possibilities
- Affection and attention

This is why people who wish to keep an animal must get good information on the species beforehand.

Keeping an animal means assuming responsibility and treating it with respect!

It's not for nothing that in Germany there are some "old" proverbs that deal with the treatment of animals, such as:

"Treat others the way you want to be treated" (golden rule)

"Never torture an animal as a joke - it feels the pain like you do" (German proverb)

Do you have any questions? You can reach us at:

Landestierschutzbeauftragte (State Officer for Animal Protection)
Ms Dr med vet Madeleine Martin
Hessisches Ministerium für Umwelt, Klimaschutz,
Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz
Mainzer Straße 80
65189 Wiesbaden

E-mail: tierschutz@umwelt.hessen.de

Internet: www.tierschutz.hessen.de

Other children's guides available:

Pigs Guide for children and their families

Horses Guide for children and their families

Dogs Guide for children and their families

Pets Guide for children and their families