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Export date: Fri Oct 30 5:06:57 2026 / +0000 GMT

LETTER: Don?t advertise animals ?free to a good home?

I am distressed when I see pictures and ads for animals that are ?free to a good home.?

Last week, I noticed an ad in a local store advertising three sweet little female kittens.

I called the person on the ad and informed her of the consequences of giving away free animals and I picked them up for my rescue group.

There are very good reasons that animal rescues and humane societies charge an adoption fee for their animals. These small fees in no way begin to cover the costs incurred for medical treatment and upkeep of the pets they adopt out.

Did you know people value what they pay for?

Pets obtained for free are less likely to be spayed and neutered by their new owners. (Why bother with vet bills?) and are more likely to be abused and/or discarded because ?there are plenty more where they came from.?

So called ?Bunchers? gather free pets until they have enough for a trip to a Class B dealer who then sells animals from random sources for research.

Free animals are also taken to ?blood? pit bulls ? to train fighting dogs how to kill and enjoy it. These can be cats and dogs of any size to be used as bait.

Unspayed or unneutered pure bred dogs may end up as breeding stock on a puppy mill. What can you do?

Don't advertise free pets! Convince others to do the same. Do spay/neuter to keep from creating possible ?FREE TO GOOD HOME? situations, or condemning your pet to a short, miserable life in a puppy/kitten mill.

Do contact breed rescue organizations.

Do charge at least $25 to discourage resale of pets to labs.

Do take time to interview every prospective owner.

Do ask for veterinarian and personal references and check them, then visit the new home where your pet might be living.

Do write a letter to your MP in support of doing away with Class B dealers, who sell animals obtained from random sources.

Do call police, animal welfare workers, even the Health department if someone in your area seems to be collecting cats and/or dog, or suspected abuse.

I would strongly advise anyone who is looking, for whatever reason to re-home their pets to have the pet spayed/neutered and become educated about your options that are safe for the animal involved.

Be forewarned is be forearmed!

Karen Stimson

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