

Christmas hazards and fun for your pets

Christmas time for my family is the most wonderful time of the year! I love the Christmas season, and everything it represents and all the traditions that go along with it! But Christmas can be dangerous to your pets! Have you ever thought about the trinkets, bobbles, and goodies that deck your home? Most are potential hazards.

Vet tips
Dr. Sara White



Some are more dangerous than others. Curious felines and the occasional puppy find electric cords to be exciting! The problem is when sharp teeth bite into Christmas light wires. Electrocution will cause burns to the mouth, lung damage, and abnormal heart rhythms. Reduce the risk by: removing all tags from cords, preventing cords from dangling, and supervising pets.

Another major hazard is foreign body ingestion, which can be fatal. Tinsel, stringy toys, ribbons, and decorations can be swallowed causing "string gut". Symptoms are vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, and lethargy. If your pet shows any signs or you suspect accidental ingestion of a foreign body, your pet needs to see your veterinarian immediately! String foreign bodies are potentially the most lethal, since they can lodge in one spot, then the rest of the string moves through the intestines and acts as a saw cutting through the wall. The best prevention is to keep all potentially hazardous objects out of reach. This removes the temptation and possible disaster!

Plants can make your pet very sick. Christmas poinsettias and lilies will cause vomiting if consumed. Mistletoe, holly and ivy should also be kept out of reach of your pet. If you are unsure, please call your veterinarian with questions!

Holiday food is a tempting treat for our four-legged friends....chocolate, turkey, bones, fat, etc! It is always best to feed your pet only their regular diet to prevent stomach upset. Bones can cause inflammation in the stomach and intestines, and may splinter and cause perforation. High fat meals may cause pancreatic inflammation (pancreatitis) and severe illness. Chocolate may cause stomach upset, increased heart rate, tremors, and even seizures.

So what can you do to make the Christmas season extra special for your favorite pets? Make homemade treats! Here are two recipes to make the season extra enjoyable for your pets! Always give treats sparingly!

Savory Cheese Cat Treats: ¾ cup white flour, ¾ cup shredded cheddar cheese, 5 Tbsp grated parmesan cheese, ¼ cup plain yogurt or sour cream, ¼ cup corn meal. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine cheeses and yogurt. Add flour and cornmeal. Knead dough into a ball and roll to ¼ inch. Cut into 1-inch pieces and place on greased cookie sheet. Bake for 25 minutes. Yields two dozen treats.

Dog Bone Treats: ¾ cup wheat germ, ¾ cup dry powder milk, 1 egg, regular sized jar of baby food meat. Mix the listed ingredients together and add a little water. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F until slightly browned.

As you go into the Christmas season, please take extra caution as you deck the halls! Call us at Norton Animal Health Center with any questions or concerns!



It's going to be a Kansas Christmas

It's going to be a Kansas Christmas. And what could be more Kansas than a tumbleweed Christmas tree?

Jim found a large, perfectly tree-shaped tumbleweed that rolled in during one of those "big blows" we had this Fall. It's been on the front porch, waiting for me to find spray snow. Now, it is sufficiently "snowed" and ready to be set in front of the bay window.

I am already regretting this decision. Seeds, flakes, crumbs? I don't know what it is, but every time you touch the "tree" it sheds on the floor. I've already swept around it twice, and I haven't even begun to decorate it. Good thing I have one of those enormous bags that go around the base of a tree. When Christmas is over and it's been undecorated, all I have to do is pull the bag up around it to get it out of the house.

I should have thought of that before bringing it into the house.

-ob-

Dec. 14 has been declared a day to

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



do a random act of kindness.

I hope this is an idea that really catches on. Facebook postings show people coming up with innovative ways to do good deeds. Like leaving a big tip for your waitress; scooping someone's sidewalk; going to the drive-up window of a fast food restaurant and paying for the vehicle behind you; leaving a bag of groceries at the door of a needy family; changing a tire for a stranded motorist; helping an elderly person cross a busy street; opening the door for the person behind you.

Good deeds don't have to cost you

any money. Usually, all they cost is a little bit of time....and consideration. Soon, perhaps, every month will have a "Good Deed Day." Then, every week will have a designated day....until it becomes second nature to look for ways to help others every day. What a wonderful world it would be.

Personally, I would add that it has to be done anonymously. Doesn't count if you expect to be recognized or rewarded (even if only with praise) for it.

-ob-

There is a young family in our church that volunteered to help deliver boxes of food to needy families right before Thanksgiving. Their little girl carried a box of groceries into the home. When she climbed back into the car she told her mother, "My heart is happy."

That is the benefit of doing good for others. We can all have "Happy hearts."

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

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Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002



Law changes provide rural opportunity

For farm and ranch families across Kansas, adding flexibility to our agribusiness laws represents a unique opportunity to access new markets, to diversify operations and to attempt a new strategy to invigorate rural communities and offer young people a rural alternative.

Our current law has restricted this state's ability to attract and capitalize on the potential in Kansas, keep families on the farm and rural communities alive and well. For many years we've simply watched as farm consolidation occurred and rural communities ceased to exist.

While no single concept is likely to address all of the issues of out-migration or depopulation, removing the real or perceived hurdles to bringing new business ventures to Kansas will encourage growth and industry and in turn attract jobs and residents to rural communities.

Revising restrictive laws is one step in the right direction to diversify economies, improve markets and give a brighter future to families who want to continue to live and thrive in rural Kansas.

Kansas is now one of just nine states in the country that prohibit or restrict certain farms from doing business in the state. Courts have struck down these restrictions in three of those

Insight

John Schlageck



states. Current family owned farms in Kansas could be in violation of our existing law.

Agribusiness, swine, dairy and poultry producers have approached Kansas about the possibility of locating here. Updating state law to reflect modern-day business structure reality will allow efficient, environmentally sound corporate citizens to revitalize many of our rural communities.

A crucial part of this story remains the privately held farms in Kansas. When comparing land values from 15 states, both with and without restrictions, there was no correlation between land values and restrictions on business structures.

Some say a change in law will hurt small farms. Research shows the opposite is true. Those states without restrictions experienced a growth of 5.24 percent in small farms compared to 0.35 percent in Kansas.

For farmers and ranchers of all sizes, increasing the flexibility of our laws

represents a unique opportunity to access new markets, to diversify operations and to attempt a new strategy to invigorate rural communities and offer young people a rural alternative.

Whether in business as a sole proprietorship, an LLC or any other entity structure, farmers and ranchers look at real numbers and real value, not emotional, unsubstantiated arguments. It's also why they support existing requirements for environmental measures that ensure they leave the land better than when they began caring for it.

In today's global economy, Kansas will continue to struggle if we fail to embrace free and open markets. This is a concept farmers and ranchers have long supported.

Rural Kansans deserve the opportunity to open our state to new development by removing barriers for entering, or in some cases remaining in business, in Kansas. Changing the law will allow multi-generational family operations to continue to work in Kansas instead of imposing a system in which future generations may be ineligible to own or operate the farm or ranch.

It's time we rethink the status quo and focus all our energy on growing all parts of the state to ensure vibrant farms, ranches, schools, faith communities and food systems in both rural and urban areas of our state.



Thumbs up to Amy McKinney at the Northern Valley School and Shannon Kats at Logan School for being so very helpful to us at the Norton Telegram by getting us any and all the photos we need along with other needed and helpful information. We couldn't do it without you.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.