

When Is It Time To Euthanize My Pet?

BY JAKE GEIS
Tyndall

The most fun decision in the life of a pet owner is choosing which pet to get. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the most difficult decision for a pet owner to make is deciding if and when their pet needs to be put down. It is a gut-wrenching choice where there is no good option. When faced with this situation, it is easy for pet owners to feel lost and unsure of what to do. However, with some guidance as to identifying the level of animal comfort, coupled with an understanding of treatment benefits and likely outcomes, this decision can be made in a manner that gives a pet owner peace.

Having peace with this decision is challenging, because seldom does the moment to make the choice for or against euthanasia come at an opportune moment. Oftentimes it is after a traumatic accident. With surprising frequency it happens soon after the death of a human loved one, a correlation that baffles me yet nonetheless occurs repeatedly. It also is the inevitable decision made for a pet suffering from a terminal illness, after months having your hopes rise and fall over and over again. This emotional baggage surrounding the decision makes it more difficult to make. Because of this, focusing on objective facts about your pet's health may seem callous at first, but it is the best way to navigate through this tough time successfully.

The most obvious component in deciding to put your pet down is your pet's current attitude versus the likelihood of a positive outcome with treatment. Pets that are in pain and have no chance of recovering should be euthanized as soon as possible for their sake. On the other hand, if there is a good chance of making a recovery with medical or surgical therapy, then the current painful situation does not mandate euthanasia. For example, if your pet were hit by a car and now had several cuts and bruises, but otherwise fine, it would not be a time to put it down. However, if the car had also severed the spinal cord in the neck, then the chance of recovery would be so minute that euthanasia should be considered.

One caveat with the prior example is financial burden. While we love our pets, there is a point where medical care for a pet can be so expensive it would place your family in a precarious position. If you can afford to spend several

thousand dollars on your pet's medical care, then it is fine to do so. Alternatively, it is not prudent to miss a mortgage payment due to veterinary bills. If the only options for your pet are thousands of dollars in medical care you cannot afford or euthanasia, my belief is electing euthanasia is ethical. Keep in mind before you get a pet, a few hundred dollars in veterinary care are standard in emergencies, so if you know you cannot afford that you probably cannot afford a dog or cat.

While trauma situations usually are straightforward when deciding for or against euthanasia, slowly progressing terminal conditions are more difficult. Owners have to decide when the benefits of life are negated by the detrimental aspects of the disease. Questions like, "How much pain is my pet in?" and "Is my pet just tired, or is he not moving because he hurts?" come up frequently. In addition, because you see your pet every day, it is hard to measure how much their condition is deteriorating because you see them every day; a host of subtle changes over the course of weeks are less visible to the daily observer.

The most objective way to decide when it is time to put down a terminally ill pet is to take note of their daily actions. Are they doing the activities they would normally enjoy doing? For example, many people have a cat that likes to watch out the window during the day. If the cat is too tired and painful to reach the window anymore, it may be time to consider euthanasia. One suggestion would be to make a list of things your pet enjoys doing. At the point in time they no longer do the majority of things on the list, it may be time to put them down.

Pets are different from humans. Where humans have the mental capacity to find spiritual value in suffering, animals do not. When they are suffering all they "know" is that they hurt. Therefore, we have to look at euthanasia in pets as a means to give them relief. Usually it is harder on us than it is on the pet to put them down, because we are left with a giant hole in our hearts where they used to be. But by having pre-established guidelines as to when we will elect for euthanasia, we can be at peace knowing we gave them as long and happy life as we could, while minimizing any suffering they might have had.

Jake Geis, DVM, works out of the Tyndall Veterinary Clinic.



Jake GEIS

Tourism Industry Remains Strong Throughout Shoulder Season

PIERRE — Recently compiled statistics show that the South Dakota visitor industry is continuing its positive momentum from the successful peak season through the fall months.

"All of our indicators are showing strong growth through September," said Jim Hagen, Secretary of the Department of Tourism. "We couldn't be happier with how things are looking, and we're proud of our industry and all of the hard work they put in to attract and welcome visitors."

- The 2016 Calendar Year-to-Date Statistics:
- Inquiries — 6.8 percent increase
 - BBB Taxable Sales — 8.8 percent increase
 - Tourism Taxable Sales — 16.3 percent increase
 - Lodging Taxable Sales — 10.7 percent increase
 - Promotion Tax Revenue — 23.1 percent increase
 - Gaming Revenue — 0.6 percent increase

Despite strong results, the Department of Tourism remains aware of the need for innovative thinking.

"Our competitors are always innovating, always growing their budgets, always trying new things," continued Hagen. "The competition is no longer just our neighboring states; it is truly the world. As such, we can't rest on our laurels."

The Department's

shoulder season marketing plans include both tried-and-true methods for reaching potential visitors as well as some new elements that are reaching new people in new places.

For example, the Department partnered with the Pedal-Powered Talk Show out of Portland, Ore., to test some research that was showing a rise in inquiries from the Pacific Northwest. This partnership will showcase South Dakota to the area in six online television episodes beginning Nov. 12.

Additionally, the Department is putting a focus on national parks this fall by placing ads in National Parks Magazine, National Geographic Traveler, South Dakota Magazine and Nature Conservancy Magazine. This comes in advance of the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and the 75th anniversary of the completion of Mount Rushmore National Memorial in 2016.

The Department will also have a presence in the 127th Rose Parade® in January 2016. The theme of the parade, "Find Your Adventure," grew out of a partnership between the Pasadena Tournament of Roses® and the U.S. National Park Service and will help shine a light on the centennial celebration of our country's national park system.

Car Talk

Nickel Bet Goes To The Wife

BY RAY MAGLIOZZI
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Dear Car Talk:
A nickel bet rides on this. I almost always just put \$20 worth of gas in my 2012 Mazda 5's gas tank. My husband firmly believes that my previous car's fill pipe rusted out because I did not fill up the gas tank all the way every time. He dogs me endlessly about rusting out the fill tank in this vehicle by not filling up the gas tank. Does it matter, and am I in danger of rusting out the fill pipe to the gas tank by not filling up the tank?
—Jan

PS. I have run out of gas only once (a long time ago) in our 25 years of marriage.

Well, you can start dreaming about where you're going to spend that



Ray MAGLIOZZI

the outside, not the inside. So for that reason alone, how far you fill up the tank is irrelevant.

And second, even if you were to fill the tank right up to the gas cap, it would stay that full for only two blocks! Then you'd use some gas, and

nickel, Jan. Your husband is a complete dodo.

The gasoline filler pipe, or filler neck, is the pipe that runs from the gas tank to the opening where you stick the fuel nozzle when you fill up. Every filler neck we've ever seen that has rusted

has rusted from the outside, not the inside. So for that reason alone, how far you fill up the tank is irrelevant.

What's the best way to warm up your engine in the morning? Find out by ordering Car Talk's pamphlet "Ten Ways You May Be Ruining Your Car Without Even Knowing It!" Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Car Talk/Ruin, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

Got a question about cars? Write to Car Talk in care of this newspaper, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

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Finding The Perfect Christmas Tree

BROOKINGS — Thanksgiving marks the start of the Christmas tree season with more than 36 million trees being sold between Thanksgiving and Christmas. While you're hunting for the perfect tree to grace your family's home, John Ball, Professor & SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist and S.D. Dept. of Agriculture Forest Health Specialist is here to help answer some questions.

REAL OR PLASTIC

While artificial trees enjoyed increased sales during the past decade, those sales have stagnated to about 50 million homes using them. "A traditional Christmas tree can be the environmental friendly way to celebrate the holidays," said Ball.

He explained that the average artificial Christmas tree may have a life span of six years before it ends up in a landfill. "The traditional Christmas tree, while used only one season, can become valuable mulch, a winter bird feeder or even used as a fish habitat after the holidays," he said.

If you take his advice and go with a live tree, here are some tips he offers on picking out the perfect tree.

1. The way to obtain the freshest tree is to harvest it yourself at a choose-and-cut Christmas tree farm. This way you are guaranteed a "fresh" tree rather than one that may have been harvested several weeks earlier.

2. If cutting your own tree is not possible, here are some ways to check for freshness at a Christmas tree sales lot. First, give the tree a light but vigorous shake. Only a few interior needles should fall out of the tree if it is fresh. If a pile of brown needles appears on the ground after shaking, it is not a fresh tree.

3. Next, reach into a branch and pull the needles gently through your hand as you move out towards the tip. The needles should bend, not break, as your fingers run across them and the branch should only slightly bend. If they break off completely this is another indicator that the tree has already dried out too much.

KEEP IT FRESH

Regardless of whether you buy a tree from a lot or cut it yourself, Ball said once you get the tree home, leave it out-



side in the shade while you set the stand up. "The choice of a stand is probably the most critical factor in maintaining the freshness of the tree once in the home," Ball said.

The stand should be able to hold one-half to one-gallon of water as the new Christmas tree may absorb this much water from the stand on the first day. "A good rule-of-thumb is a tree will use 1 quart of water per day for every inch trunk diameter at the base. If you have a tree with a 3-inch base, it may use 3 quarts of water per day," he said.

Just before you bring the tree in the house cut the base between a half and one-inch from the bottom. "This will open the sap-filled pores responsible for transporting water and allows water to be absorbed into the tree," he said. "The base cut does not have to be slanted; the angle makes little difference in the amount of water absorbed so cutting perpendicular to the trunk is best."

Ball said not to drill holes into the trunk or whittle the trunk smaller as neither will improve water uptake. Also, he said to brush off any debris or dirt on the base before placing it in the stand.

NEVER LET YOUR STAND RUN DRY

Once the tree is in the stand, add water and then never let the stand become empty. Ball said that if the stand becomes empty for more than six hours, the tree's pores plug up again. Water uptake will be significantly reduced, the tree will dry out and the needles will soon

begin to fall.

"If the tree stand does dry up for half a day or more there is nothing that can be done other than pull the tree out of the stand and recut the base - not a pleasant task once the lights and ornaments are already up," he said.

Nothing needs to be added to the water in the stand to improve needle retention. The commercial "tree fresher" products do not significantly increase the life of the tree and the home remedies such as aspirin, sugar, soft drinks and vodka do not work and may be harmful to pets that may drink from the stand.

Place the tree in a spot that receives only indirect light from the windows and not near any heat duct, as Ball said this will reduce water loss from the tree and prolong its freshness. Another tip he shared to prolonging freshness is to start out with a clean stand.

"Before setting up the tree wash the stand out with a solution of about a cupful of bleach to a cup of water, to reduce the growth of microorganisms that may also plug up the tree's pores," he said.

WHICH IS THE BEST TREE?

Each species has its good points but the Fraser fir, is probably one of the top favorites, Ball said. "The tree has a very pleasant scent, excellent needle retention — they will last the entire holiday season — and the branches are stiff enough to hold most ornaments," he said. "The bright green needles are white on the underside and this makes a very

attractive display." However, if heavy ornaments are desired, Ball said to go with a spruce.

Balsam fir is another good choice, said Ball, though the needles do not last as long and the branches are not quite as stiff. Canaan fir, another popular fir which appears to have qualities similar to Fraser fir is also becoming a popular Christmas tree.

Ball said that pines are very popular, with Scotch pine probably being the most popular tree in the country. "It also has a pleasant scent, excellent needle retention and the branches are stiff enough to hold heavy ornaments," he said.

White pine is another pine commonly sold at Christmas tree stand. Ball explained that the needle retention is not quite as long as Scotch pine and the branches are very flexible meaning heavy ornaments may fall off. White pines do have very soft needles and if you are going to run into the tree in the middle of the night this is the one!

Spruces are not as popular a choice for Christmas trees, Ball said this is primarily due to their relatively poor needle retention. "If you want to have a blue spruce as your Christmas tree, you probably should wait until a couple of weeks before Christmas to set it up as the needles may only last that long," he said.

He added that once the needles begin to fall, blue spruce are about the worst tree in the house as the fallen needles are sharp and seem to find their way into socks and slippers. Blue spruce has the best needle retention of all spruces. "They may last a few weeks or more — but does not have much of a fragrance," he said. "The branches are very stiff, however, and can support the heaviest ornaments."

White spruce, or Black Hills spruce is not a commonly available Christmas tree at lots, however Ball said it is used in the Black Hills where it can be cut from the National Forest.

"It does make a nice tree, particularly when cut fresh, as needle retention is poor. The tree also does not have much of a fragrance and occasionally Black Hills spruce trees can produce a slight musky odor," he explained.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

DOROTHY C. SCHIEFFER SCHOLARSHIP

VERMILLION — Students interested in studying political science at the University of South Dakota have until Dec. 1 to apply for the four-year, full-ride Dorothy C. Schieffer Scholarship.

The award for Fall 2016 includes full in-state or

out-of-state tuition and fees; books; room and board; at least one international travel and/or study abroad experience; and, to the extent practical, a working internship or service opportunity as described within.

Strong preference will be given to non-traditional students with clear financial

need who show real potential to be grow into civic-minded leaders.

Details and how to ap-

ply are available online at <http://www.usd.edu/admissions/freshmen/scholarships>.

The family of **Marvin E. Lammers** would like to express their thanks for all the cards, phone calls, texts, memorials, flowers, plants, food and comforting words we received during this time. Thank you to the staff at Avera Majestic Bluffs for the kindness, care and support given to Marvin and our family during the difficult process. Thank you to Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home for their kindness and help with funeral preparations. Your compassion and guidance were especially appreciated. Fr. Mike Schmitz for the service celebrating Marv's life. The Choir for the beautiful music and St. Rose Guild for the wonderful lunch served following the service. Our hearts will ache but your kind words and memories will give us comfort. God bless each of you!

Marcella Lammers, Rita Schumacher, Cindy & Jim Hilligas, Dennis & Cindy Schumacher, William & Diane Schumacher, Pam Sprakel, Carmine & Robert Nice, Keith & Rhonda Schumacher, Luann & Duane Schumacher, John & Kristi Schumacher, Roger & Angie Schumacher

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