

## Yeah He's Cute – But Know the Pitfalls of Buying Pets as Gifts During the Holiday Season!

Every year around the holiday season the Division of Animal Health sees a sharp increase of activity in residents adopting or buying pets. Residents are encouraged to think carefully before making this long-term commitment of taking care of an animal – especially if the pet is going to be a gift to someone else.

Finding the right animal can take some time. Pet buyers should research breeds to find an animal best suited to a family's lifestyle:

- If the plan is to adopt a pet, residents should only adopt from [approved shelters](#). Residents eager to jump in and help animals directly should consider volunteering with an approved rescue or humane organization to learn about responsible rescue.
- If you are considering buying from a pet shop, make sure you are buying from a licensed pet shop. Click [here](#) for more information on buying a dog in Massachusetts.
- If buying from a breeder, make sure that the breeder is reputable. Ask to see the mother dog or cat interact with her puppies or kittens to detect any behavioral problems.

The right pet can bring many years of joy to you and your family. Once you've found the dog or cat you want, it is urged that you have them seen by a veterinarian to get a check-up right away to make sure the animal is healthy and up-to-date on its vaccinations.

## Last Minute Gift Idea: Consider Giving a Holiday Certificate for a Veterinary Visit

This year, how about a gift that will help ensure that the fine furry friends you know stay healthy for many years to come. Call your local veterinarian to inquire about a gift certificate for an office visit for someone you know who has a dog or cat.

## **Affordable Rabies Vaccination Clinics – Check online throughout 2011!**

Rabies is a viral disease that can affect all mammals, including humans. The Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health has been working with the Massachusetts Animal Health Coalition (MAC) to maintain an online list of rabies vaccination clinics held throughout the state during the year.

Recently, the Department added an online registration form to make it easy for clinics offering vaccinations to register. Rabies shots are offered between \$10 and \$15 dollars. Click [here](#) to find a clinic near you! The list is updated regularly so check back often. For more information about rabies visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/agr/animalhealth/rabies/index.htm> or contact Patricia Cabral at 617-626-1786.

---

MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of local agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – [Agricultural Development](#), [Animal Health](#), [Crop and Pest Services](#), and [Technical Assistance](#) – MDAR strives to support, regulate, and enhance the Commonwealth's agricultural community, working to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, go to [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr) or follow us at [www.twitter.com/agcommishsoares](http://www.twitter.com/agcommishsoares) for the latest agricultural trends and updates. To keep up to date on workshops and events, visit [www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming\\_up.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm).