

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

What to do if You Find a Stray Animal

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

It is unfortunate that not all pets stay home, but they don't. If you own a pet, there is a good chance that sometime in his life he will be missing for at least a few hours. There is also a good chance that even if you do not own a pet that you will come across a dog or cat that sure looks lost to you. So as a concerned, humane person what do you do?

First of all, be very careful when approaching a dog or cat that is not your own. If it seems friendly and comes to you when you kneel down or call it to you, you are probably safe to carefully pet it and pick it up. It is best to keep a leash or even just a rope in your car to make controlling larger dogs possible. If the pet is small or injured, take a jacket or towel and wrap the animal up in it before picking him up.

Now that you have him safely confined in a box or on a leash what do you do? First of all look for a collar and I. D. tag. It would be great if all strays came with a name and a phone number, but unfortunately they don't. The best course of action then is to take the animal to your county's animal shelter. This is best because they have the cages, the government funding and the time to look for the owner or care for the pet until an owner can be found. The employees there are trained professionals who are humane and caring and know many of the local dogs and cats in the area by name. They can often recognize "regulars" that have been brought to them before. They will then contact the owner and after posting "bail" the pet can go home. The owners may also get a lecture about keeping their pets off the streets and keeping an I.D. tag on them.

If you just can't stand the thought of taking an animal to a municipal shelter, there are some local "No-Kill" shelters such as the Humane Society in Louisville, the Shamrock Society and other non-profit animal care groups.

If you decide to keep the stray, there are a few things you need to know. First of all, you must make an effort to find the owners by putting an ad in the paper and posting found notices. If it were your pet, wouldn't you want someone to try and locate you? You should also realize that when you spend money on veterinary care, no one,

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not even the owners, should you find them later, are responsible for paying you back. It is Indiana State law that you are responsible for getting your new pet to a veterinary clinic for a Rabies vaccination within three days of finding him.

Whatever you do, don't make the mistake of doing nothing. Too many people just ignore the stray cat in the barn, or the dog in the yard. Then that animal has a litter of babies and then those babies have babies, and pretty soon you are the person responsible for strays wandering your neighborhood. You are not being cruel by taking an animal to the shelter. You are being humane and responsible. You are being a caring citizen who takes fast action.

If you have any questions, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾