

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

Consider a Year-End Donation in Support of the Animals

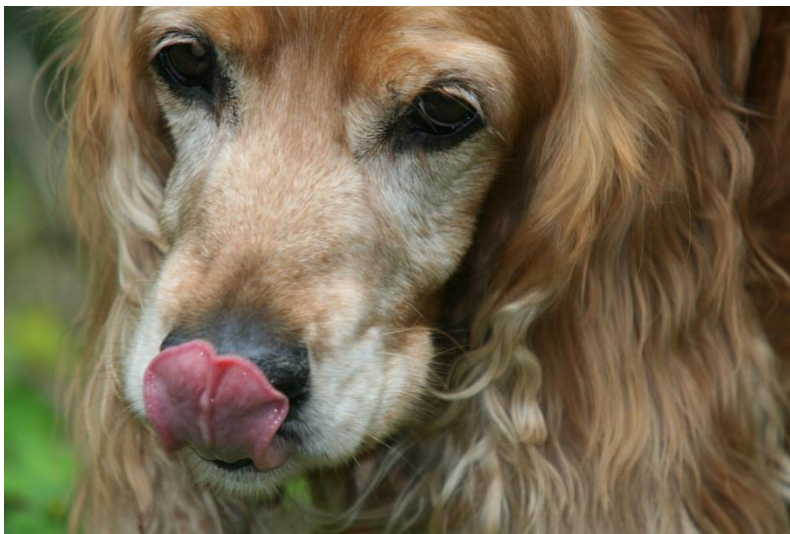
By Dr. Donald F. Smith
October 29, 2013

If you are planning charitable donations this time of year, you may want to consider animal health and welfare programs among your causes to support. For those who don't know where to turn, I offer these suggestions.

Support pet shelters in your local community:

Local humane shelters are among the most money-strapped animal nonprofits in the country. They operate in local communities, providing critical services for adoption and education, as well as animal rescue, cruelty prevention, and pet overpopulation issues. Most community animal shelters do not receive government funding and rely almost entirely on donations to accomplish their missions. National humane organizations are seldom affiliated with the shelter in your own city or town, so your local shelter/SPCA/humane society may be an excellent place for your support.¹

I have always been impressed by the number of older veterinarians who leave a legacy by giving generously of their time and professional expertise to local shelters and, upon their death, have designated that memorial gifts in their honor be made to a local shelter. To me, that is a valuable testimonial.



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Photo by the Author, 2011

Support the Next Generation of Veterinarians:

Twenty years ago, the ratio of starting salary to educational debt for a graduating veterinarian was 1:1. It now averages 1:2, and is often higher. State financial support for veterinary colleges has been declining for at least two decades, and has plummeted precipitously during the recession. Despite the important role that veterinarians play in animal and human health, the average level of annual operating support for veterinary colleges is less than \$2.00 per person. Many states provide no direct support for veterinary colleges; nor do they provide even partial tuition support for students who attend out-of-state colleges because there is no veterinary college in their home state.

Each of the nation's veterinary colleges has scholarship funds that would benefit from your donation. Consult the website of your favorite college or the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges.² If you wish to contact me directly at dfs6@cornell.edu, I can also provide you with the name and address of the appropriate contact at the college of your choice.

Support Veterinary Medical Research:

There are several reputable organizations that support research on animal health and welfare. Two that I consider among the most effective are the Morris Animal Foundation (supporting the health of pets and wildlife),³ and the Winn Foundation (for cats).⁴

Among my favorite conservation and wildlife programs are the Wildlife Conservation Society, which includes the world-famous Bronx Zoo;⁵ and the Cheetah Conservation Fund, a scientifically-based conservation program located in Namibia, Africa.⁶

¹ Thomas, Maggie (Director of Marketing and Development, SPCA of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY), email to Donald F. Smith (Cornell University), 2013 October 21.

² [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges](#), Washington, DC.

³ [Morris Animal Foundation](#), a global leader in advancing the health and well-being of pets, horses and wildlife. Established in 1948 by Mark Morris, Sr., DVM. See story [Mark Morris Sr. and the Birth of Prescription Pet Food](#), published in *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine*. April 23, 2013.

⁴ [Winn Foundation](#), established in 1968 to advance the health needs of cats.

⁵ [Wildlife Conservation Society](#), an international conservation program that also includes the Bronx Zoo and New York City Aquarium, as well as three other zoos and parks in New York City.

⁶ [Cheetah Conservation Fund](#), Namibia, Africa, the life's work of Dr. Laurie Marker.

KEYWORDS:

Philanthropy
Morris Animal Foundation
Winn Foundation
Cheetah Conservation Fund
Wildlife Conservation Society
Biomedical Research
Student Scholarship

Animal Shelters
Humane Associations

TOPIC:

Uncategorized

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.