Main reasons for abandoning a pet animal

Reasons for abandoning dogs and cats

According to the latest Affinity Foundation study “He would never do it” into animal abandonment, the main reasons for abandoning dogs and cats in Spain last year were once again unwanted litters (15.3%), the end of the hunting season (12.6%), the animal's problematic behaviour (10.8%), economic factors (10.7%), loss of interest in the animal (9.8%) and changes of residence (8.9%).

Among the less frequent reasons for abandonment we find allergies in one the family members (4.4%), the birth of a child (3.9%), admission to hospital or death of the owner (6.0%), holidays (1.2%) and the fear of contracting toxoplasmosis during pregnancy (0.5%).

When living with a pet animal is not a success

Many people enjoy the company of a dog or cat and would never consider getting rid of their pet animal who is seen as another member of the family. Nevertheless, in many cases the coexistence of humans and animals is not always successful and sometimes the relationship fails.

If somebody has a strong commitment to an animal, they will exhaust all options before accepting breaking up their coexistence. Most behavioural problems can be rectified with the help of a professional.

However, if it becomes impossible to continue living together with an animal, we will have to find another family or person who can take care of it to ensure the animal finds itself in the best possible circumstances

It is possible that an animal does not adapt to a household, yet is the perfect companion for another family or person. We could for example look for a family in our surroundings to make sure it will be in good hands.

If not, then there are digital platforms like Miwuki which help with providing adoption for animals. They establish contact between shelters and possible adopters, but also bring people who cannot take care of their animals in contact with other individuals interested in adopting them.

Awareness of animal abandonment

Although society in general is advancing towards a growing awareness of our responsibility for pet animals and the commitment required to live with them, unfortunately there still are many cases of abandonment.

In percentage terms they are a minority, not even 2% of all cases. The majority of people who live together with a dog or cat do so happily and responsibly.

The numbers are nevertheless worrisome and indicate there are still many people who do not have a healthy relationship with their animal in terms of responsibility and a solid commitment. Without serious prior consideration and without this healthy relationship, the problems which derive from coexistence may lead to abandonment.

Advice in case you want to adopt a pet animal

If you are considering the possibility of adopting a pet animal and wish to share your life with a dog or cat, you should keep in mind the following key aspects:

Think it over. Before adopting a pet animal, you must be sure about the commitment this implies. It's a choice for the rest of the animal's life and you should involve the whole family in the decision.

Look for information. Ask for advice and assessment from the shelters in order to be prepared, to know which type of animal goes best with our habits and to be informed about the responsibilities we must to be ready to assume.

Sterilize your dog or cat to avoid unwanted litters, which remains the main cause for abandonment in Spain.

Identify your pet animal correctly to help it being returned to you in case it's gone missing.

Train the animal to improve its behaviour. This way, the coexistence will be much easier and we will enjoy more the company of our dog or cat.