

## **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association: Considerations Regarding the Choice of a Pet**

### **Position:**

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) believes that the suitability of animal species (domestic or non-domestic) as pets depends on the commitment of pet owners to:

- a) treat their pet humanely;
- b) provide for all of the animal's physical, behavioral, and medical needs; and
- c) ensure that the relationship with the pet does not infringe on the rights and safety of members of the community in which they live.

### **Background:**

Animal species that have been selectively bred and managed for sufficient time to allow selection for preferred attributes such as temperament and behavior make better pets. However, it must be remembered that any animal may express natural behaviors as they mature, including hunting and territorial defensiveness, which may make them behave in ways that can be unpredictable and potentially dangerous. Although certain animal species, which have been recently taken from the wild may be hand-raised and may appear tame, they may be more likely to exhibit natural behaviors which could make them inappropriate to keep as pets.

The following criteria must be carefully considered when determining if an animal species is appropriate as a pet:

1. There must be adequate knowledge of the species regarding nutritional, health care, social, and housing requirements. These needs should be easily met.
2. The animal must not be illegally imported.
3. The animal must be likely to be an acceptable companion to the owner, and not likely to be a nuisance on the basis of odor, noise, uncleanliness, unruliness, and destructive behavior.
4. The animal must be non-venomous.
5. The species must be unlikely to transmit disease to humans, or to wild or domestic animals.
6. The species must be unlikely to cause ecological damage if it escapes.
7. The animal must be able to be transported in a humane manner.
8. Trade and transportation regulations for species existing in the wild must be enforced.
9. The animals must be obtained from a captive breeding program.