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Topic: Pet adoption

General purpose: To persuade

Specific Purpose: To convince my audience they should adopt cats and dogs from animal rescues/shelters instead of going to boutique animal breeders.

Central Idea: Adopting cats and dogs from rescues/shelters is cheaper, more widely available, and also more sustainable than adopting from specialized breeders.

Man (and Woman's) Best Friends

Introduction

Cats and dogs, men and women's best friends. I love them, you love them, and the world loves them. I'm a proud cat dad of four rescue animals myself. They were all adopted as kittens who were either abandoned or discovered as strays. Since adoption, they all have had a loving home. They vary in age from 4 to 15 years old and get along together as one happy family (most of the time). All of them were given their vaccinations and spayed/neutered while in the shelter at no additional cost to my wife and me. It crossed our minds to adopt from a breeder to get a specific breed of cat like the Sphinx or a Maine Coon, but at the end of the day we decided it best to check out local humane society first to see what we could do to help rescue these sweet, innocent kittens from getting put down. What we didn't realize was the amount of money we'd be saving in adopting from an animal shelter. During my own research, I also did not realize how much

damage feral cats and dogs in the United States cause every year. **According to a 2009 study by David Bergman of USDA Wildlife Services titled “Dogs Gone Wild: Feral Dog Damage in the United State”**, “feral dogs caused as much a \$620 million in agricultural and property damage annually”. I feel like it is an additional duty of ours as people and pet owners to help alleviate the issue of pet homelessness in the United States.

(So, let’s dig into why you should adopt from shelters instead of going to an uncaring puppy mill.)

Body

- I. Rescue animals are always available and in need of homes.
 - A. As I said earlier, I’m a happy cat dad of four cats.
 1. Three are rescues from animal shelters in Florida, and our youngest cat, Rufio is a four year-old tabby we adopted from a farm in Virginia Beach. We’ve thought about adopting from a breeder for a special breed from time to time, but it turns out that for us any breed of cat would do as long as they had a loving home.
 2. **According to a 2017 report from NPR titled “No 'Easy Answer' To Growing Number Of Stray Dogs In The U.S.”**, “there are nearly 14,000 shelters and pet rescue groups in the U.S. that acquire almost 8 million animals each year.” The supply of animals for adoption far outweighs the demand. These shelter and rescue groups are taking in abandoned and stray animals in order to find them loving homes.

B. Large scale puppy mills and breeders on the other hand can be run with nothing but profit in mind.

1. **According to a 2023 report from the Humane Society of the United States**, “If you buy a dog from a pet store, online seller or flea market, you’re almost certainly getting a dog from a puppy mill. Puppy mills are factory-style breeding facilities that put profit above the welfare of dogs. They will continue to operate until people stop supporting them. By adopting a pet, you can be certain you aren't giving them a dime.”
2. This isn’t meant to disparage mom and pop breeders who take their craft seriously and provide excellent care for their animals. There are plenty of valid reasons to adopt from a breeder. Such as if you’re in the animal husbandry circuit and are displaying your animals in shows and competitions or are adopting a working dog for hunting or farming. However, the vast majority of cats and dogs adopted in the US are for companionship and the choice to adopt is not dependent on a specific breed of animal.

(The decision to adopt a pet from a rescue shelter shouldn’t be solely focused on the moral or ethical merits, but also the financial benefits.)

II. Adopting from a rescue shelter saves us plenty of money on additional costs, not just on the individual level but also at the national level.

A. Adopting saves us, the individual, plenty of money.

1. **Geoff Williams wrote an excellent article titled “Costs to Consider When Adopting a Pet” for US World News in July 2023**, and it helps to spell out all of the services and operations that a rescue shelter already performs on their animals at little to no cost to adopters. There include, veterinary fees, vaccinations, microchipping, and spaying and neutering the animals.
 2. When we adopted our three cats in Florida, it cost between \$35 to \$50 each, and that was all. However, when we adopted our farm cat Rufio four years ago, we had to pay for all of those services ourselves and it came out to about \$500 after it was all said and done. That cat’s lucky we love him because we would not go through that hassle again.
 3. **Michelle Neff of One Green Planet thoroughly detailed the costs of buying a dog from a puppy mill in a 2020 article “The Cost Difference between a Rescue Dog and Puppy Mill Dog.”** As Neff rightly points out “Purchasing a purebred dog from a breeder can cost anywhere between \$500 to \$3,000 dollars. And what are you getting? The dog. That’s it.” A dog or cat from a rescue shelter is just as capable and deserving of our time, money, and love.
- B. Adopting saves the country as a whole plenty of money as well.
1. Stray animals can cause damage to property, especially agriculture, reduce populations of local wildlife due to predation and conflict, and can also spread harmful diseases such as rabies. Taking these stray dogs and cats out of the wild and into loving homes helps to reduce these issues in our communities.

2. **Kate Abbey-Lambertz wrote an important article titled “Detroit's Stray Dog Problem Fought By Rescue Groups As Abandoned Animals Roam Streets” for the Huffington Post in 2017** addressing the issues of stray dogs roaming throughout the US and presented adoption as one important solution.

(Knowing that we're saving young and innocent animals from a life of suffering and pain is its own reward, but knowing that we're doing it while saving money is an added bonus.)

Conclusion

So, to wrap things up, let's remember why we're adopting in the first place. Cats and dogs are our best friends. They give us companionship, a sense of family, even an added layer of security in our homes. The next time you are considering adopting a cat or dog, but sure to consider where you plan to adopt from and why. It costs a lot to raise a cat or dog, why not save yourself some money by adopting from a shelter. Also, don't forget to remind the good you're doing in this world if by adopting from a rescue shelter instead of from that shady guy at the flea market.

Works Cited

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