For Your Information…The Cost of Loving

The adoption fee which Merced County Animal Control charges for its animals serves two purposes. First, it helps to defray some of the costs of operating the Shelter. Secondly, Merced County Animal Control doesn't wish to place animals in just any home, but rather only in homes where the animal's needs are likely to be met for the rest of its life. The adoption fee helps us screen out and educate potential adopters who may be unable or unwilling to pay the normal expenses incurred by a responsible pet owner. Although most of us consider owning a pet more a necessity than a luxury, when you look at the cost of adding a pet to the family, you realize that caring for that pet responsibly requires a large economic commitment.

To illustrate this, let's look at the amount of money that an owner of a new puppy or kitten can spend just during the first six months of ownership.

Medical Expenses	8-Week-Old Puppy	8-Week-Old Kitten
Distemper Booster (8 weeks)	$ 14 - 30	$ 12 - 30
Distemper Booster (12 weeks)	14 - 30	12 - 30
Distemper Booster (16 weeks)	14 - 30	12 - 30
Rabies Shot (12 weeks)	12	12
Check for intestinal worms	14 - 16	14 - 16
Worming	5 - 30	5 - 30
Neutering	85 - 120	85 - 120
Heartworm check (6 months)	11 - 32	
Heartworm preventative	8 - 34	
Physical exam/office visit (10 day follow-up for illness only)	8 - 12	8 - 12
Feline leukemia test		20 - 35
Feline leukemia vaccines		15 - 32

Pet Supplies		
Collar	$ 3 - 20	$ 3 - 6
ID tag	5	5
Nail Trimmer	5 - 9	5 - 9
Brush	3 - 10	3 - 10
Leash	3 - 15	
Food and Water dishes	3 - 15	3 - 15
Flea control products	5 - 40	4 - 20
Shampoo	3 - 15	3 - 15
Toys	20 - 40	5 - 25
Scratching post		12 - 30
Puppy/kitten dry food	50 - 130	35 - 60
Dog/cat crate	20 - 100	20 - 50

Litter/litter pan		35 - 60
Miscellaneous		
Rabies registration fee (3 months)	$ 6	$ 6
Obedience Training	42 - 80	
Boarding	0 - 200	0 - 100
Professional grooming	20 - 60	
Pet deposit for a dwelling	0 - 500	0 - 500
Replacement cost for items damaged by pet	0 - 1,000	0 - 1,000
Total (6 Months)	**$ 395 - 2,534**	**$ 334 - 2,235**

Surprised? These averages do not even take into account any medical fees should the pet become sick. That's a major investment that makes the adoption fee look like a drop in the bucket. Many animals are left at the Shelter because their owners found them too expensive; for example, the tiny puppy that became a sixty pound dog. Most animals brought to the Shelter have received little or no preventative medical care until they came to our shelter. Charging a nominal fee for adoption helps to insure that they will be placed with adopters who are willing and able to assume the financial obligations necessary for proper pet care, as well as to enable Merced County Animal Control to provide a good health care program for all our sheltered animals.