



CLOVER SAFE

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



#9

SAFE CARE AND HANDLING OF DOGS

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.

Dogs were first domesticated more than 10,000 years ago and since that time have become companions to humans. This relationship developed through a fostered process of humane treatment and friendship. Although dogs are companionable, they still may attack and harm humans. Information available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates about 180,000 children 19 years and younger received emergency room treatment for dog bites during 2001. Approximately 80% of these dog bites were caused by a family or neighbor's dog and most frequently included bites to arms/hands, legs/feet, and heads/necks.



*Photograph Courtesy
University of California 4-H
Archives*

Safe Dog Care

- Young dogs require more frequent daily feedings (up to four times daily) of commercial puppy food than older dogs. Older dogs should be fed a 90% diet of high quality dry food mixed with water, broth, or canned food. Never feed a dog chocolate and avoid feeding dogs table scraps.
- Dogs require at least one hour of outdoor exercise a day. During warm weather make sure outdoor dogs have adequate shade and water.
- Brush dogs frequently and during warm months check for ticks and fleas.
- Assure that your dog has a warm and dry place to rest.
- Dogs should be examined annually by a veterinarian. If a dog appears to be sick, take it to a veterinarian for an evaluation.
- Return the friendship and love that your dog shows you.

Safe Dog Handling

- Never hit, kick, poke, pinch, or tease a dog. Treat dogs with respect.
- Lift dogs by placing one arm and hand under their chest and the other arm and hand beneath their hindquarters.
- Never leave infants or young children alone with dogs.
- Do not approach unfamiliar dogs or enter their territories such as yards.
- Avoid forcing a dog into a corner. Always leave an escape route for a cornered dog.
- Remain motionless with your hands at your sides when allowing unfamiliar dogs to approach. Let an unfamiliar dog smell you by sniffing the back of your hand.
- Do not attempt to pet a dog without letting them first see and sniff you.
- Do not kiss or hold your face close to a dog.
- Dogs that show their teeth, snarl and bark, lay their ears back, and/or raise their tails are showing aggressive behavior and should not be approached. Instead, slowly and calmly walk or back away from the aggressive dog while avoiding direct eye contact.
- Stay away from dogs that are sleeping or feeding. Likewise, maintain a safe distance from a mother dog with puppies.
- When in public areas, keep your dog on a leash.
- If you are injured by a dog during a 4-H activity, tell your 4-H YDP volunteer, parent, or guardian and promptly seek medical attention.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling a dog or any other animal.