

'Every Day Is Tag Day' Keeps Dogs Safe

This Saturday, "Every Day Is Tag Day" urges dog owners to equip their dogs with proper ID.

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The American Humane Association and thousands of animal care and control agencies, veterinarians, and humane organizations will celebrate Every Day is Tag Day on Sat., April 7. The event aims to urge pet owners to equip their pets with one or more forms of ID.

"Ensuring that your pet has reliable and accurate identification so he can be returned to you if he gets lost is one of the most important things you can do to express your love to your pet and keep him safe," American Humane President and CEO Marie Belew Wheatley said.

It's estimated that only 15 percent of dogs that wind up in shelters without an ID tag will be reunited with their owners. Because of space and resource constraints, many shelters can hold lost animals for only a short period of time in the hope that the owners will claim their pets.

Of the eight million to 12 million animals who enter shelters every year, American Humane estimates that six million to nine million are euthanized. To spare the heartache of losing a pet, the Every Day is Tag Day event urges dog and cat owners to understand the critical necessity to tag them.

American Humane recommends microchipping dogs and cats, since many shelters that take in lost animals will check a pet for the tiny electronic capsule embedded under its skin containing a code that links the pet to its owner through a database.

Microchipping and tattooing provide an additional layer of assurance in the event that the pet's collar and tag fall off or are removed. But any form of ID may be useless unless it contains up-to-date contact information.

To support Every Day is Tag Day, American Humane offers several tips for making sure pets can be identified if they're lost or stolen: Make sure your pet wears a collar with a current ID tag, rabies tag and city/county license. Include a contact name, address and phone numbers. Consider providing a phone number for an alternate contact like a neighbor or family member. Keep your pet's licenses and ID tag current. Make sure to update the tag if you change your address or phone numbers. If a reward is offered for returning the pet, put that information on the tag. When moving or traveling, place a temporary tag on your pet with the phone number of someone who knows how to reach you. Remember that even indoor pets need tags. Many strays in shelters are indoor pets that escaped and got lost.

For more information about Every Day is Tag Day, visit <http://www.americanhumane.org/tagday>.