

Universal Human-Animal Bond Scale

Att*	Relationship	Devotion	Value	Concern	Resp.	Total
10	A love relationship with 2-way interaction between a person and a specific companion animal that is regarded as a best friend or a member of the family. Emotional attachment and reciprocal reliance is readily displayed.	10	10	10	10	50
9	A strong relationship but yields to other responsibilities, priorities	8-9	9	9	10	45-46
8	Successive reliance relationships: service animals, K-9 partners, etc.	8-9	10	5-9	10	41-46
7	Ownership for purpose: military, protection, work, transport, etc.	2-9	3-9	3-9	10	24-43
6	Animals used in: racing, hunting, sports, shows, circus, draft	0-9	3-9	1-6	10	19-39
5	Animals raised in a family environment but considered disposable	2-9	1-4	1-5	10	21-35
4	Casual interactions with therapy, aquarium, zoo, exhibit animals	0-3	4-5	5-9	10	23-31
3	Food animals, farmed animals, game reserve and game animals, Species exploited for sport-fighting and other abusive acts	0-3	2-9	0-6	10	15-31
2	Laboratory animals used in research and development	0-3	1-9	0-6	10	13-30
1	Reserve & free ranging wild animals, wild birds, aquatic animals; Unwanted animals: horses, dogs, cats, feral animals, hoarded animals, etc	0-2	0-6	0-9	10	11-28
0	Invasive species, pests, parasites, vectors of disease, destructive & harmful species, prey species that harm people and livestock	0	0	0-6	10	6-16

***Attachment** refers to the degree of bonding which a person has with their animal(s). All scores range from 0-10. Example; zero means no attachment; 10 indicates the most highly bonded relationship. **Devotion** refers to the amount of time, effort and continuous ongoing interaction with the animal(s). **Value** refers to emotional, financial, intrinsic, research, development or ecologic value. **Concern** refers to the worry people have regarding the welfare of animal(s) such as preventing suffering or rescue or disaster response work. **Responsibility** is direct for owners and indirect for society, public health, conservation, etc. **Add the scores from left to right for Totals.** The most highly bonded relationship has a total score from left to right of 50. This HAB Scale is generalized and is certainly disputable for particular scenarios. The universal diversity of HAB relationships is vast, so totals are reported in ranges and anyone may create their own version for personal clarification. This HAB Scale was created by Alice Villalobos DVM, DPNAP, of Hermosa Beach, CA, www.pawspice.com in June 2011 for the AAH-ABV, SVME, NAP & AHF.

AAH-ABV: Issues of Animal Ethics

People who love animals are instantly challenged when engaging issues regarding animal ethics. This is because there is no clear concept or definition of the degrees or levels of the human-companion animal bond and society's inclination to be part of the more expansive HAB. This universal HAB Scale serves the v-team and all animal lovers as a useful tool to better understand and characterize the myriad HAB.

People in their global diversity relate to their own companion animals in multiple ways under different circumstances. This fluctuation often frustrates the v-team. People who own animals for a purpose do share a bond with their animals which may dissolve with their animals' inability to fulfill a needed or wanted function. All these considerations give rise to ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest for veterinarians and all those who care about the welfare of animals and their environment.

As healers, veterinarians face bioethical considerations and decision making dilemmas for highly bonded clients who are struggling to provide proper care for their ill or end of life companion animals. Scenarios may be heart wrenching especially for highly bonded families who have been adversely affected by the economic recession. Veterinarians are obliged to help their recession battered clients by offering reasonable, affordable treatment options for their patients. Caring for a companion animal should not cause the family financial distress to the point of missing mortgage payments or declaring foreclosure or bankruptcy.

Most caregivers want their pet to have a good quality of life with no pain. It helps to provide the family with the "HHHHHM" Quality of Life Scale which helps them to evaluate their pet for the 5 H's and 2 M's acronym: no Hurt, Hunger, Hydration or Hygiene issues; Happiness, Mobility and More good days than bad days. The QoL Scale may be downloaded at www.pawspice.com.

Although modern veterinary medicine parallels the pediatrician model, it only takes a decade for the "baby" to become a geriatric dog or cat. Geriatric animals likely have multiple co morbidities that compete against a newly diagnosed problem such as cancer for treatment and survival. There is a cry from society for veterinarians to embrace the concept of palliative care and hospice for companion animals. Society resonates with the concept of "Pawspice" which combines palliative care with kinder gentler forms of standard care and transitions into hospice care when the patient nears the edge of death. VCNA Vol. 41, Palliative and Hospice Care, Ed. Tami Shearer, May 2011

Decision making dilemmas regarding how and when to elect euthanasia for a beloved dying pet causes an emotional burden that weighs on the heart of every caring person. When a client is unable to decide what to do, it is imperative that the veterinarian offer guidance and moral support. It is very helpful for all those involved to use the Framework for Decision Making by Michael McDonald which can be downloaded at www.ethics.ubc.ca/ or <http://www.ethics.ubc.ca/upload/A%20Framework%20for%20Ethical%20Decision-Making.pdf>

The v-team faces ethical distress with the nonchalant attitude of those who view their animals as disposable property. It is difficult for the v-team to deal with clients who do not seem to prioritize their animals over meaningless inanimate amenities, unnecessary habits or self destructive addictions.

Encroachment, extinction, ecology, conservation, global animal welfare, public health, disaster response and disease control are all societal responsibilities that often involve the expertise of veterinarians. The Universal HAB Scale indicates that man is 100% responsible for husbandry of the entire animal kingdom. It reminds society of man's ancient contract with animals by returning to the role of the responsible "good shepherd."

A veterinarian's normative ethics should remain steadfast despite the inconsistency of animal ownership or the adverse situation that animals encounter in the environment. This is because the search for right and wrong for justice and truth prevails with the character it takes to uphold the revised Veterinarians Oath.

Submitted to AAH-ABV by Alice Villalobos, DVM, DPNAP on July 1, 2011. References upon request.