

Showing Love Through Good Animal Care

February and Valentine's Day remind us to show love to those who depend on us—including the animals in our care. For youth involved in animal projects, love is shown through daily responsibility, patience, and consistent care, not just on special occasions.

Providing clean water, proper nutrition, and a safe, comfortable environment is essential year-round, but especially during the winter months. Cold temperatures, frozen water sources, and damp or dirty bedding can quickly lead to health concerns. Taking time each day to check animals and their living spaces helps prevent small problems from turning into serious issues.

Observation is another important way to care for animals. Changes in behavior, appetite, posture, or movement can be early signs of illness or injury. Youth who regularly observe their animals learn to recognize what is normal and are more prepared to respond quickly, seek help, and provide appropriate care when something seems off.

Kind, calm handling also shows respect for animals and helps build trust. Whether working with small animals, livestock, or horses, gentle and patient handling reduces stress, improves safety, and helps animals perform better both at home and in the show ring.

Routine health care is another way to show love in action. Tasks such as grooming, hoof care, vaccinations, and parasite control may take extra time, but they play a critical role in keeping animals healthy and comfortable.

This Valentine's Day, remember that love for animals isn't shown with cards or candy—it's shown through clean pens, full water buckets, thoughtful handling, and consistent care every day.