

What's Stewardly When It Comes to Pets?

Introductory Note from CC Editor:

In a recent issue, a CC reader shared her "animal dilemma:" what to do with a large hunting dog that could not be given away, was no longer wanted and cost too much to feed. Here is one of the responses that came in from another reader ("What's Stewardly When It Comes to Pets?" CC, 9 Feb/2015, p. 5).

My answer assumes that this hunting dog has served you well for some years. It has earned its keep or, at least, did what you expected from it.

This means that you owe your dog a debt of gratitude and appreciation. This means that killing him—yes, let's be blunt about it!—should not even be considered by you. It would be an act of gross ingratitude.

As to expense, that's of your own doing. If it is too expensive to keep the dog, that most likely means that, like most dog owners, you feed it expensive commercial dog food. I can understand that this would be expensive for a large dog like yours. However, why make it so expensive?

I lived my first thirteen years in The Netherlands, during and after World War II. Later, I spent 30 years in Nigeria. In both countries people kept/keep dogs, but they spent (NL) / spend (Nig) little on their dogs, since they fed/feed them food scraps. I have done that myself. Dogs do very well on such a diet.

Not only dogs, but even humans do well on it. Years ago, I served a Nigerian friend and myself a quick refrigerator lunch. I saw a container that looked suitable for lunch, warmed it up and both of us enjoyed it. Later that day, my wife asked what happened to the dog's supper; it was not in the fridge. A week or so later, I received a letter from my friend, thanking me for that delicious lunch.

Till this day, eighteen years since leaving Nigeria, I am still amazed, not to say shocked, when I walk through the pet sections of the supermarket, at how much people spend on their pets, especially cats and dogs. It was not always that way in Canada either. That feeding culture developed in response to corporations making it available and people

slowly getting used to it, till they began to see such feed as absolutely necessary. *You apparently have fallen for it as well.*

So, my advice? Be grateful to a dog that has served you well for many years and feed it with your food scraps. It has the added advantage of keeping those scraps out of the garbage system. *A green solution of gratitude.*