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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BUNNIES & CHICKS MAY FIT IN AN EASTER BASKET, BUT THEY'RE NOT BABIES FOR LONG

Be prepared for disease and duty

(Phoenix) Every year well-intentioned adults buy baby rabbits, chickens and ducks as Easter gifts. The cute, fluffy animals soon grow out of the baby stage, and children lose interest leaving the parents holding the basket, so to speak.

“Bunnies and chicks can be great pets, especially to help children learn how to care for animals and where eggs come from,” said Dr. Susan Gale, acting state veterinarian. “But think carefully if you’re considering giving them as a gift, the same way you would if giving a kitten or puppy. It’s a commitment to the animal for its lifetime.”

Pets are not something you can return to the store if you don’t want them. It’s important to have a plan to raise them, care for them and pay for them. They can all be raised inside or outside but the right way. A house has to be pet-proofed to raise them inside, and housing, feed and water have to be in place to raise them outside.

Chicks and ducklings also carry the risk of salmonella. They commonly have it in their droppings and sometimes in their feathers. People need to wash their hands before and after touching them.

Also, chickens are flock animals and do not do well as a single pet.

“Easter symbolizes a new beginning and baby animals capture that spirit,” said Mark Killian, director of the Department of Agriculture. “Instead of giving a pet without a plan, consider visiting a farm or zoo to see baby animals.”

Even after they are older, domestic rabbits, chickens and ducks aren’t prepared to be in the wild. Domestic animals often starve to death or are eaten by other animals if let go.

There are clubs for people who raise chickens or have pet rabbits. Consulting them or your veterinarian can help you make your decision.

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