

Man's best friend provides added health benefits  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dogs are great. They are generally loveable, have better attitudes than most humans, and are always glad to see you when you get home. The family dog is the most loyal confidant you could ever have. They are always eager to assist on crop scouting field trips, finish your leftovers, and make sure you are covered in their hair whenever you have some place important to go to.

But did you know that your dog might be good for your health beyond putting a smile on your face? In the midst of the current trade wars, lower commodity prices, and a growing trend of mental illness in the United States' agricultural community, farmers may want to consider their dog as a valuable asset for their mental and physical health.

According to Miltiades and Shearer (2011), individuals in rural areas have lower levels of depression when their pet plays a central role in their life and they are able to physically care for the pet. Another study found that dog ownership has been found to decrease the likelihood of depression in people with infectious diseases (Muldoon et al., 2017).

Dogs have the ability to combat depression because they keep their owners moving, are a good distraction from the daily challenges they face, and dogs are active listeners. Being outside with your pets is also a way to increase your intake of vitamin D. "The body makes vitamin D when skin is directly exposed to the sun" and it helps maintain strong bones and immune systems fight bacteria and viruses (National Institutes of Health, 2016).

Walking your dog can help you achieve the Physical Activity Guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is "recommended that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination each week. The guidelines also recommend that children and adolescents be active for at least 60 minutes every day" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018, p.1). By achieving these goals while walking your dog, it decreases your risk for heart disease, cancer or diabetes.

In conclusion, dogs have many added benefits for your health beyond being your best friend. Reducing the risk for depression, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are all added benefits of spending time with your dog.

## For Help

*If you or a loved one is suffering or experiencing a crisis, or if you have a friend who is suffering or in crisis, you can call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text "HOPE" to 741-741. Each of these options provides access to a licensed counselor 24/7. You may also contact your county's mental health and recovery board. Ohio residents needing help in finding mental health resources in their county or interested in taking a class in Mental Health First Aid can contact Jami Dellifield at [dellifield.2@osu.edu](mailto:dellifield.2@osu.edu) or 419-674-2297.*

## References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Why Walk? Why Not! Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/index.htm>

Miltiades, H., & Shearer, J. (June 01, 2011). Attachment to pet dogs and depression in rural older adults. *Anthrozoos*, 24, 2, 147-154.

Muldoon, A., Kuhns, L., Supple, J., Jacobson, K., Garofalo, R. (2017). A Web-Based Study of Dog Ownership and Depression Among People Living With HIV. *JMIR Mental Health*, 4, 53. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5700404/>.

National Institutes of Health. (2016). Vitamin D. Retrieved from <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-Consumer/>.

## Upcoming Events:

### Beef Quality Assurance Trainings:

- Tuesday, August 28, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Union Stockyards, Hillsboro
- Thursday, September 13, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Producers Stockyards, Hillsboro
- Thursday, October 25, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Producers Stockyards, Hillsboro

Call your local Ohio State University Extension Office to register for the date and location of the BQA training of your choice. The Highland County Extension Office can be reached at 937-393-1918.

Tickets for the 2018 **Farm Science Review** are now available at the Highland County Extension Office. Tickets purchased at the Highland County Extension Office are \$7, tickets will be \$10 at the gate. Children 5 and under are free.

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