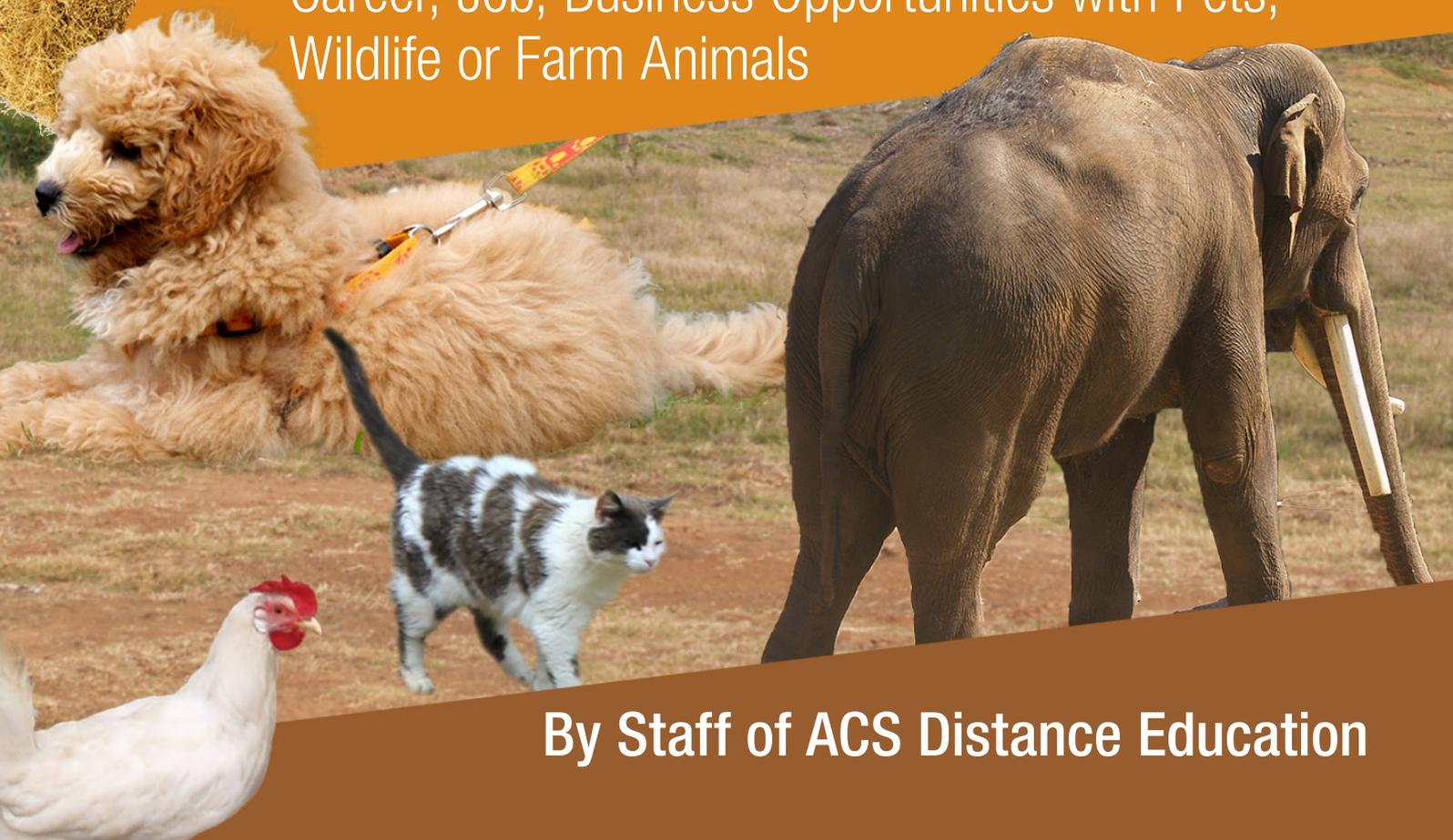


Working with Animals

Career, Job, Business Opportunities with Pets,
Wildlife or Farm Animals



By Staff of ACS Distance Education

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CREDITS

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The information in this book is derived from a broad cross section of resources (research, reference materials and personal experience) from the authors and editorial assistants in the academic department of ACS Distance Education. It is, to the best of our knowledge, composed as an accurate representation of what is accepted and appropriate information about the subject, at the time of publication.

The authors fully recognise that knowledge is continually changing, and awareness in all areas of study is constantly evolving. As such, we encourage the reader to recognise that nothing they read should ever be considered to be set in stone. They should always strive to broaden their perspective and deepen their understanding of a subject, and before acting upon any information or advice, should always seek to confirm the currency of that information, and the appropriateness to the situation in which they find themselves.

As such, the publisher and author do not accept any liability for actions taken by the reader based upon their reading of this book.

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PREFACE

Are you an animal person? Some people are, some are not. If you enjoy interacting with animals, are interested in biological science, or are passionate about wildlife, pets or farming; you may thrive in the type of jobs outlined in this book.

CHAPTER 1 THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS

If you want a career with animals, you need to read this book!

Some people love to make things from inanimate objects more than spend time interacting with other people. Some might say they prefer the company of animals to people. However, it is important to stress that working with animals also involves working with people. It could involve giving keeper talks if you are working in a zoo, advising people about pet care if you are working in a pet shop, or dealing with anxious owners if you are working in a kennels or cattery or in a veterinary surgery. In general, wherever there are animals there are people too, so it is important to realise that a career with animals will also involve interacting with the public.

- Animal trainers are employed by animal owners. The owner will be employing them to train the animal to act in a certain way. The value of their training will depend upon how well they understand the owner.
- An animal lover who loves interacting with animals may not be suited to serving in a pet shop if they have difficulty dealing with the people who are customers.
- A zookeeper may spend a lot of time dealing with animals, but some tasks can require a high level of cooperation with fellow worker; particularly when dealing with large animals.

- A farmer may spend a lot of time alone with animals, particularly on a small farm; but most farmers are also small business owners who need to be able to manage every aspect of the farm, from water resources and equipment to finance, marketing and contracting employees.
- Animal conservationists need to engage public opinion in support of their activities, whether through the media, giving talks or fund raising.
- Academic careers with animals may include teaching or research. Teachers need to be good communicators, to connect with their classes. Researchers need to collaborate with colleagues; and poor communication skills will result in diminished research outcomes.

Clearly, a career working with animals should not be approached as a way of escaping the need to interact with other people. Working with animals almost always involves working with people too.



Ecotour tour guide



Dog grooming requires certain grooming equipment and technology

PUT YOUR MIND TO THE FUTURE NOT IN THE PAST

Many people look at jobs people are doing today, or which they did in the past - and have a perception of what that job might be like, based upon today or yesterday. The world doesn't work that way anymore though. The way we work, the equipment and techniques we use and the actual jobs we do, are changing faster than we can predict in today's world.

It is a mistake to look at a vet, zookeeper or farmer and think "I want a job exactly like that".

Tomorrows veterinarians may be using wearable computer technology to remotely diagnose and prescribe

treatments for animals. Farmers and zookeepers may be using automated machinery or robotics more than they do today. Farm produce may be grown, harvested, processed and marketed in very different ways in the future.

There is very little that is not subject to change. This does not mean everything in the world is going to change. It does mean though that a career with animals is likely to see continual change and in order to be successful in such a career, you will need to be prepared for change. The most successful people are likely to be those who not only accept change, but are proactive about change: staying up to date with trends, information and technology, looking out for opportunities and being amongst the first to act on new opportunities as they arise.

Forward thinking, networking and attitude may be just as important to your success, as knowledge and experience are.

BROADEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE

An understanding of animal husbandry or biology is not a ticket to a career with animals, but it is a foundation for being successful in all sorts of careers. Most people that start out on a career path will usually divert from their original goals as time moves on. This is because:

- The job they have in mind when they start may simply not exist by the time they are trained and experienced enough to do that job.
- Their perception of what a job would be like changes from fantasy to reality, as they study, gain experience, learn, and hence develop a proper awareness of that job.
- The opportunities they anticipated never present - but more attractive opportunities arise that were never anticipated.
- Priorities change; when a person starts studying and gaining experience, for instance; earning money might change to be a higher or lower priority.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

People usually start with either experience, or study. It does not matter a great deal which comes first - but to realize your full potential, you will eventually need both.

Experience may start very informally, perhaps caring for pets at home, taking up a hobby (e.g. bird watching), or having a family that is involved with animals (e.g. growing up on a farm). Alternatively, it may start with a job (e.g. working in a pet shop or farm), or volunteering (e.g. for an animal charity).

Study may start with anything from a short course or vocational certificate through to a university degree.

Whether you start with experience or study - the value of either is the same. The greatest benefit is “learning”, and the second greatest benefit is being seen to have learned. Every time you learn new things about animals, your capacity to work with them improves. When an employer or client sees an indication that you have relevant knowledge, they are more inclined to employ you.

Getting qualifications can be of value too, but in the grand scheme of things, your career is likely to be far more affected by your learning than by your qualifications.

In reality, most graduates end up working in disciplines other than those they studied, partly because opportunities they anticipate do not arise at the time, or in the place, they hoped for - but also because their interests and motivations change.

This should not dissuade you from studying though, but it should make you understand that a “broad based course” which teaches general skills in your areas of interest, will be more useful in the long term, than what a highly specialised course would be.