

Saturday, May 30, 2009 (file cac217)

To: Dan Breedon

Fr: Ed Miller

Subj: Encouragement and constraints on animal life in Butte County

Ref A: T. Grandin, *Animals in Translation*, Harvest book/Harcourt Inc, 2005, originally published by Scribners. (Butte Lib 591.5 G)

Ref B: S. Weaver, *The Donkey Companion*, Storey books 2008

Ref C: H. Wolfson, *Small Cattle=Large Profits*, OutHere Magazine, spring 2007

Ref D: D.Tuller, *Ill informed*, California May/June 09, pp16-170

Background: The decision to constrain much of rural Butte County subdivision to 20 acres in the near future suggests that animal oriented land uses will become increasingly important. The cost of special use permits and health issues need to be debated.

Comments:

1. Ref A was recommended by "Brainy Dog" a local small scale training facility for dogs as a good reference for understanding pets and economic animals. People need dogs for love, companionship and security. We need to recognize the threat of predation by feral/abandoned dogs. Animal owners/associates as well as dogs need to develop a functional relationship recognizing the role of leadership and submission. Butte County needs to encourage responsible animal management and the role of small scale entrepreneurial trainers and boarding facilities.
2. Ref B describes the role of the donkey both as a pet, endangered species support or beast of burden that has become popular in Butte County. These animals are a good fit between the dog and a horse for many stakeholders. The battle against intestinal parasites that can have a devastating effect on animals and man are well documented from a diagnosis and remediation point of view. The role of the donkey as a vegetation management tool, forager, protector of livestock and transport should be examined. Net GHG generation/global warming and quality of life in difficult economic times are issues of interest relative to this form of animal husbandry. The Mammoth, Large Standard, Standard and Miniature range from 54 to 36 inches and under, providing a variable fit to applications and caregivers. All domestic and African Wild Asses have the same chromosome count and produce viable offspring. In addition to the donkey/ass, sterile hybrid offspring of a male ass and horse or mule and a female ass and a male horse or hinny needs to be recognized. Hybrid vigor is typically desired for working animals.
3. Ref C points to the advantage of miniature cattle, primarily Herefords, that are advantageous for small parcels and owners with marginal energy.

4. The housing element of the general plan should recognize that the small farm production or animal training facilities are key to a sustainable life in rural portions of Butte County and justify minimal cost and/or fast track BOS approval. Federal and state land managers need to consider lease or sale of land subject to rigid control of vegetation management guided by agroecology principles. Marginally or unemployed individuals in an urban environment may not be sustainable despite the best efforts of government. Returning to agricultural roots with recognition of the potential for bio fuel production, efficient use of water and avoidance of wildfire associated global warming effects is a white hope that we should not neglect. Animals as pets offer psychological benefits of rural living that should not be neglected.
5. Ref D points up concerns about health care reporting in which wonder drug of the month reporting driven by financial interests is undermining a systematic overview of problems in public health. Problems associated with wild and domestic animals are one aspect of need for systematic evaluation of risk factors that potentially need governmental guidance. Physical/social isolation is under indirect control by zoning ordinances that in turn can affect health. General health associated with nutrition and exercise can potentially drive susceptibility to environmental degradation factors. Tuller in Ref D is potentially a biased observer since he is in the process of created a combined master's program in public health and journalism but his criticism is worthy of note. The U.C. and Mayo clinic news letters are examples of public health reporting that need to be recognized. Mortality /quality of life statistics indicate that some beneficial activities are serving us well. Increasing concerns over cost will require that we need to sensitize ourselves to the quantitative benefits of various public health approaches in terms of the nitty gritty details such as animal density limits, coordinated parasitic disease control and septic tank maintenance schedules.