

## **On the Positive Side: The Benefits of Pet Micro-chips**

**By J. L. Jones**

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A lot of us have had the experience of finding a lost dog without any tags and attempted to locate the dog's owner. Sadly, unless the dog has tags or is micro-chipped the chances of the pet being reunited with its family dramatically decreases. Even with animal control and the local shelter involvement, companion animals can slip below the radar and be lost to their families. Some lucky ones find another loving home while many are destined to not survive their separation due to accidents or the vagaries of the system they fall into.

Recently a Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) volunteer again experienced and appreciated the benefits of micro-chipping. Late on a Thursday night, a female blue fawn pit bull was found near the home of J.J., who is a foster parent for the HSSNM. The dog was in good condition, very sweet and the dog was wearing an expensive collar but had no identification tags. Contacting HSSNM, J.J. was able to get the dog scanned for a micro-chip quickly. With the micro-chip information, literally within a matter of minutes, the dog's owners were notified and were on their way to retrieve their companion. The owner was very relieved to hear that his sweet "Lola", who had managed to jump out of their fenced yard, was okay. Coincidentally, the HSSNM volunteer who rescued the dog also owns a female pit bull named "Lola".

Too many times lost pets are not reunited with their owners, and a main reason is due to the lack of contact information. In other words, the animal is not wearing its rabies tag and city license as required by law or any other ID tags and has no microchip. Animal control and the shelter have benefited greatly from micro-chipping as they are more quickly able to reunite the pet with the owner. It is reported that most, if not all, our county and city animal control trucks are now equipped with scanners. It should also be noted that micro-chipping your pet can also be useful when ownership of the animal is in question.

As it is essentially impossible to guarantee that family companion animals will never slip out of their yard, identification tags and especially micro-chips are the best way to ensure their quick return. HSSNM is strongly advocating and supporting loose cats and dogs with identification picked up by animal control be returned from the trucks without taking them to the shelter. This can save the life of the animal and that of others in an over-crowded shelter. It also can dramatically cut the cost to operate the shelter.

In an attempt to lower the pet over-population and shelter euthanasia rate, some counties have passed mandatory spay/neuter/microchip laws. This of course is met with some opposition as conspiracy theorists state "Once it is mandatory to microchip your pet humans will be next". However if you worked in the rescue business for one week you would understand how important sterilizing and microchips can be.

For more information on getting your pet a micro-chip, please contact your veterinarian, the shelter at 575-382-0018 or visit:

<http://network.bestfriends.org/14631/news.aspx>, <http://network.bestfriends.org/7324/News.aspx>

Guest author J.L. Jones is a HSSNM volunteer and a member of Therapaws. Interested guest authors can contact HSSNM at 575-532-8020.