MOVING: BETTER CHECK THAT MICROCHIP

When you move to a new home, you are diligent about changing your address with the post office. But, are you also diligent about updating your pet's microchip registration with your new address?

Microchipping your pet, along with a having a collar and a current nametag, could mean the difference between having him forever by your side or losing him forever. A microchip is a small computer chip that is injected under your pet's skin, between the shoulder blades. Each microchip is associated with an identification number that is specific to your pet. The procedure for inserting the chip is quick and generally painless, and the microchip should never wear out or lose the registered information.

But just as important as having your pet microchipped is keeping the microchip registration information up to date. After the chip is inserted, it is the pet owner's responsibility to register the chip online with contact information, including current address, phone number, and email address.

Losing a pet can be incredibly stressful. If he's microchipped, some of that worry can be eased. If your pet is found and brought to a veterinary practice, animal control facility, or local shelter, the team there can scan your pet for the microchip and easily find your contact information.

Once a microchip is scanned, identifying correct contact information can still be tricky, in part because pet recovery services use different microchip technologies and databases. However, there are free tools available, such as the AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Lookup Tool (www.petmicrochiplookup.org), which scans the databases of all participating pet recovery services to determine which has registration information available for a microchip. When the microchip identification number is entered into the tool, all of the current and past registration information is made available.

To raise awareness about the importance of updating microchip registration information, AAHA and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) established ***"Check the Chip Day"*** (August 15) in an effort to ensure more happy endings for lost or stolen pets.

In addition to adding "update microchip information" to your moving checklist, visit your veterinarian or local shelter on August 15th and check that chip!