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Delta Education, LLC
Attn: Steven Korte
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Dear Mr. Korte,

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. We were recently contacted by an elementary school in regards to strong concerns about anoles and the “Teacher’s Pet Kit” being offered in your Life Science catalog. The shared concerns include

- teachers being told that anoles would live only one year (green anoles can live for seven years in captivity if cared for properly);
- the provided terrariums melting when used in accordance with proper heat lamps;
- failure to fully communicate the risk of salmonella bacteria associated with the keeping of reptiles as pets;
- promotion of an activity that frequently results in substandard care, suffering, and premature death of the animals involved.

The HSUS fully understands the widespread interest in reptiles; they are fascinating creatures. However, we oppose keeping any wild animals as pets (in the classroom or home) and discourage the public from owning reptiles as pets. Millions of animals suffer and die in the reptile trade every year; wild populations of reptiles in the U.S. and abroad, including some of the rarest species on Earth, are threatened by over-collection for trade. In addition, pet reptiles released into the wild are causing conservation problems for native species. These imported reptiles carry ecto-parasites, viruses, and bacteria that can be harmful to humans, agricultural animals, and wildlife.

All reptiles, including green anoles, carry *Salmonella* bacteria that can be harmful or even fatal to humans, particularly children, who are most in need of protection from reptile-related salmonellosis and the least capable of understanding and heeding public health warnings about handling reptiles. Reptile-related salmonellosis is also a threat to all people with weakened immune systems.

The school that contacted us did purchase new equipment for the anoles after the original terrariums melted, but upon realizing that the care required was more intensive than they were led to believe, the anoles were sent to a reptile rehabilitator. In this instance it was

extremely fortunate that a reptile rehabilitator was willing and able to accept the anoles. But this, and similar situations, impose further and unnecessary burdens on rehabilitators, nearly all of whom operate on extremely small budgets.

We would be happy to share alternate classroom activity ideas that humanely meet Life Science standards, should you wish to offer these to the teachers with whom you work.

Please contact me if questions arise. I can be reached at sclark@humanesociety.org and (860) 434-8666, ext. 24. We would welcome the chance to work with you to develop engaging, humane science activities.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Clark, M.S. Ed, CHES
Manager of Training, Student Outreach