

Activity 2.1.1 Harnessing the Wild**Purpose**

Have you ever walked through the zoo and wondered why the lions and tigers and bears are behind bars while you can wander peacefully through the petting zoo of sheep and goats? Domestication is bringing a wild animal species under human control. What makes an animal domesticated?

An animal must have six characteristics to be completely domesticated. An animal's diet must be flexible, the animal must have a fast growth rate, be able to be bred in captivity, behave calmly and predictably, have a flight zone that can be managed, and accept humans as their leaders within a social hierarchy. If an animal species has all six of these characteristics, the species can be domesticated. Sometimes animals can return to the wild after domestication and survive in the wild. These animals become feral. Common feral populations include horses, cats, dogs, goats, and pigs. An individual animal from a wild species trained and manipulated by a human is not domesticated. A tame animal can be trained but its offspring will retain wild instincts.

As you continue your journey through the zoo, you observe the elephant trainer working with the elephant. Is the elephant wild, tame, or domesticated? How does a person domesticate a species?

Materials**Per student:**

- Highlighter
- Pencil
- Computer with Internet access
- Agriscience Library
- *Agriscience Notebook*

Procedure

In this activity, you will use the characteristics of domestication to determine what it takes to domesticate an animal. Table 1 is a list of exhibits you saw on your last trip to the zoo.

Table 1. Zoo Exhibits

Domestic Animals	Wild Animals
Alpaca	Antelope
Canary	Baboon
Guide Dog	Beaver
Ferret	Elephant
Guinea pig	Gazelle
Laboratory mice	Lion
Mustang	Ostrich
Rabbit	Panda
Reindeer	Warthog
Water buffalo	Wolf

Part One – Choosing Animals

Select one domestic animal and two wild animals from Table 1. Record your choices in Table 2 in the appropriate space provided.

Part Two – Research

Research each animal and determine its diet, growth rate, reproductive habits, disposition, temperament, and social structures. Record the information in Table 2 of *Activity 2.1.1 Student Worksheet*.

Part Three – Identifying Domestication

On Table 2, highlight any factor that prevents the wild animals from being domesticated. Refer to your notes from the *Domestication* presentation to help you. In the space provided under Table 2 of *Activity 2.1.1 Student Worksheet*, write a summary of your findings. Compare the characteristics of the domestic animal with the wild animals you chose. Why do you feel humans were able to domesticate that animal?

Conclusion

1. Based on your experience and knowledge so far, is it beneficial to animals to be domesticated? Explain?
2. What is the difference between taming wild animals and domesticating them?
3. In your opinion, why can one animal be domesticated while another animal in a closely related species, i.e. dogs and wolves, cannot?

****Be prepared to share your responses to Conclusion questions in class.***

Name: _____

Activity 2.1.1 Student Worksheet

Table 2. Animal Information

	Domestic Animal	Wild Animal 1	Wild Animal 2
Name of Animal			
Diet			
Growth Rate			
Ability to Breed in Captivity			
Disposition			
Temperament			
Social Hierarchy			