



## **A Cost Comparison Between Animal Dissection and Humane Educational Alternatives**

Animal dissections are not cheap. The purchase of animal cadavers from biological supply companies year after year can be very expensive. On the other hand, humane educational alternatives such as computer simulations, realistic models, and dissection DVDs can often be used for minimal cost, virtually indefinitely, once the initial purchase has been made.

The following study is based on the needs of a typical biology department over a three-year period. Four of the most commonly dissected species - the frog, fetal pig, cat and dogfish - are given as examples. It is assumed that the department teaches three classes comprised of 30 students each, and that every pair of students dissects each species of animal once. Hence 45 frogs, 45 fetal pigs, 45 cats and 45 dogfish are needed annually, or 135 of each over a three year period. Prices were taken from *Carolina Biological Catalog 2012*, *Ward's Natural Science Online Catalog (Wardsci.com)* and *Digital Frog International (Digitalfrog.com)*, using the average cost of individual animal specimens. Items such as dissection kits, aluminum pans, and the humane educational alternatives were only purchased once. A range of humane educational alternatives is given for each species, and the total costs provided. However, not all of these alternatives would be necessary in every educational setting.

### ANIMAL DISSECTIONS

#### Supplies

High School Dissection Set:

$$\$11.10 - \$41.75 = \text{Average} = \$26.43 \times 45 \text{ (one-time purchase)} = \$1,189.35$$

Aluminum Dissection Pan Set:

$$\$11.60 - \$17.00 = \text{Average} = \$14.30 \times 45 \text{ (one-time purchase)} = \$643.50$$

**TOTAL Cost of dissection sets and pans = \$1,832.85**

#### Cat

Price Range for 1 cat: \$42.95 - \$105.00 = Average = \$73.98 x 135 (for the 3 years) = \$9,987.30

Frog

Price Range for 1 frog: \$4.85 - \$18.50 = Average = \$11.68 x 135 (for the 3 years) = \$1,576.80

Fetal Pig

Price Range for 1 fetal pig: \$15.75 - \$26.25 = Average = \$21.00 x 135 (for the 3 years) = \$2,835.00

Dogfish

Price Range for 1 dogfish: \$6.00 - \$21.00 = Average = \$13.50 x 135 (for the 3 years) = \$1,822.50

**TOTAL Cost of animal specimens = \$16,221.60**

**TOTAL cost for dissection supplies and specimens = \$18,054.45**

HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Cat

BioLab Cat Virtual Lab (Unlimited Site License)	=	\$1,069.95
Ward's Pregnant Cat Model	=	\$492.70
Carolina The Anatomy of the Cat (DVD)	=	\$72.95
<b>TOTAL =</b>		<b>\$1,635.60</b>

Frog

Digital Frog 2.5 – Building Site License (Networkable CD-ROM and workbook)	=	\$884.00
Ward's Realistic Frog Models (Female and Male)	=	\$326.00
Carolina The Anatomy of the Frog (DVD)	=	\$57.50
<b>TOTAL =</b>		<b>\$1,267.50</b>

Fetal Pig

BioLab Fetal Pig Virtual Lab (Unlimited Site License)	=	\$1,069.95
Ward's Fetal Pig Model	=	\$399.50
Carolina The Anatomy of the Fetal Pig (DVD)	=	\$69.95
<b>TOTAL =</b>		<b>\$1,539.40</b>

Dogfish

BioLab Fish Virtual Lab (Unlimited Site License)	=	\$1,069.95
Ward's Pregnant Shark Model	=	\$366.70
Carolina The Anatomy of the Shark (DVD)	=	\$59.95
<b>TOTAL =</b>		<b>\$1,496.60</b>

**TOTAL cost for humane educational alternatives = \$5,939.10**

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<b>ANIMAL DISSECTIONS TOTAL</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$18,054.45</b>
<b>HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES TOTAL</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>\$5,939.10</b>

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**COST SAVINGS OF HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES**  
**\$12,115.35**

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