

COTON RESCUE

UCARE

As breeds gain popularity the number of rescue situations usually increase, sometimes dramatically. Sadly, Cotons de Tulear have not escaped this trend. A rapidly increasing number of people are drawn to the breed because of its small size and clown like personality. Many potential buyers have educated themselves about the Coton de Tulear and will be wonderful and dependable owners. However, an alarming and growing number of others are woefully under-informed and/or unprepared for the commitment of dog ownership. Unforeseen situations can, and do, come up after a dog is brought into the home that make keeping the animal impossible, e.g., serious illness of the owner. However, the majority of reasons dogs are in need of rescue could have been anticipated and avoided, e.g., health and temperament issues, maintenance costs, grooming requirements, exercise needs, etc. Responsible pet ownership requires an honest and factual assessment of whether a specific breed is right for you. Not all breeds fit all lifestyles.

Much as we love other “white fuzzy dogs”, **UCARE** is devoted only to the rescue of purebred Cotons de Tulear. Cotons rescued by **UCARE** have been obtained for a variety of reasons from various sources. For example, some of our rescues have been acquired directly from puppy mills (commercial dog breeding facilities where hundreds of dogs are raised in unhealthy conditions with lack of proper food, water, and medical care) and shelters. Others are released to **UCARE** by an owner who can no longer care for the dog or by a family member in instances where the owner has passed away while others come to us because the owner(s) did not realize the commitment that is required to be the guardian of any dog, let alone one as special as a Coton. Regardless of the circumstances by which the Coton is released to **UCARE**, our first step in the process is to find a foster home so that the dog can be evaluated and receive proper medical treatment, if necessary (which can be as minimal as vaccinations or as extensive as surgery). The evaluation process is critical to ensure that the right match of adopter and Coton is made. The foster home is an interim step and provides a critical service to **UCARE** and the potential adopter prior to permanent placement in a forever home.

UCARE is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charity established for the purpose of rescuing homeless Cotons, preventing animal abuse, and educating the public about animal welfare. **UCARE** is NOT an extension of any national Coton club in compliance with the IRS rules governing non-profit charities. However, we do work with any recognized Coton breed club if it is for the benefit of a particular Coton.

The steps to adopting a Coton from **UCARE** are:

- 1) A pre-adoption application can be found on the **UCARE** website, <http://www.cotonrescue.us>. Copy and paste it into a document file, fill it out, and mail it to the address on the form. This information will be reviewed so that when a Coton becomes available that matches your needs, you will be contacted for the initial interview. It is critical that the applicant fill out the document as accurately and thoroughly as possible.
- 2) A **UCARE** representative will call you if there is a Coton available that you might be interested in adopting. At that time, the rescuer will discuss the dog and its behavior to determine if the applicant and the dog appear to be a good match. However, remember Cotons are a rare breed so patience is a necessity and our concern is to match the Coton with the best forever home possible – regardless of how long you've been on the waiting list!
- 3) If the initial interview appears to be positive for both you and the Coton, the rescuer will contact your vet reference, personal reference, and schedule a home visit.
- 4) All Cotons rescued by **UCARE** are spayed/neutered prior to placement in the adopter's home. We only provide companion animals and do not participate in assisting with someone's breeding program or interest in breeding a Coton.
- 5) When the decision is made to place the dog in the adopter's home, the adopter will be required to complete the Adoption Contract. The Adoption Contract specifies the care that the rescued Coton must receive and has a clause that requires the adopter to return the dog to **UCARE** if the adopter can no longer care for the dog.
- 6) We do ask that you make a donation to **UCARE** as well as cover certain other expenses, such as medical or transportation. These donations and costs vary but will always be discussed with you in depth prior to any final decision. Although the combined amount of the donation and other costs will generally be considerably less than if you purchased a Coton from a reputable breeder, we also want you to be committed to the fact that the care of a Coton does include expenses along the way, just like any other dog.

FAQs About Rescued Cotons

- **Where do most of the Cotons requiring rescue come from?** Most Cotons come from owners who are no longer able to care for them because of changing life circumstances or issues with the dog's health or behavior.

All known behavioral issues are fully disclosed to potential adopters prior to placement by **UCARE**. In some circumstances, **UCARE** will provide rehabilitative training prior to placement. That decision is made on a case by case basis.

• **How long will I have to wait for a rescued Coton?** This is a tough question to answer. While the number is growing, thankfully situations where Cotons require rescue are still infrequent. Thus your wait could be very long or you may never be called. You will only be contacted if we have a potential match for you. If you should adopt another dog in the interim, please notify us so we can remove your application from our files. We place the right dog in the right home, regardless of the order in which applications have been received.

• **Can I get a puppy?** Dogs younger than two rarely come into the rescue program.

• **Can I breed my rescued Coton?** Absolutely NOT. All Cotons placed by **UCARE** are spayed/neutered prior to placement.

• **Can I “show” my rescued dog?** No. Again, rescued dogs will be spayed or neutered prior to placement and thus ineligible for showing in conformation. However, they would be eligible for agility or similar competitions.

• **How do adult Cotons adapt to their new homes and families?** Adult Cotons are very loyal to their humans yet do surprisingly well in new homes. The bonding time can take a while — easily 3 months to a year — but generally they begin to settle into the routine within a month. Don't despair if your new Coton “acts up” – just remember what he/she has been through and the patience of you and your family is imperative in making your new companion feel comfortable.

• **I don't have time/energy for a puppy. Is an adult dog a better choice for me?** Not necessarily. Many rescued Cotons have had little or no training and may have behavior issues that require the same amount of vigilance that a puppy requires. In general, the careful supervision needed for a smooth transition is less for an adult rescue dog but it is still necessary. Adults require the same amount of planning and care that a pup does. Your new adult dog will need to learn the rules of your home. If you are an inexperienced dog owner or have never adopted an adult dog, we recommend that you engage a behaviorist/trainer to help in the transition. This is especially important if you already have other animals in your household that will be making an adjustment as well. We recommend that you contact the APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) and search for a certified trainer in your area. The rescue group will not provide monetary assistance for the training, except under unusual circumstances. It is critical that the training be commenced

immediately to ensure a smooth transition for all involved, both human and canine.

• **Cotons are so expensive. Can I get one cheaper through a rescue program?** **UCARE** will ask for a donation to help defray rescue expenses. The amount of the donation will vary depending on the age, health and temperament of the dog. The range for adoption is usually between \$350 to \$500. Rarely do these amounts cover the expenses incurred by the rescue group to rehabilitate a dog and get it medically ready for rescue. If the dog needs to be transported from the foster home to the adopter, it is incumbent upon the adopter to provide transportation. The cost of hiring a courier to transport the dog by air generally runs about \$350 dollars to fly in the cabin. Not all Cotons will fit under the seat of an airplane so that must be taken into consideration as well.

HOWEVER, although the expense of adopting is much less than buying a Coton from a REPUTABLE breeder, one must factor basic living expenses and health care in their adoption decision. Cotons can suffer from many different health issues that can be expensive over the life of the dog. Annual check-ups, vaccinations, and periodic teeth cleaning are necessary for minimum basic care. If you are not proficient in dog grooming, you must also include professional grooming fees in your cost estimate. Should the dog require surgery for a more serious illness, the cost of surgery can be thousands of dollars. Consequently, a rescued dog may be less expensive to obtain but the ongoing costs associated with its care will mirror those associated with a dog obtained from a breeder.

• **I got my Coton from a breeder but can't take care of it any longer; what should I do?** Coton breeders who abide by their respective club's Code of Ethics will take responsibility for every dog they place on this earth. That would include taking the dog back if an owner is no longer able to care for the dog or providing for the dog in a temporary setting until a forever home can be secured. Your first contact, therefore, should be with your breeder. If you contact **UCARE**, one of our first questions is going to be – who is the breeder and have you talked to him/her.

If **UCARE** is notified by a breeder that he/she has a dog available for placement, **UCARE** may help the breeder find a home for that dog as we have many more applicants than available dogs and are happy to assist. In those cases, the adoption agreement will be between the ADOPTER and the BREEDER. Breeders generally ask the person who adopts the dog to make a donation to **UCARE**. Expenses for the dog are covered by either the adopter or the breeder.

FOSTERING A COTON: If you are interested in fostering a Coton prior to its placement in a forever home, please request a Foster Home Application at

ucare@flash.net. Keep in mind that fostering does not guarantee permanent placement with you should you decide you would like to adopt the dog. We try to accommodate our foster families when possible, but the foster home must also apply for adoption for any dog they may be interested in making a permanent part of the family.

The goal of any dog rescue program is to become extinct because there are no longer dogs in need of this help. However, until that day comes, please do your best to understand the requirements of responsible dog ownership. Carefully research the breeds in which you are interested. And, if you become one of the wonderful individuals who rescues a Coton, or any dog, and provides that animal with a loving, secure and dependable home,
WE THANK YOU!