

## 10 Charities and Tips to Consider

**Here is a collection of 10 animal, environmental and similar charities for your consideration. See also a list of helpful charitable giving tips.**

12/3/2008

Photo courtesy of Heifer International/Darcy Kiefel

Caitlyn Johnson, 10, of Morgan County, Ky., in the Appalachian Mountains, with her East Valley Youth Goat Project goat.

### Before You Give

Click on these links to find tips for smart donors: [Top 10 Best Practices of Savvy Donors from Charity Navigator](#)

[Charitable Giving Guide for the Holiday Season from the Better Business Bureau](#) if you've decided to make charities part of your holiday gift giving, take a look at a few you may wish to consider ([Smart donor tips? Click here>>](#)).

These 10 animal, environmental and similar charities have received the "OK" from Charity Navigator, the Better Business Bureau or both (in no particular order): The Humane Farming Association American Bird Conservancy World Wildlife Fund Earth Share Feeding America (formerly Second Harvest) Sanma -- Farm India (This link takes you to the page to help support water buffalos ) Earthworks American Veterinary Medical Foundation Farm Sanctuary Heifer International

You may also want to consider giving a gift membership to one of our favorite organizations that supports the conservation of rare breeds of livestock:

[American Livestock Breeds Conservancy](#)

### Before You Donate

Consider the following tips before deciding to support a charity.

[Top 10 Best Practices of Savvy Donors from Charity Navigator](#): Be proactive in your giving. Have targeted outcome goals rather than blanket goals for your giving.

Hang up the phone. Eliminate the middleman: Send your contribution directly to the charity rather than contributing over the phone.

Be careful of sound-alike names. Take the time to uncover the difference.

Confirm 501(c)(3) status. Check it at <http://apps.irs.gov/app/pub78>.

Check the charity's commitment to donor's rights. Seek out charities that want partners and not merely donors by checking if the charity has a donor privacy policy whereby the organization promises to never sell or trade the donor's contact information.

Obtain copies of financial records. Most efficient charities spend at least 75% of their budget on their programs and services and less than 25% on fundraising and administrative fees.

Review executive compensation. Sufficient and competitive compensation is important.

Ask about program results. Talk to charity representatives about accomplishments, goals and challenges.

Concentrate your giving: Spreading your money among multiple organizations not only results in your mail box filling up with more appeals, it also diminishes the possibility of any of those groups bringing about substantive change as each

charity is wasting a large percentage of your gift on fundraising and overhead expenses.

Share your intentions and make a long-term commitment. See yourself as a partner in the charity's efforts to bring about change.

[Read more about these tips>>](#)

Top

Charitable Giving Guide for the Holiday Season from the Better Business Bureau:When in doubt, check out unfamiliar charities.

Take a minute or two to "think" before you give--ask for written information on the charity's programs and finances.

Giving later might be better. Never feel pressured to give on the spot. Legitimate charities will welcome your money tomorrow.

Watch out for cases of mistaken identity; some charity names sound alike.

Don't accept vague claims.

If a charity sends you greeting cards, address labels or other merchandise with an appeal for donations, you are not obligated to make a donation or pay for the items.

Watch out for charity fraud. Legitimate charities do not demand donations.

Consider donating food, toys, clothing, other items--and even your time--during the holidays.

If you want to take a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes, make sure to verify the organization's tax-exempt status first. Check out a charity's tax-exempt status.

[Read more about these tips>>](#)

Top