Special Report on Animal Overpopulation: Breeding Surplus Dogs and Cats Causes Suffering

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Breeding Surplus
Dogs and Cats
Causes Suffering

Not so long ago a two year old baby was killed in St. Louis County, Mo., by a pack of stray, starving dogs. Some of you may have read about it. All of us, from time to time, read of abandoned, hunger-crazed dogs attacking livestock and other animals.

These tragedies stir public anger. They often provoke retaliation in which scores of innocent dogs are killed. They create, for many people, a hatred of dogs.

And, yet, the dogs are not usually to blame. The hunger-driven, half-crazed dog pack is simply a byproduct of the greatest cruelty facing the humane movement: the overbreeding of dogs and cats.

No cruelty is more widespread than this overbreeding. No cruelty is so insidious. No cruelty is so hard to fight.

Overbreeding has created a surplus of nearly 50 million dogs and cats. These animals are unwanted and homeless. Some of them—the lucky ones—will get a quick, merciful death at humane society shelters. Most, however, haven’t even the hope of being reached and protected from suffering in the 3,000 or more communities without humane societies. Instead, they roam the country—starving, thirsting, suffering.

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... spaying female animals and
scale. Many factors contribute to
shops, for example, are partly to
ferring from disease and injury.
This is suffering on a massive
scale. Many factors contribute to
it. Commercial interests like pet
shops, for example, are partly to
blame in suggesting there is money
in breeding puppies and kittens.
Veterinarians who charge high fees
altering males are partly at fault.
But most of the blame lies with
misguided animal lovers and hu-
mene societies that adopt out un-
neutered dogs and cats.

Often, pet owners think they are
doing a kindness by letting their
animals breed. The stark reality is,
however, any pet owner who
breeds animals he does not intend
to keep permanently himself con-
tributes to cruelty and suffering.

It is ironic most of our
animal owners who permit sur-
plus breeding cause the greatest
problems of overcrowding, dispo-
sition, and abandonment.

Animal owners who permit sur-
plus breeding are also the cause of
the distasteful killing of animals by
humane societies and public
pounds. They—not the humane so-
cieties or pounds—pass the death
sentence by allowing the breeding.

By now she eats anything she can find, and it
is a rotten, wormy, disease-laden
diet. Dogs and other animals chase
her. She is almost hit by passing
cars. Exposure to freezing nights
almost kills her, but your cat is
tough...

"I want to tell you what hap-
penned to your cat after you
dropped her off (abandoned her)."
Mrs. Thomas Stoner of Waynes-
boro, Pa., wrote. "The first few
days she stayed just about where
you dropped her waiting for you
to come back. Then hunger drove
her on along the road, searching
for food and shelter. By now she
eats anything she can find, and it
is a rotten, wormy, disease-laden
diet. Dogs and other animals chase
her. She is almost hit by passing
cars. Exposure to freezing nights
almost kills her, but your cat is
tough..."

...I found your cat today. She
was beside my mailbox, right where
you wanted her to go to that farm-
house in the country. Only trouble
was your cat couldn’t see me be-
cause her eyes were puffed shut
with infection, every bone showed
through her dirty hide, and she
couldn’t eat because her stomach
was already full, distended with
worms and by starvation. Too
weak to stand, she made a little
noise at me—but it was for you, her
rightful owner, to hear. She is
dead now, but can you still believe
that you took care of her the hu-
mane way?"

Guilty of contributing to this ter-
rible problem are humane societies
and pounds which allow animals out
for adoption that have not been
spayed or altered. These organiza-
tions add to the surplus and to
their own problems. Some of them are
actually afraid to mention spay-
ning or neutering; they think it
would reduce the number of ani-
mal's placed and, thus, reduce the
income from such placements.

Your Society carries on a con-
stant nationwide program to solve
the problem in its many aspects.
We are trying to make Americans
aware of this senseless cruelty. We
have published articles in hun-
dreds of newspapers, magazines,
and other publications. We have
distributed millions of leaflets like
"10,000 per Hour" and "From
Cause to Effect." Columnists and
radio commentators have spread
our message. It has been "plugged"
on national and local television
programs.

These efforts and establishment of
spaying clinics have had some
effect, of course. There is a grow-
ing awareness of the problem.
Spaying and neutering clinics have
been set up by humane societies in
New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois,
Michigan, Massachusetts, and other
states. Others are planned in Cali-
ifornia and Nevada. As part of its
overall program, the National Hu-
mane Education Center sponsors
a spaying and neutering clinic for
pet owners in the Virginia, Mary-
land, and District of Columbia
areas.

Even the nation’s veterinarians
are becoming more conscious of
their obligation in this area. A re-
cent editorial in the influential
"Modern Veterinary Practice" mag-
azine implies that veterinarians
have as much an obligation to the
"less affluent segment of the popu-
lation" as to those who can afford
"upper-echelon care."

The professional magazine says
veterinarians should turn more of
their attention to the methods for
handling unwanted animals. It
states, "To almost every town and
city better rapport with humane
groups and animal control agencies
would help disadvantaged kids ob-
tain pets—properly vaccinated and
spayed—at prices they could afford."

The emphasis here, of course, is
on the vaccinating and spaying of
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Conference Call!

ou should have received y now our brochure on the 970 National Leadership onference. Make your reser vation now. Those re ceived first will be booked to the Avalon Inn. When e Inn is full, other per­­ons seeking reservations will be accommodated at e nearby Holiday Inn.

Plan to be with us on October 8-11. We need your elp in solving major ani­nal welfare problems.

'es! I want to help.

[ ] Send me more information.

I enclose my gift of $__________.

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NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
1145 19th St., N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

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This little fellow is looking for a home. But, of course, there aren't enough homes to go around. Ignorant and thoughtless owners who allow promiscuous breeding give pets like this a poor chance of life.

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pets. It is clear the veterinary pro­fession is aware of the surplus breeding problem.

Much more needs to be done. Even with a continuing HSUS national program, the scattered sporadic efforts at the local level are not enough to cope with the problem. It will take a total, nation­wide effort if we are to prevent countless millions of puppies and kittens being born every year to be killed, abandoned, or otherwise cruelly mistreated.

Education is the first need. We know the facts and we publish them. To be really effective, however, distribution must grow. This means educational publicity in local newspapers, school papers, club bulletins, on radio and television, and before every possible civic organ­ization through well informed speakers.

Persuasion of pet owners is also important. If we can get their co­operation, a community spaying program can easily be organized. It may, indeed, be possible to set up a low cost spaying and neuter­ing clinic.

Then, too, there is need to co­operate with local veterinarians, city and county pounds, cat and kennel clubs, wildlife conservation groups, Boy and Girl Scout organi­zations and the like.

And, of course, legislation is needed. We must have laws to discourage breeding and to encour­age spaying. We must have laws to protect animals by putting penalties on their owners instead of automatic death sentences on the animals. Your Society has de­tailed information on how you can take part in this great effort. Send for it today. There is no better way in which you can help stop massive animal suffering.