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The first reduced fee spay/neuter clinic in Canada reports some interesting and useful results after its first year in operation. More than 12,000 surgeries were performed during 1976-1977 by the Vancouver Regional Branch of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
The Branch is responsible for animal control in 11 municipalities around Vancouver. Its policy is to neuter every animal leaving the shelters.

Secretary-manager C. Jack Hornes reports that while pet owners may not have a genuine concern about the overpopulation problem, they will respond to the advantages to them of having their pets sterilized. Consequently, the branch publicizes these advantages whenever possible -- better health for the animal, reduced tendency in males to roam, elimination of the inconveniences of the female "heat" period, and of course, prevention of unwanted litters.

While castration has traditionally been unacceptable to many pet owners, the ratio of castrations to spays in Vancouver is well above that in many similar clinics. Hornes attributes this to significantly lower license fees for castrated males.

There had been some concern about the clinic being used by people who could easily afford the services of a private veterinarian, so pet owners coming to the clinic during the first year were surveyed about why they came.

Of the dog owners, 83% said they can now afford to have their animals neutered because of the clinic (their dogs were generally the larger breeds), and this reason was given by 94% of the cat owners. Twelve percent of the dog owners were having their dogs sterilized to qualify for lower license fees, and 5% of the dog owners (6% of the cat owners) said they wanted a bargain.

More than 1000 animals were pregnant when sterilized -- so more than 4000 animals were prevented from being born only during the first month of operation. Hornes reports that an amazing 91% of the owners were not aware of their pets' pregnancies.

The clinic was opened with funds from several municipalities and from humane groups and private citizens -- however, it was viable after the first month of operation.

Hornes has traveled to Puerto Rico, Dallas, Texas, Columbus, Ohio, and other locations as a consultant on similar spay/neuter facilities.
Information service begins

Texas A&M University has established an Animal Control Information Service, operated by the University Center for Urban Programs and the C. Sterling Evans Library.

The service staff gathers information on animal control laws, animal handling procedures, shelter operation, public education and other topics, and then organizes and stores the information in a computer system for easy retrieval. Information sources include municipal and county animal control departments, pet food companies, state health and agricultural departments and humane societies.

For further details on contributing to or receiving material from the Animal Control Information Service, contact the Center for Urban Programs, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

Adoptors forfeit fewer deposits

Fewer pet adoptors are forfeiting their spay/neuter deposits at the Humane Society of Kent County (Mich.) since a lawsuit last summer over adoption policies.

The society filed a lawsuit against a local family for failing to have an adopted animal sterilized as required in the adoption contract. The society demanded that the animal -- a female Dachshund -- be returned. The family allowed the dog to have one litter of puppies, saying they planned to have her spayed when one litter was produced.

In a press release, the society pointed out that one litter of four puppies can result in 4,000 offspring in seven years' time.

The outcome was a consent judgment in which the adoptors acknowledged that the contract was binding and had the dog spayed -- and the society dropped the suit.

Betsy Pullen, director of the society, reports that the suit has had a lasting effect on the community and is regarded as a victory for the society even though there was no trial.

The area newspaper has given the society more favorable coverage since the incident.

Pullen says that forfeitures of spay/neuter deposits have dropped because of an improved contract and because the society has demonstrated that the sterilization requirement will be enforced. She advises other societies and animal control agencies to consider such legal action to help combat the problem of adoptors not fulfilling sterilization requirements.

The film is available for loan or purchase from the Progressive Animal Welfare Society, Box 1037, Lynnwood, Wash. 98037. The purchase price is $50.

The pamphlet Saving Oiled Seabirds gives instructions for responding to oil spill emergencies involving seabirds. Single copies are available free from American Petroleum Institute, 2101 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. (Please note that this is not the HSUS address, although it is similar.)

If your organization or agency publishes a newsletter or other periodical, remember to add The Humane Society of the United States to your mailing list. Send two copies of your publication to: Library, HSUS, 2100 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

The film Saving Oiled Seabirds is available for loan or purchase from the HSUS. Single copies are available for $14 from Boulder Humane Society, 2525 55th St., Boulder, Colo. 80301.

(For groups interested in producing their own filmstrip, the HSUS Humane Educator Linda S. Puckett reports that the original cost of production was $800, some of which is recovered through sales of the filmstrip. The materials were not produced by professionals, however, the participants were reimbursed.)

The PAWS Film is a 10-minute introduction to the problem of pet overpopulation and the resulting necessity for animal destruction. The film shows shelter life, and as the shelter becomes more crowded with animals, leads gradually to the actual euthanasia of animals. It ends with a cat looking directly at the viewer in a plea for aid. There is no narration, but the cello score has been described as very effective.

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This animal adoption ticket was used successfully at the National Humane Education Center, Inc. in Virginia for several years.

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Multnomah County (Ore.) Animal Control gives rebates to dog owners who have their pets sterilized.

Applicants for the rebate must be residents of Multnomah County, have licenses for their dogs and have had household incomes of $10,000 or less the previous year.

The only proof of income required is a statement of affirmation signed by the applicant -- anyone who falsifies such a statement can be prosecuted for perjury, and that fact appears on the statement. The county believes requiring more detailed proof would be a burden to check and a deterrent to applicants. There is no attempt either to screen out applicants who have received such assistance elsewhere.

The county distributes an attractive short pamphlet describing the rebate and explaining what spay and neuter operations are.

When the surgery is done, the applicant has the veterinarian fill out a form supplied by Animal Control, and this form is presented at the county offices. The applicant receives a check for $20 for a spay operation, or $15 for a neuter operation, from Animal Control funds.

Some of the advantages of a rebate system are:
- No capital investment in the form of building clinics for reduced fee spay/neuter operations was necessary.
- Administrative costs amount to less than 1% of the funds used in the program.
- Veterinarians find the rebate more acceptable than the county performing actual surgeries.
- Dog owners can go to veterinarians located near them and have surgeries done fairly quickly.
- Responsibility for the animal's health rests with the person's own veterinarian.
- The rebate can be increased to keep up with increasing surgery prices.

The rebates -- in combination with reduced license fees for sterilized animals, public education and strict law enforcement -- have reduced the estimated dog population in the county by 20,000 since 1974.

The Progressive Animal Welfare Society in Lynnwood, Wash., holds a snapshot contest for pet or wildlife photographs, with a $25 first prize. There is a $2 fee for the first entry, and a $1 fee for each additional entry.

PAWS does not attempt to return the entries, and the contestants are informed of this in the contest rules. The contest serves as a benefit for the PAWS building fund for a new shelter facility.

Programs like these serve to bring the animal welfare problem to the attention of the community and to encourage citizens to become involved -- as well as offering the potential for fund-raising and public relations. If your organization has developed a successful idea that can be adapted to other communities, write a brief description of it and send it to SHELTER SENSE. Each idea will be carefully considered for publication.

The City of Los Angeles presents an annual St. Francis of Assisi Award for humane treatment of animals. The award was conceived in 1971 by Mayor Tom Bradley, and entries are solicited from the public. The winner is selected by the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation Board of Commissioners.

Winners receive an inscribed oak plaque, and in past years, have included a family who opened their home to forgotten animals and a wildlife preservationist.

A companion award goes to an organization or individual in the media for outstanding journalistic effort on behalf of humane treatment of animals.

The Alexandria (Va.) Animal Control Department produced this billboard announcement to inform the public about the various functions of the animal shelter. The monthly rental of $400 is contributed by a local restaurant, and the artwork itself cost the shelter $70. The billboard has encouraged greater public interest in animal welfare.

Photographer Bonnie Smith found this vehicle in a North Carolina town and photographed it as an example of poor animal control. The animals are kept in an airless crate on a pickup truck with no disease control. Better conditions for them would be more humane and result in more community respect and cooperation for the dog wardens.
Fourteen animal welfare groups and government agencies in the Washington, D.C., area cooperated in Spay-Neuter Week 1978, March 26-April 1.

This approach to encouraging animal sterilization can be adapted to other communities, with possible expansion to a month-long effort.

The coalition developed a publicity campaign urging pet owners to have their animals sterilized, and the effort resulted in a three-fold increase in phone inquiries to the major reduced fee spay/neuter programs in the area. Veterinarians reportedly experienced a similar increase in surgery requests. Inquiries came in long after the week was over.

Project chairman Jerry Southern of United Humanitarians, Inc. (Washington Branch), said that each sponsor group contributed $25 (with some extra individual contributions), and that amount more than paid for printing and distribution of flyers and news releases. Friends of Montgomery County (Md.) Animals, Inc. purchased quarter-page advertisements in the Washington Post and The Washington Star. Spay-Neuter Week was also featured twice on local television news.

The materials gave the phone numbers of United Humanitarians, Inc., and Spay, Inc. -- callers were then referred to a reduced fee spay/neuter program in their area. Southern said a survey had been conducted to gather up-to-date information on area programs.

Southern predicts that Spay/Neuter Week will become an annual event. He recommends that organizations interested in such a program begin planning six months in advance and that the duties of all participants be clearly defined.

He believes the Washington effort was successful in motivating people who knew of the need for pet sterilization but had simply been procrastinating.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and The Humane Society of the United States have produced a three-part series of videotape programs on animal shelter management.

The series is called Changing Your Image, and each videotape is 15 minutes long.

Part I - Record Keeping - explains the necessity of keeping accurate records of shelter functions. Sample forms are provided.

Part II - Sanitation and Cleaning - demonstrates the most effective methods for shelter cleaning. It was taped at the Fairfax County (Va.) Animal Shelter.

Part III - Field Services - stresses the importance of professionalism and proper technique in animal handling and pickup.

The videotapes feature Phyllis Wright, HSUS director of animal sheltering and control. The series is believed to be the first use of video technology for training animal shelter personnel.

For further information, write HSUS Magazine, 2100 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

The HSUS 1978 Annual Conference will be held October 12-14 at the Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, Michigan.

Workshops of special interest to SHELTER SENSE readers will include: Animal Control, Euthanasia, Investigations, Improving Your Newsletter, Techniques for Humane Society Management and Establishing a General Accounting System for Humane Societies.

Presenters will include HSUS director of investigations Frantz Dantiler and investigator Phil Steward, HSUS editor Charles Frantz Dantzler and HSUS animal control specialist Phyllis Wright. The program also includes a talk by Dr. Michael Fox, noted author and lecturer on animal behavior.

For complete information, write HSUS Conference, 2100 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

There are two kinds of animal stories that will get good media coverage. One is the sweetly sentimental puppy, kitty or bunny tale, and the other is the shocking expose of animals suffering and dying.

The story that is difficult to tell is the daily nittiness of keeping dogs happy and out of people's hair. No one wants to hear about Mrs. Smith's petunias being dug up or Mr. Smith losing sleep because of a dog barking. But these are the problems animal control must attempt to solve most often.

Before one can educate the public through the media, one must educate the media itself. Television reporters are often young and usually have mostly city experience. They are under a great deal of pressure to get a lot of stories from new angles in a short time. They prefer to interview "on location" with a background that illustrates the story, but they can't allow more than half an hour or so for the actual shooting.

Stories are not scheduled until the morning of the day they are shot and if some exciting story breaks before they get to you, they may not show up.

The best way to establish rapport with TV people is to work up a clear, interesting angle, invite them to do a story on it, be available at their convenience, and come through with some vivid information.

If you can make a statement that has a little humor or a twist to it, you are less likely to hit the cutting room floor...

Facts and figures are good in small doses if you can illustrate them. For instance, a good way of illustrating how many pups can be prevented over a period of seven years, by keeping one female from breeding is to use dry lima beans and count them out by generations.

Continued on next page
If you start with a batch of four pups, half of them female, becoming fertile at six months and coming into heat every six months thereafter, the total in seven years will be 4,372 dogs -- about five pounds of beans. If you can make a statement that has a little humor or a twist to it, you are less likely to hit the cutting room floor when a taped interview is edited. Try something like: "Buy your dog a labor-saving device: a spay operation!"

Some of the hardest problems are lack of time, interviewers who cut you off before you tell the whole story and interviewers who over-edit what you say to the point of distorting your meaning. You are entitled, even obligated, to call the interviewer to account if he is unfair. Media people are not sacred or perfect.

In addition to news and feature interviews, you may also have the chance to be on a television or radio talk show where listeners at home use the phone to participate. Two skills are necessary to run this gauntlet. The first is the ability to predict what questions will be asked and prepare good solid answers, maybe making notes of statistics or other resources.

The second is concentrating on each question as it is asked, discerning what the person really wants to know and answering in a clear, useful way. Nothing costs you more points on a show of this kind than misunderstanding a question or giving an answer that has nothing to do with the issue.

Educating the public through the media means educating the media people themselves. Don't wait for them to come to you -- go to them. Go with facts and illustrations and ideas you can justify. Be honest with them, but also consider good timing and tactful presentation. Work at building personal friendships and a reputation for reliability and credibility with media people.

Multnomah County Animal Control

This message above can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer, for you to distribute at schools, shopping centers, libraries and other community locations. Remember to add your organization's name, address, and telephone number in the space by typing, typesetting or affixing your group letterhead. You can also purchase advertising space in your local newspapers for the reproducible or use it in your organization's newsletter or magazine.
When we first had the idea of publishing SHELTER SENSE, someone asked if the same publication could serve both a humane society and a governmental animal control department. It doesn't take long to see that the answer is yes. Despite the animosity that sometimes exists between the two, humane organizations and animal control agencies are (or should be) working toward the same ends: seeing that every animal has a responsible home and is not becoming a public nuisance or adding to the pet population.

By reducing the number of unwanted animals, the community reduces the cost of caring for strays in addition to reducing animal suffering. The goals of animal control and animal welfare are met at the same time.

The animal control agency and the humane group thus have good reason to work together in promoting the idea of responsible pet ownership -- pets should be properly inoculated, licensed, leashed and sterilized. The public must learn that owning a pet is not a right -- but can be a joy when the responsibility is accepted.

Animal control agencies themselves must accept their proper responsibility of efficient and humane animal regulation. Animal wardens need proper training, and the local ordinance must be sound and enforceable. This is the duty of the local government to pet owners and non-owners alike.

Humane societies must commit themselves to finding and implementing practical solutions to today's animal welfare problems, and to encouraging greater public participation.

Both societies and agencies must spend wisely the public money with which they operate.

We urge the local government and humane group in each community to shake hands and come out fighting -- not each other any longer but the real opponents -- irresponsibility, waste and cruelty to animals.