(No. 12) -- The Real Truth About the Surplus of Dogs and Cats

Humane Information Services, Inc.
THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THE SURPLUS OF DOGS AND CATS

Humanitarians believe that the most important over-all human problem is dealing with the tremendous surplus of dogs and cats. They prove by giving around 36 percent of their contributions for humane work to organizations dealing primarily with this problem.

Dogs and cats more than any other animal beset us with problems. A dog may well be a friend, but the dog finds people to be so wonderful (they can’t be the same people we know) that they are guilty of all the rules (except Emily’s Teddy -- she is his slave). The cat, despite its apparent independence, is just as much of a slave as is the dog. Man, flattered by the dog’s devotion and sexually attracted by the cat’s soft femininity, cannot separate from all others. It is this very affinity between man and his dogs and cats that makes the problem of dogs and cats just ordinary animals, the surplus soon would disappear. The unwanted, unloved, unneeded animals are now knocked in the head, like bull calves on a dairy farm, hunted down like rabbits, or used as food for people who would eat more meat as they are humans. But the animal lover who feeds his pet will be horrified to think of feeding his meat to his enemy. So, when more dogs and cats are born than can be used as pets, they become a problem, not cause for celebration.

Approximately because of fear that they might lose members and contributions, humane societies have never come out with the real truth about the great surplus of dogs and cats, which causes such a tremendous amount of animal suffering and absorbs the greater part of our efforts and resources. Also, these same communities are afraid of losing members and they know that the only way to preserve them is to cover up the problem with such misleading approximations. The one that seems to be most frequently cited is that made by a good intentioned but illogical animal lover, who feed dogs and cats from surplus and it by the estimated number of females in the shelters and pounds in the area would be nearly all of the Humane Society of the United States. This is an impressive round figure, but it would eliminate the necessity of "putting up" most of the surplus dogs and cats.

Dealing with Symptoms

All kinds of suggestions for dealing with the surplus have been offered, and some accepted. Perhaps the most common are spaying and alterations, of course, thinking that in this way the number of dogs and cats would be reduced. But the animal lover who is interested in the "surplus" problem, will tell you of the enormous difficulty of getting your recommendations accepted, let alone carried out.

How Many Millions?

There are many estimates of the size of this surplus as there are humanitarians making such estimates. You start with one formula describing the number of surviving puppies or kittens per litter and so many litters per year, and assume that they are killed, or starved, or knocked in the head by other animals, and start a new cycle of breeding. This interesting exercise in arithmetic soon gets you about the same result, which is that the human population is only as much as the humanitarain, so he takes the potential annual production of one female, multiplies it by the number of females in the United States, 29,000,000. But the dog or cat population, makes an allowance for the number of females which are dying old and disease and, comes up with a total figure which is closer to reality.

Such estimates can be only the rudest of approximations. The one that seems to be most frequently cited is that made a good many years ago by the late Fred Myers, founder of the Humane Society of the United States. It is a very impressive figure of 10,000,000 every hour in the United States alone, or nearly 50 million annually.

We have no idea how many millions in excess of the number that can find good homes. The remaining millions exist continually menaced by the threat of painful death by drowning or other destruction in infancy, or a life of suffering before finding a home, in the hands of irresponsible owners or by starvation, disease and accident.

Many humanitarians see concerned about the surplus of dogs and cats or other animals and their in the United States, or people in the United States. We have said that the surplus dog or cat in any foreign country supports only a very small community in the United States. It is just as cut and cuddly as ours. In fact, it is a descendant of the same animal. There are millions of dogs and cats in other parts of the world.

In some other parts of the world the dog and cat populations are not as large in relation to the human population, although the world as a whole the situation approaches that in our own country. And conditions for the surplus frequency are far worse. We have been informed that in one South American city the dog catchers facilitate the capture of strays by using dog- trained pitchforks. In another, a recent campaign to reduce the dog population relied largely on the use of cyanide poison for people or other animal lovers who are interested in the care of dogs and cats, but it seems so simple! As Roger Caras put it in a recent syndicated newspaper column: "The answer (to the surplus problem) is simple. Birth control -- spaying and altering -- or, neutering, Humane Information Services indeed wishes that "the answer" were that simple. But the truth is that although humanitarians, through the years, have been saying the same thing, birth or no actual progress has been made in reducing the surplus. In fact, it probably has been increasing.

So sweet -- but part of the surplus! (Photograph from All Florida Magazine)

Education for Pet Owners

The most commonly encountered idea about how to prevent surplus breeding is "adoption." Just print some leaflet, such as the excellent one issued by the HSUS entitled "10,000 per hour", run repetitions in animal publications, and write letters to newspaper editors, showing the great need for spaying all female dogs and cats. The trouble is that it doesn’t work.

Most of the literature merely circulates among humanitarians, who read, click their tongues in approval, and, send the pamphlet or article on to some other humanitarian. Even here at Humane Information Services we have never seen a response from "the cat people", from our good friends who apparently think we are unaware of the need for spaying, and need to be convinced!

Even the spaying propaganda read by many of the general public is generally ineffective. The reasons that people keep unspayed female dogs and cats appear to be to be more cogent than the generalized arguments about a surplus which they cannot really visualize.

It is up to everyone to have their children come into intimate contact with the beginning of life (she should also take them to a euthanasia chamber to show them the ending of life). The kids will find homes for the puppies or kittens (the musical chair arguments about adoptability notwithstanding).

Moreover, the mother is really not so interested in the suffering of some other animals -- it is her children she is concerned about.

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For others, who view any prospective "blessed event" for an animal in the household as just a nuisance, the educational material can be tailored to their particular humanitarians entitement. The unspayed female animal is adopted because the child for whom she was given requires her as a playmate. She was chosen because the parents, who think she might be a fine cat and dog, don't think she might be a fine cat and dog. The unspayed female animal is spayed because the owner believes that the child's well-being is at stake. She was chosen because the parents, who think she might be a fine cat and dog, don't think she might be a fine cat and dog.

What it really comes down to is that these people do not want to go to the trouble of possessing an animal that has not been spayed. Those who think enough of their pet to give it a good home and veterinary care will get spayed, unspayed, or spayed without surgery. It is the great bulk of pet owners who acquire their pets casually, and who find it equally easy to ignore the problem of the breeding surplus. They are not reached by the propaganda, or it is easy to ignore the problem.

This writer has neighbors who love and are kind to animals, and feed them bountiful servings of pet foods. The neighbors have grandchildren who love animals, and who during the past few years have gone through a variety of animals, including several females that had litters. We have presented them with copies of humane literature about spaying and the surplus. We have argued politely but vigorously. But still the procession of animals continues. They are9, easily spayed or removed, and are lost, strayed or stolen, cost them little or nothing. They take in under the mistaken belief that they are providing a home for an animal that otherwise might wind up at the humane society shelter. They don't believe in killing pets.

There are only three ways to get these well-meaning but thoughtless people who won't invest real money in a pet to find it easy to get rid of the surplus.

Subsidized Spaying

A number of humane societies have attempted to reduce the costs of spaying to pet owners who presumably cannot afford it, by subsidising the fee paid veterinarians or providing spaying clinics where the services are free to pet owners. Many veterinarians, however, contribute little or nothing to this real answer to the surplus problem. Actually, it contributes only negligibly to the reduction in the surplus. While most of the money spent by humane societies was devoted to this one program, it would make only a small dent in the surplus.

Let us assume that there are ten million unspayed female cats and dogs that are potentially capable of reproducing within a year. Each one will cost $50 for spaying. Or make it five million and 25 cents -- whatever figure you wish within reason. At $50 per animal spayed, this would amount to $500 million, or $50 million, or more dollars. Whatever the figure used, the result is far beyond the capacity of the human society to finance.

An analogy would be the use of funds, by someone of good will, to finance the escape of some potential draft-dodgers to Canada. This would save the particular humanitarians and society that participate in the program from the full brunt of the draft. Similarly, many of the humane societies and veterinarians still believe that the same funds could be used more effectively in dealing with the surplus problem.

Reducing Spaying Fees

If any veterinarians read this -- and they very likely will find it easy to ignore the problem.

Vets do a lot of "good" for dogs and cats, and they certainly do a lot more "good" for people than they do for the society of dogs and cats. We have argued politely but vigorously. But still the procession of animals continues. There is only one way to stop this. It is to make it five million dollars or more for an animal, that otherwise might wind up at the humane society shelter. We don't believe in killing pets.

There are only three ways to get these well-meaning, but thoughtless people who won't invest real money in a pet to find it easy to get rid of the surplus.

If the average spaying fee could be reduced even to $10 paid by the owner and $50 paid by his veterinarian, the surplus would increase. Many veterinarians, however, contribute little or nothing to this real answer to the surplus problem.

For an animal, that otherwise might wind up at the humane society shelter, it is easy to get rid of one million pets casually, and who find it easy to ignore the problem.

We have argued politely but vigorously. But still the procession of animals continues. There is only one way to stop this. It is to make it five million dollars to $10 paid by the owner and $50 paid by his veterinarian. Or make it five million and 25 cents -- whatever figure you wish within reasonable bounds.

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The Ralston Purina Company says: "We do have a well-planned approach to reducing the surplus problem. However, we have not yet developed a method of reducing the surplus that is really effective."

The Upjohn Company reports: "We do have a well-planned approach to reducing the surplus problem. However, we have not yet developed a method of reducing the surplus that is really effective."

The Halston Purina Company says: "We have been working on anti-estrus compounds that will be developed in the next few years."

The F.D.A. would probably say that we should have no expectation of a drug being developed in the near future, and meanwhile the problem of the surplus continues to worsen. The problem of the surplus continues to worsen, and meanwhile the problem of the surplus continues to worsen. The problem of the surplus continues to worsen.

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Penalties for Owning Unspayed Females

Still another approach to the surplus problem is to make it too expensive for people to own unspayed females. This would involve licensing of pet owners and requiring an annual fee for the privilege of keeping different categories of pets.

The present system of licensing, and therefore of controlling pet ownership, is largely a revenue producer rather than a control device.猫 owners are not licensed, places enforcement at the wrong point. It should be directed at the owner, not the animal. One reason why cat licensing is rarely attempted and even more rarely successful is that conditions in some shelters and pounds are constructed, but not being operated properly. It uses carbon monoxide from an approved chamber. We ascertained that this chamber had been inspected and tested twice by a field representative of the American Humane Association, and found to be in good working order.

The humane movement could put a tremendous crimp in the surplus of dogs and cats, and its appeal to municipal officials and others of local humane societies could be made up its collective mind to do so. It will not take the necessary steps, however, unless it is encouraged by the national humane societies. The time may be coming when local humane societies insist upon such action.

We would appreciate hearing from our readers about this whole problem. Do you agree or disagree with this analysis? Are you sufficiently informed with the need for someone to raise your voice and make it heard? Especially? We expect that the volume of mail on this subject will preclude individual replies in our Report. We will, however, be interested in your suggestions. Don't just sit back and criticize other people for not doing something. Let's hear from you.

GREAT INTEREST IN EUTHANASIA ARTICLE

A few of our members have written to say that they enjoy reading our comprehensive and informative articles on the subject of euthanasia. We are going to translate them into action.

The answer is that the articles themselves. They are written to develop and further our euthanasia programs. This is well illustrated by the article on euthanasia in our last Report. It outlines the development of an effective program to improve euthanasia in local humane shelters and pounds. It is one thing to know what needs to be done, and another to arouse sufficient interest in the problem to get shelter operators to take advantage of this knowledge when it becomes available.

The article produced a big response from our readers, as indicated by the number of letters we have received from shelter directors who have just been completed with the same results. We have just been completed with the same results. We have just been completed with the same results.
New President of the Florida Federation of Humane Societies

Miss Helen E. Smith, who has served the organization during the past four years as president, and chairman of the Committee on Legislation, of the Florida Federation of Humane Societies, has been compelled by the pressure of other humane work to resign both of these positions. She is succeeded by Mrs. Floyd L. Thompson, who will continue to serve as director.

The new president, appointed by the newly-elected directors at the annual meeting held in Daytona Beach on May 28, is Mrs. Kenneth R. H. Bowey, Jr., of West Palm Beach. Mrs. Bowey has been the executive director of the Humane Society of Greater Miami and chairman of the Southern States Humane Federation. Communications regarding the Federation’s activities are directed to Mrs. Bowey, who is also the director of the Humane Society of Greater Miami and chairman of the Southern States Humane Federation. Communications regarding the Federation’s activities are directed to Mrs. Bowey, who is also the director of the Humane Society of Greater Miami and chairman of the Southern States Humane Federation. Communications regarding the Federation’s activities are directed to Mrs. Bowey, who is also the director of the Humane Society of Greater Miami and chairman of the Southern States Humane Federation. 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