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ANIMAL CONTROL IN PIMA COUNTY
AND TUCSON, ARIZONA

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Human Demographics

Pima County, Arizona, which includes the city of Tucson, is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the Southwest. In 1980, the populations of Pima County and Tucson were 531,896 and 330,537 respectively. Table I shows how the population has grown from 1960 to 1980. The overwhelming majority (83.3%) of the population are white and a substantial proportion (21%) are of Spanish origin. One fifth do not have high school diplomas while another fifth have college degrees. Table II gives the age structure of the population. Table III gives data on household numbers and the number of families while Table IV provides data on household income distribution.

Table I

POPULATION GROWTH IN PIMA COUNTY

| | |
|------|---------|
| 1960 | 265,660 |
| 1970 | 351,667 |
| 1975 | 449,544 |
| 1980 | 531,896 |

Sources: "Arizona Statistical Review" , Valley National Bank, 1980. U.S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1980.

Table II

AGE STRUCTURE OF ADULT POPULATION IN GREATER TUCSON*

| <u>Age</u> | <u>Percentage of Total</u> |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 18 - 24 | 17.8% |
| 25 - 34 | 28.8% |
| 35 - 44 | 16.1% |
| 45 - 54 | 11.8% |
| 55 - 64 | 12.9% |
| 65 & Over | 12.6% |

*GREATER TUCSON is defined as the metropolitan area composed of the City of Tucson and the urbanized area surrounding it.

Sources: Marketing Strategies Inc. 1981 : Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1980

Animal Control Operation

Tucson, Arizona is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the southwest. Tucson's rapid growth over the past ten years reflects a tremendous (51%) increase in population. The increasing urbanization of Pima County has affected animal control philosophies and the policies of the Pima Animal Control Center.

The Pima Animal Control Center is a Division of the Pima County Health Department that currently provides all animal control service to Pima County including the City of Tucson. The City of Tucson contracts with Pima County for animal control service and presents the most significant animal control problems. For the purpose of this report we will focus primarily on the characteristics of the animal control program in the City of Tucson.

While no survey of households has been undertaken to determine how many dogs and cats are owned in Tucson and Pima County, we have estimated animal numbers using the formula (% of owning households, average numbers of animals in each owning household) given in Table The data on age and spay/neuter status is derived from vaccination lists and a phone poll.

In the two latest years (82/83 and 83/84) the Pima Animal Control Center has handled 12,080 and 12,348 animals respectively (see Table VI). However, the Humane Society of Tucson also handles a significant numbers of animals every year although they do not enforce leash laws or conduct bite investigations. Last year, the Tucson Humane Society sheltered 15,215 animals. Gary Dungan, the Executive Director of the Society indicates that, although the total number of animals being sheltered has probably dropped in the last few years, Tucson still has a significant pet overpopulation problem. The Humane Society of Tucson operates a low cost spay/neuter clinic and investigates cruelty complaints in metropolitan Tucson. Other animal welfare groups, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Welfare Coalition provide either spay/neuter clinics or financial support for low cost spay/neuter surgery. Pima County has, therefore, a number of active animal care/welfare groups that have had substantial impact in publicizing the plight of urban pets.

Table III

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

| | City of Tucson | Pima County |
|---|----------------|-------------|
| Total Number of Households | 129,480 | 201,860 |
| Single Family Dwellings (includes 24,457 Mobile Homes) | ----- | 163,870 |
| Multiple Occupancy Units | | 37,990 |
| Number of Families | 81,508 | 136,763 |
| Families with children under 18 | 75,274 | 128,500 |

Source: Census of Population 1980, U.S. Bureau of Census

Table IV

| | <u>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u> | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | <u>CITY OF TUCSON</u> | <u>PIMA COUNTY</u> |
| Percentage of Households | | |
| under \$5,000 | 1.7% | 12.7% |
| \$5,000 - \$9,999 | 23.1% | 28.0% |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 21.1% | 17.0% |
| \$15,000 - \$19,999 | 16.8% | 14.0% |
| \$20,000 - \$24,999 | 13.5% | 12.3% |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 14.7% | 14.5% |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 6.7% | 7.6% |
| \$50,000 - or more | 2.4% | 3.9% |
| Per Capita Income | \$17,147 | \$6,493 |

Source: Census of Population 1980, U.S. Bureau of Census

The activities of the Pima Animal Control Center as they relate to the metropolitan area of Tucson are set out in Table VII. the numbers of animals from the city of Tucson that must be disposed of has fallen but it is difficult to draw any conclusions given the large numbers that are also sheltered by the Humane Society. More attention has been paid to enforcement in recent years (hence, the increase in number of citations) and, in 1978/79, the leash law was changed to permit animal control officers to issue a citation for an uncontrolled animals, even when it was on the owner's property.

Table V

DOG AND CAT POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS (GENERAL)

| | <u>City of Tucson</u> | | <u>Pima County</u> | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | Dogs | Cats | Dogs | Cats |
| Total No. Hshlds | 129,480 | 129,480 | 201,860 | 201,860 |
| % Hshlds. Owning | 48 | 35 | 48 | 35 |
| Av. No. Animals per Owning Hshld. | 1.35 | 1.5 | 1.35 | 1.5 |
| Total Animals | 83,903 | 67,977 | 130,795 | 105,984 |
| Average Age (yrs.) | 4.1 | 2.3 | 4.1 | 1.3 |
| No. Altered Animals | 33,155 | 12,235 | 52,628 | 19,077 |
| % Altered Animals | 39.5 | 18.0 | 40.2 | 18.0 |
| No. Vaccinated Dogs (83/84 projected) | 60,300 | ----- | 95,608 | ----- |
| No. Licensed Dogs (83/84 actual) | 40,016 | ----- | 69,491 | ----- |
| % Licensed Dogs (83/84 estimate) | 47.7 | ----- | 53.1 | ----- |

Table VI

DISPOSITION OF ALL ANIMALS HANDLED BY

PIMA ANIMAL CONTROL CENTER

| | Redeemed | Adopted | Euthanized | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| <u>1982/3</u> | | | | |
| Dogs | 2,637 (26.6%) | 1,018 (10.3%) | 6,262 (63.7%) | 9,917 |
| Cats | 55 (27.0%) | 58 (2.9%) | 1,912 (94.4%) | 2,025 |
| Total | 2,692 (22.5%) | 1,076 (9.0%) | 8,174 (68.4%) | 11,942 |
| <u>1983/4</u> | | | | |
| Dogs | 2,848 (27.8%) | 874 (8.5%) | 6,529 (63.7%) | 10,251 |
| Cats | 125 (4.7%) | 128 (4.8%) | 2,425 (90.6%) | 2,678 |
| Total | 2,973 (23.0%) | 1,002 (7.8%) | 8,954 (69.3%) | 12,929 |

Table VII

| | <u>ANIMAL CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN CITY OF TUCSON</u> | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 76/7 | 77/8 | 78/9 | 79/80 | 80/1 | 81/2 | 82/3 |
| No. of Licenses Issued | 38,000 | 36,000 | 33,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 36,000 | 39,000 |
| No. of Citations Issued (approx.) | --- | --- | 1,500 | 1,200 | 3,500 | 6,000 | 7,000 |
| No. of Field Service Calls | --- | --- | --- | --- | 33,400 | 29,600 | 34,800 |
| No. of Loose Animal Calls | --- | --- | 13,133 | 16,307 | 17,255 | 18,458 | 19,269 |
| Stray Dog Pickup (approx.) | --- | --- | 3,000 | 2,000 | 6,000 | 6,800 | 5,800 |
| Dead Dogs/Cats on Roads | --- | --- | --- | --- | 3,450 | 3,570 | 3,682 |
| Animals Disposed of | 9,254 | 8,458 | 7,511 | 6,620 | 7,264 | 7,395 | 7,147 |
| Approx. % Euthanized | 65 | 62 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 66 |
| Approx. & Redeemed/Adopted | 29 | 32 | 36 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 33 |

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Pima Animal Control employs one full time person to provide public education. This Public Service Coordinator speaks to school, animal welfare groups, service groups, 4-H Clubs, scouting organizations, etc. The topics of his presentations range from caring for pets to rabies prevention. During the summer months our Public Service Coordinator participates in City of Tucson summer recreation programs by providing films and presentations to large number of school age children throughout the community.

This year the Pima Animal Control Center has started a coordinated effort to reduce dog bites especially among children and service workers. The Public Service Coordinator has made presentations on how to prevent dog bites (recognition of animal behavior patterns and strategies to avoid bites) to schools, U.S. Post Office and local utility companies.

In addition to the Bite Prevention Program, the Pima Animal Control Center and the City of Tucson are developing television spots that will be aired on cable channels. Monthly public relations presentations are also made

on such topics as Leash Laws, spay/neuter programs, care and feeding of pets, etc.

SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS

Pima Animal Control requires that all adopted animals be spayed or neutered. This is accomplished by including a spay/neuter certificate with every adoption. In addition, the license fee for altered dogs is much lower than the license fee for unaltered dogs.

Local animal welfare organizations provide low cost spay/neuter programs and almost all of the local veterinarians provide this service. The issues of pet overpopulation and spaying/neutering of pets have just recently (the past 3 years) been publicized by the media. Work to increase awareness and ultimately decrease surplus dogs and cats is continuing.

ENFORCEMENT

Pima Animal Control Center is particularly proud of its enforcement program which is based on a comprehensive training program, an aggressive enforcement policy and a professional staff.

The Pima Animal Control Center has developed an eight week training program covering a wide range of topics such as animal behavior, stress management, rabies, and public relations. This training program is conducted by staff members who are graduates of the H.S.U.S./University of Alabama, Animal Control Academy. The training program produces a knowledgeable and conscientious animal control officer.

The enforcement staff at the Pima Animal Control Center have successfully completed the transition from "dog catcher" to Animal Control professionals. The Pima Animal Control Officers have authority to issue citations for animal related offenses ranging from leash law to quarantine violations. The professional attitude of our enforcement staff has resulted in less complaints and more positive recognition from the public. Although it is hard to measure professionalism in a quantitative sense, we feel the staff's attitude is one of our greatest assets.

The enforcement policy includes consistent, stringent enforcement of all violations involving dogs running off their leashes, and unlicensed animals. We feel that the dog that is at large is the primary cause of dog bites, the spread of disease and the wholesale slaughter of dogs on streets and highways. The unlicensed dog is usually the property of the uninformed or irresponsible owner. Our dog bite records indicate a relationship between unlicensed dogs and dog bites and between dogs at large and dog bites (Table VIII).

This past year, there was a special effort to identify and cite dog owners who allow their dogs to run loose and/or neglect to license them. The program, along with a public relations campaign and spay/neuter incentives,

has resulted in a reduction in the number of reported dog bites in Pima County. In 1981/2, there were 2,553 reported bites, representing a 12% increase over the previous year. In 1982/3, the number of reported bites fell by 12% to 2,255 and a further 20% fall (to 2,230) is projected for 1983/4.

Table VIII

DOG BITES INFLICTED BY LOOSE, LICENSED DOGS

| | July'82 | July'83 | Oct.'82 | Oct.'83 | March'83 | March'84 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Total Dog Bites | 179 | 222 | 195 | 184 | 216 | 207 |
| % Bites (Dogs) At Large | 37% | 37% | 46% | 40% | 52% | 47% |
| % Of Biters That Are Licensed | 38% | 31% | 45% | 40% | 37% | 38% |
| % Of Total Dog Population Licensed (estimate) | 55% | 54% | 55% | 54% | 55% | 54% |

In June of 1984 the Tucson City Council passed a set of comprehensive ordinances directed towards animal cruelty/neglect and vicious animals. Pima County Animal Control accepted complete enforcement responsibility for these ordinances in September, 1984 and have responded to over 800 complaints between September, 1984 and June 30, 1985 and June 30, 1985. These ordinances have provided the Pima Animal Control Center with an opportunity to not only protect mistreated animals but to also educate the general public on topics related to pet care and responsibility.