Homeless Cats and Dogs are Suffering and Dying
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Dumped — like litter
This sad dog is waiting for the owners who'll never return. People in a nearby house are feeding him. He won't let them befriend him. He's waiting. He's unwanted.

HSUS says ‘There are solutions!’
Last year more than 13 million homeless cats and dogs were euthanized at humane societies and municipal animal shelters. Thirteen million! The number is so large that it’s mindboggling!

At a statistic, 13 million may be meaningless. But think of it another way. Think of the 13 million as individual animals with individual personalities — each with their own beating heart, each with their own wretched story of how they found their way to the animal shelter. They’re not a group! Each one was an individual breathing creature whose life was ended because there was no home to go to.

The HSUS estimates there are between 80 and 100 million dogs and cats in the United States, with kittens and puppies being born at the rate of 3,000 per hour. Public and private animal control programs cost this country as much as $500 million a year. Much of this amount is spent feeding and caring for unwanted animals, and killing and disposing of the carcasses of the 80 to 90 percent that are not redeemed or adopted.

Parks and farms adjacent to urban areas suffer tremendous animal losses because of the predation and worrying of wildlife and livestock by free-roaming dogs.

Free-roaming dogs cause automobile accidents resulting in property damage, personal injury, and sometimes even death.

Littering of public and private property with animal feces is a nuisance as well as an obvious public health hazard. New York City’s 500,000 dogs deposit 20,000 tons of waste per year on city streets. The number one complaint to mayors in large cities is free-roaming pets.

Obviously, a lot of money, time, and energy is spent dealing with the overwhelming numbers of unwanted dogs and cats.

The story is the same all over the United States. There are five animal shelters in the city of Detroit, Michigan. In one year, over 90,000 dogs and cats are destroyed in those five shelters. There are more than 100,000 animals destroyed in New York City each year.
There are solutions

According to HSUS Accreditation Associate Kathie Flood, “There are solutions to the pet overpopulation problems.” Flood outlined those solutions in testimony before a midwestern city council last late last year.

First, you must have a good, working animal control program which includes five integral parts:

1. A strong, enforceable animal control ordinance which includes a lower licensing fee for altered animals;
2. A responsible animal control depart­ment capable of picking up and humanely handling animals at large;
3. A good animal sheltering facility which requires spaying and neutering of all adopted animals;
4. Public education programs which pro­mote owner responsibility; and
5. A practical method of preventing the births of puppies and kittens, namely a spay and neuter program which is responsible and accessible to the public.

The Humane Society of the United States recommends cooperative spay and neuter programs involving veterinarians and animal welfare groups in local communities. If, for one reason or another, these programs fail, or if the public does not have access to that program, or if the taxpayers of a community demand it, a reduced cost spay and neuter clinic is an alternative which must be considered.

The greatest single cause of domestic animal suffering is overpopulation. Even though all of the residents of a community may not own pets themselves, all of the residents suffer because of the problems created by the pet overpopulation problem.

HSUS’s Director of Animal Sheltering and Control Phyllis Wright promotes a 3-point program to solve the surplus pet animal problem. She calls her program LES which stands for Legislation, Education, and Sterilization. “If you combine these three elements,” she says, “you’ll have less surplus animals being euthanized, less tax dollars and humane society dollars being spent, less suffering on the part of unwanted animals, less animals propagating, and less cruelty.”

Wright, who is probably the best known animal control expert in the country, speaks much of her time giving workshops and seminars to animal control personnel in all parts of the U.S. She’s constantly telling her students, “The most common irresponsibility I see is a dog without a tag.”

The dog without a tag cannot be reduced to its owner. The dog without a tag bound to be euthanized. The dog without tag has no life insurance. He’s a dog without roots. Animal control people have no way of getting a tagging dog and its owner back together again. Thus, a strong license program which includes penalties for negligent owners is an essential part of the solution to our free-roaming pet problems.

Euthanasia won’t solve the problem

But, there’s no choice in a world that has no room for this kitty. Unwanted pets are being euthanized at the rate of approximately 1,100 per hour in the U.S. But they’re being born at the rate of 3,000 per hour.

Summer W. Fowler from K. Flood

What happens to the free-roaming, unwanted animals that don’t end up at the animal shelter?

Some local animal welfare organizations have found solutions to the pet overpopula­tion problem in their communities. These examples prove it can be done.

The nation’s first spay and neuter clinic was opened in Irvine, California. There are now seven reduced cost spay and neuter clinics in Los Angeles County. There are also 34,000 fewer animals killed per year by the Department of Animal Control. The City of Los Angeles is now subsidizing approximately $3 of each surgery performed.

Hewlett, the number of animals impounded since the inception of the program shows clearly that the clinics are, at most, a minimal cost to the city. By subsidizing spays and neuters at $3 each, the city saves the $20 cost of processing each impounded animal.

Palo Alto, California, opened a spay and neuter clinic in late 1972. In the first two years after the clinic was opened, there was a 40 percent reduction in the number of animals handled at the shelters. Part of this reduction is directly attributable to surgeries done at the clinic. The rest is due to increased public awareness of the pet overpopulation problem and lower licensing fees.

The Peninsula Humane Society, San Mateo, California, opened a clinic in 1973. The first year end operation figures show a 60 percent increase in the success of the clinic. Total surgeries numbered 3,226 with total revenues of $61,746. Since the start of the clinic and public awareness campaign, there has been a continuing decrease in the number of animals handled at the Peninsula Humane Society animal shelter.

Euthanasia won’t solve the problem

The Humane Society of Huron Valley in Ann Arbor, Michigan, opened a reduced cost spay and neuter clinic in 1973. The Humane Society of Huron Valley handled 18,000 animals in 1973, most of which were humanely destroyed. In 1977 the HSHV handled over 14,000 animals and that figure decreased steadily through 1978. The clinic is breaking even. The clinic averages 20 surgeries per day and is booked solid for three weeks in advance. More than 10,000 surgeries have been performed at the clinic.

In 1976 the Vancouver branch of the British Columbia SPCA opened its spay and neuter clinic. The staff is comprised of four licensed veterinarians, four veterinary assistants, two kennelworkers, and two receptionists. There were 12,032 surgeries performed the first year. The number of pet owners waiting to use the clinic averages two weeks full operation of the clinic. Due to the sheer weight of numbers, there has been no need to stimulate public interest in the clinic. Extra telephones and staff have had to be installed to keep up with the calls.

The effects of the clinic have been astounding! At the end of one year of operation, the animal control figures in Vancouver were:

1. Animals destroyed at shelters down by 17%.
2. Complaints of dogs running at large down 21%.
3. Aggressive or biting attacks by dogs down by 41%.
4. License revenues increased (dogs hav­ing surgery at clinic are required to be licensed).

Other points of interest: 83% of dog owners and 94% of cat owners interviewed said that the reason they used the clinic was because they could not afford to have their pets altered otherwise. The clinic was finan­cially viable after the first four weeks of opera­tion.

What is The HSUS doing about the pet population problem?

The HSUS is working to solve the pet overpopulation problem — and its related miseries! Among the many things The HSUS is doing today are:

- Promoting spay and neuter programs
- Through public education, advertising, and professional development seminars for animal control personnel. The HSUS en­courages the establishment of spay and neuter programs and clinics.
- Sterilant research
- Working in cooperation with a large drug company and a western university, The HSUS has developed and is testing an inex­pensive male dog sterilant. At the present time the sterilant is in the testing stage under FDA supervision. When released, the one-time sterilant should cost less than $5 per application. This low cost should enable shelters to sterilize every male dog that is adopted.
- Accreditation program
- The HSUS conducts an accreditation program for humane society and municipal animal shelters. To become accredited, shelters must work with HSUS accreditation personnel to establish programs, policies, and methods of operation which are designed to reduce the numbers of un­wanted animals.
- Professional development
- Conducted throughout the country, these “Solving Animal Problems in Your Community” workshops help animal control personnel, humane society leaders, and others to improve their shelters and thus...
make life better for the unwanted pets.

In addition, The HSUS publishes the only periodical designed specifically for animal control personnel. *Shelter Sense* gives the professional animal control worker a platform for learning and sharing.

**Investigating cruelty**

HSUS investigators travel throughout the country helping individuals, local animal welfare organizations, and on occasions local governments develop solid evidence to support prosecutions, in particularly aggravated cases which have national implications.

**Educational programs**

In addition to the professional development workshops The HSUS also works with teachers through our National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education division. This division develops educational materials, conducts workshops and seminars, and distributes a magazine, *Humane Education*.

HSUS's KIND magazine for children is currently being used by classroom groups throughout the country. KIND has been speaking to children since 1959. Many of the young people who read KIND as children are now adult members of The HSUS and other animal welfare groups.

**Developing legislation**

The HSUS works on the local, state, and federal level assisting legislators and local animal welfare groups in the creation of legislation to develop government-assisted spay and neuter programs, leash and license laws, and other statutes which will have a positive effect on the free-roaming and unwanted pet problem. The recent liberalization of some of the restrictions on lobbying has helped The HSUS become a recognized friend to animals on Capitol Hill.

The HSUS has developed a model ordinance which local organizations have had great success implementing. HSUS testimony on the state, local, and federal level has also helped pass laws which will eventually have an impact on the pet problem.

**TV & radio spots**

The HSUS distributes radio and TV spots promoting pet ownership responsibility. These spots are played all over the country. Correspondence to The HSUS indicates that people are heeding our advice.