Pet Overpopulation: More Spay/Neuter Efforts Underway!

by Debbie Reed

The encouraging news about this nation's pet overpopulation problem is that more and more organizations and individuals are establishing spay/neuter programs and laws. The April Shelter Sense described some of these efforts, and there are lots more!

The Sugarbush Valley of Vermont, a popular ski area comprised of several small communities, has its share of homeless animals. In one community, Waitsfield, sits the Mad River Valley Humane Society (Box 479, Waitsfield, VT 05673), a tiny organization run in conjunction with a small boarding kennel by Dorothy Pamucina, its president. The shelter houses approximately six cats and five dogs, and Pamucina will not release one of them for adoption until she personally has had it spayed or neutered by an area
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Proposed Ordinance Could Help Injured Pets

A new Santa Cruz, Calif., ordinance requires that residents spay or neuter their pets the second time they are impounded. The “get-tough” policy is enforced by the Santa Cruz SPCA (2200 7th

A stray, injured pet that has appropriate tags or obvious signs of ownership could receive immediate medical treatment under an HSUS-proposed model ordinance.

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According to William Meade III, director of The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office, who developed and proposed throughout the region the model ordinance, the guidelines could be adopted by any city to protect injured, stray animals. They are worded carefully to limit shelter expenditures and responsibility for animal medical procedures other than a simple painkiller and stabilization. All other expenses would be the responsibility of a pet owner, who could be required to purchase a license and pay a penalty for failure to license his or her pet.

“Many city shelters have a policy of not treating an animal, or of treating only animals with current licenses,” said Meade. “This punishes an animal that might have to be euthanized because of its owner’s oversight. Certainly the owner should be held accountable rather than the pet.”

Previously, Meade practiced these guidelines at shelters he operated, with positive results. While director of the Arlington, Va., shelter, for example, he discovered that by using the guidelines, over 50 percent of owners claimed their injured pets within 12 hours. “This procedure has proven inexpensive, and it gains immeasurable goodwill with each citizen who is thankful someone cared enough to consider his or her pet’s life and safety.”

Meade was reminded of the benefits of this ordinance one evening when a neighbor asked him to help rescue a dachshund that had been hit by a car in the neighborhood. He called the local animal-control department, which sent a truck within minutes. Nevertheless, that shelter’s policy prevents treatment of any animal unless it is wearing a current license tag. Rather than allow the tagless dachshund to be euthanized, Meade rushed it to an emergency veterinary clinic, where it was X-rayed and given a painkiller. Meade filed a “found” report with the shelter the
next morning, and the owner, a local judge, called within a few hours. Indeed, his pet dachshund had escaped the judge's fenced yard, and the man had searched for his pet all night.

The text of the proposed ordinance is as follows:

"Any seriously injured animal (wearing a collar, license or identification tag, or that appears to be a well-cared-for pet) shall be taken to a veterinarian by animal control to be stabilized and given needed pain alleviation for a 12-hour period while the owner is sought. If the owner has not been located, and has not assumed financial responsibility for the animal, by the end of the 12-hour period, the veterinarian shall euthanize the animal with sodium pentobarbital injection, unless it can be held at the shelter without excessive pain for the remainder of its holding period. If the animal has massive or unrecoverable injuries (as determined by the veterinarian or animal control officer), it may be immediately euthanized. Animals not seriously injured and mobile (minor cuts and scrapes) may be taken directly to the shelter for the normal holding period. Animals without identification and in poor, uncared-for condition may be euthanized after the normal holding period, or immediately if seriously injured or suffering, as determined by animal control or a veterinarian."

Meade would be happy to answer questions from city animal-control agencies about the model ordinance. Contact HSUS Gulf States Regional Office, 6262 Weber Road, Suite 305, Corpus Christi, Texas 78413; telephone, (512) 854-3142.

A new registry for mixed-breed dogs and cats promotes their worthiness as pets.

Last year, Regina Cates, Deborah Diehl, and Kathy Johnson of Birmingham, Ala., created the American Mixbreed Society Inc. (AMS) (2900 Tenth Ave. South, Birmingham, AL 35205), a registry that promotes the adoption, registration, and sterilization of mixed-breed dogs and cats. Cates, the organization's president, thought of the idea as a way to do something special for her pet.

"Through the registry, owners of mixed-breed animals can obtain papers for their pets, and feel good about owning them instead of purebreds," said Cates. She intends for the organization to educate the public about pet overpopulation and the need for spaying and neutering, encourage pet adoptions from animal shelters, and promote the use of mixed breeds in the media.

T-Shirt Auction

A one-time $7.50 fee includes a brass tag with the owner's telephone number and proof of AMS membership, a certificate, a collar, and a bumper sticker. One dollar of each registration fee is donated to the registrant's local humane society; however, Cates ruled that no money will be donated to shelters that give or sell animals to research laboratories.

The AMS to date has registered more than 500 dogs and cats and plans to produce a newsletter once it has 5,000 registrants.
Federal Government To Pay Dog-Bite Victim

A 12-year old girl who was bitten by a dog three years ago at a U.S. Air Force base has been awarded $335,000, to be paid by the federal government.

Joe Wood, deputy clerk for U.S. District Judge Joyce Hens Green, confirmed during a telephone conversation with Shelter Sense Editor Deborah Reed that an April 30, 1986, report of the case in The Washington Post is correct. The newspaper reported that Tracey Nelson, who lives now in Minnesota, was bitten by a German shepherd in April 1983 at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. She suffered facial disfigurement and eye damage and currently has trouble talking and swallowing. In 1983, Tracey and her brother and mother lived in the Air Force base housing while her father was stationed in Japan. The dog was owned by a neighboring family, and the newspaper account said base records revealed it had bitten children on two occasions in 1981. (A spokesman for the air base told Reed he could not comment on the judge's decision until legal authorities had had time to review it.)

The newspaper reported further that Judge Green said base officials should have known the dog was dangerous and might bite another child. She said the government was liable for the award because it regulated those living in base housing. The judge ruled that Tracey's future medical and psychiatric needs would require $135,000 and that she should receive $200,000 for her pain and suffering. The money will be paid to Tracey's mother and administered through a Minnesota court.

Another new film and videotape features children teaching others to care for pets and to understand the plight of sheltered animals. The production can be purchased or rented, and preview copies are available to qualified customers.

"Friend For Life," produced and directed by Erik Friedl, whose previous films include "Kiss the Animals Goodbye" (see Shelter Sense, September 1984), presents understandable concepts and information about pet ownership as seen through the eyes of a young narrator. Appealing scenes of dogs and cats with young owners can help children and adults learn what to consider when adopting a pet; how to introduce a pet to its new home; how to keep pets clean, safe, and healthy; how to train and play with pets; and why all pets should be spayed or neutered. According to HSUS President John Hoyt, "'Friend For Life' is the first film for children, about children, that teaches kindness to animals. I highly recommend this excellent program for all children...and adults!"

The 15-minute color show would be useful for humane educators and animal-welfare workers to show in shelters, during school programs, at community events, and in other places. Pyramid Film & Video is selling the film in 16mm, VHS, Beta, and 3/4" format for $350 (or pay $55 for a three-day rental). A 20-percent rental discount is available for non-profit organizations. For further information, or to inquire about a preview VHS copy, call toll-free, (800) 421-2304. To order, send check or money order to Pyramid Film & Video, Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406.
A new set of posters illustrates the cruelties of pound seizure and the animal slave trade. Animal shelters can order a free set to help in their continuing campaign to end these practices!

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) produced the four-poster set, which contains a large central poster surrounded by a horizontal poster on top and a vertical poster on each side. The glossy posters explain what pound seizure and the animal slave trade are, including photographs. The set can be divided easily in cases where shelter wall space is limited.

While supplies last, one poster set is available for no charge to local animal shelters and animal-control agencies working on the pound seizure issue. To receive a free set, organizations must send a written order on organizational letterhead (only one free set allowed per organization). An additional set costs $7.50. Two or more sets cost $6.75 each. To purchase a set, send check or money order, payable to "The HSUS," to The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037. Designate "Free Poster" on an order for a free set. Allow four to six weeks for delivery. Sorry, United Parcel Service (UPS) cannot deliver to a post office box.

The four-poster set contains this large central poster.
A lost and found program needs to look only for a match between information you provide about a missing animal and information already on file about animals that a shelter has received, or vice versa. The key to a successful lost and found program is consistent record-keeping. You must be certain to collect enough information to positively identify an animal, yet avoid unnecessary details. The way to complete a quick file search is to divide information into as few categories as possible to enable the record of the lost animal to be matched to the information that is reported when the animal is found. To do this, use two or three letter codes for common information, and be certain to supply a list of these codes to everyone handling the data. Further, for safety’s sake, maintain these records on paper as well as in your computer. Here is some information that should be included in your records:

- name, address, and phone number of person who lost or found the animal
- date the animal was lost or found
- location where the animal was lost or found - If you have a local map with grid coordinates, record this information. In this way, you can expand or narrow the geographic region in which you look for possible matches. ZIP codes are also useful. You can, for example, look for records in the same ZIP code area or match the first four digits to expand your search.
- breed - This can be helpful if the animal is a purebred, but many animals will be of mixed breed, and some lost purebreds are likely to be misidentified when they are received. Use a two- or three-letter code such as “GSR” for “German Shepherd Cross.”
- sex and spay/neuter status
- age - Since it can be difficult to precisely determine the age of an unknown animal, you should limit yourself to codes for puppy/kitten, young adult, adult, and older adult.
- coat color - As with breed, different people will describe the same animal in different ways, so try to have a small but comprehensive list of 10 to 15 codes, such as “BT” for black and tan, or “CM” for cream.
- coat texture - This can be more helpful than color in describing some animals. Use a few simple codes, such as “S” for short, and “W” for wire-haired dogs.
- ears - A simple description of a dog’s ears can be helpful in identifying it. Use codes for “droop,” “half-cocked,” “erect,” “cropped,” and any other relevant categories.
- collar - Make a note of the type of collar on the animal; for example, a chain, flea, plastic, or leather collar.
- comments - Leave room in your records for comments on unusual markings, behaviors, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Now that you have gathered this information, you might wonder how you can use your computer to find a match! If you have a computer, the chances are that you already have a program that can do this job. Most word processors have the ability to rapidly search through a text file for all occurrences of a particular word or phrase. Therefore, you could store your lost and found records as a single document and search for the codes that would identify the animal in question.

A more sophisticated approach is to use a database program. Many inexpensive database programs can be used like filing cards, which can be searched for any particular word or phrase or some combination thereof. You could, for example, retrieve the records of all brown, short-haired, male dogs found in one ZIP code area, or all German shepherds or shepherd mixes found in a given week. It is best to begin with a very broad or general search and then narrow it. The problem with several shelter lost and found programs I have seen is that they require an exact match between the lost and found records in order to locate an animal. Since people might have different interpretations of color, age, and breed, it is important to allow some latitude in your search.

There are many inexpensive database programs that lend themselves to easy use for lost and found activities. PSF: File, which is being used for lost and found records by several shelters, is available for most microcomputers at many bookstores for under $80. Many other free or low-cost database programs are available from computer user groups. If you need help locating an appropriate program for your system, please contact me. If you are using an IBM or compatible, The HSUS can send you a copy of "PC-File III" for $5 to cover duplication and mailing. To order, send a $5 check or money order to "PC-File III," The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037. (Sorry, UPS cannot deliver to a post office box number.)

Lost and found applications can be simple and satisfying. With very little effort, you can use your computer to reunite people and pets! If you have a success story about your system in this way, Shelter Sense would love to hear about it!
have the animal sterilized will be an infraction: Owners will be fined and required to have the surgery completed. An earlier proposal that would have required all impounded dogs and cats to be spayed or neutered before release, with no opportunity to convert impound fees, failed to gain support from the County Board of Supervisors.

Fakkema said the SPCA is providing a grace period to allow pet owners to learn about the new law. "Everyone will be placed back on 'square one','" he said. "If their animals were impounded before the ordinance went into effect, we will consider the next impoundment to be the first. But we've gotta play 'hardball' to get rid of this pet overpopulation problem."

The Southern African Federation of SPCCAs and Affiliated Societies (82831 Southdale, 2135, South Africa) has declared 1986 the "Year of Sterilization" in its effort to promote spaying and neutering of domestic pets. Organizations in the United States might consider a similar educational campaign.

Aimed at the South African public, the March 15 - August 30 campaign evolved after recent statistics revealed an alarming increase in South Africa's pet population, according to Mrs. D.H. Richter, the Federation's education director. At the heart of the campaign is a stamp fund-raiser. Letter-sized stamps, which carry the theme "Care About Life - Sterilize Your Pet," were produced through the courtesy of SPAR South Africa, a supermarket chain.

Booklets of stamps, alternately depicting dogs and cats and written in Afrikaans and English, are sold by students at area schools and by member societies of the Federation. Stamps can be sold at SPAR stores if store managers permit.

In a letter to school principals, Dawn McClintock, administrator, outlined the spay/neuter campaign and asked for schools' support. She explained that anyone who purchased a full booklet of stamps would receive a credit voucher for use at SPAR. For each partially sold booklet, a school can keep the voucher for itself. Stamps sell for 10 cents each, R1-00 (50 cents) per sheet, and R10-00 ($5) per booklet. Schools receive R1-00 for every completed book of stamps sold.

To encourage students to sell the educational stamps, prizes will be awarded, courtesy of SPAR stores, for the "highest average sales of completed books per pupil," ensuring that each school is given an equal chance of winning regardless of its size. Nine prizes will be awarded, enabling winning schools to purchase sporting equipment of their choice from any area sports dealer, dependent upon the prize amount. A similar campaign last year enabled one local school to purchase a bus, and income for the spay/neuter effort totalled R40 ,000 -00 ($20,000).

Three years ago, an Ohio organization initiated a one-month, discount spay/neuter program in cooperation with area veterinarians. To date, over 3,000 cats and dogs have been spayed or neutered through the program, which the volunteer-run organization would like to share with any animal organization in the nation.

Valley Save-A-Pet (Box 39221, Solon, OH 44139), located outside of Cleveland, conducts the spay/neuter program -- now a two-month project -- in January and February. According to Jackie Kaplansky, president, "Our biggest disappointment so far is the lack of interest by others in developing this type of program. No matter how successful our organization is, we are doing little unless other, similar programs across the nation are successful, too."

Kaplansky said Valley Save-A-Pet gleaned the idea for its spay/neuter program from Actors and Others for Animals (P.O. Box 405, Beverly Hills, CA 90213). In 1984, the first year of the program, Valley Save-A-Pet altered approximately 1,000 cats. In 1985, 1,200 cats and a few dogs were sterilized. This year, 1,000 cats and a limited number of dogs received the operations. Kaplansky said the program has concentrated on cats for two reasons: It is easier to budget cat surgeries (charges for dogs increase according to their weight), and some cooperating veterinarians claim that stray dogs are difficult to work with.

The spay/neuter program is aimed at the lower and middle classes, senior citizens, and others who are on limited incomes: "The people who really need our help," said Kaplansky. Still, veterinarians complain about pet owners who arrive in Cadillacs to register pets for the surgery. "Last year and this year, we tried to be more explicit about who should participate. We've referred a lot of them to other veterinarians."

The program's cooperating veterinarians agreed to the following rates for spaying and neutering:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cats</th>
<th>Dogs</th>
<th>Rates can vary according to a dog's weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$15 - neuter</td>
<td>$22 - neuter</td>
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<tr>
<td>$20 - spay</td>
<td>$40 - spay</td>
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Valley Save-A-Pet's spay/neuter program is helping to reduce animal births, but the organization urges others nationwide to establish similar programs to end the tragedy of pet overpopulation.

In 1984, the organization offered the spay/neuter program to the public for no charge. "We paid for it all," said Kaplansky. The second year, the organization required that pet owners pay $5 toward the surgery. This year, pet owners must pay $7. This fee is paid in advance, after which the organization releases an authorization for surgery. Shots are part of the program: The first year, pet owners were asked to pay the veterinarian for shots. If necessary, the organization would cover the cost. In 1985, people were expected to pay $5 for the animals' shots unless they really were financially unable to do so. This year, the pet owners must pay $7 to the veterinarian for shots.

According to Kaplansky, the organization uses the months June and July as a measuring stick to determine the impact the surgeries have made. For example, she said an animal protective league in Cleveland euthanized approximately 4,996 cats and kittens just before Valley Save-A-Pet's spay/neuter program began. One year later, that number had been reduced by 181. Although during the second year of the program, there was no significant reduction in the total animals euthanized, the total was less than the year before. This year, the June/July figures will be available in August.

Kaplansky said that the organization sponsored a workshop in 1984 to teach others about the program. She was disappointed in the results. "We charged only $3, and workers from 10 to 12 humane societies attended. But it turned into a lot of 'gibber-jabbering.' We now know what to do to keep the workshop focused and moving. We want the program to spread across the country!"

"Just Wright"
Continued from page 16

Director of humane services for large, progressive humane society. Responsible for staff, programs in cruelty investigation, humane education, public relations, adoption counseling, volunteer services. Must have strong background in investigation and education. Position available July 1. Send resume, salary requirements to Patricia Mercer, Houston SPCA, 519 Studemont, Houston, TX 77007.

Field supervisor with excellent personnel management skills and solid background in enforcement of humane laws needed for progressive shelter. Supervise 11 field officers, animal services programs, and investigations. Excellent benefits; salary negotiable. Send resume to Diane Allevato, Director, Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys, Novato, CA 94947.

Shelter operation manager to manage and coordinate operation of growing, seven-shelter system. Must have well-developed management, interpersonal, and shelter-programming skills. Send resume to Carter Luke, MSPCA, 450 Salem End Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

Humane educator needed full time for education department. Responsibilities include classroom instruction, curriculum development, and project coordination. Previous teaching experience, good interpersonal skills, flexibility needed. Knowledge of computers helpful. Bachelors degree in education preferred. Send resume to Judy Golden, Director of Education, MSPCA, 450 Salem End Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

Veterinary technician for Kent County Animal Shelter in Michigan to assist veterinarian. Salary, $13,811-$18,179, dependent upon experience. Must possess veterinary technician degree; licensure preferred. Apply to Kent County Personnel, 300 Monroe N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49503. EOE.

Only Shelter Sense subscribers may submit "position wanted" ads. Only Shelter Sense subscribers may submit "position wanted" ads.
Help Pet Owners Understand Their Pets' Behavior!

by Phyllis Wright

Wright is vice president of Companion Animals for The HSUS

For years, humane organizations have shouldered the responsibility and sadness of caring for and disposing of unwanted cats and dogs. Pet owners offer every imaginable excuse for no longer wanting their pets! Instead of continuing to listen to excuses, why not sponsor training sessions and educational materials to help pet owners better understand and cope with pet behavior so they'll want to continue caring for their pets.

We know that dogs dig, bark, shed fur, throw up occasionally, soil the house sometimes, and much more! Unfortunately, this surprises some pet owners who thought "Rover" naturally would be as perfectly trained and groomed as "Lassie." Whether adopting out a pet or only dealing with a pet-related problem, you can help pet owners understand the truth about pet behavior. There are simple ways to live with seemingly complex animal problems.

Budget time is nearing, so your organization should plan now to allot time, money, and staff members for programs to teach owners about cat and dog behavior and alternative ways for pets to vent their energy and curiosity. If you do that, both pets and their owners will be less frustrated. A pet-owner support group, for example, could help owners air some of their frustrations, share common pet experiences, and learn to deal with them.

The Marin Humane Society recently produced a booklet to help dog owners understand and eliminate pet misbehavior and develop an enjoyable, lasting relationship with problem pets. Is Herbert There?, written by Terry Jester, the society's dog trainer and animal-behavior consultant, packs 32 pages full of information about pet owners as pack leaders; dogs chewing, barking, not coming when called, digging, jumping on furniture, getting into the garbage, house soiling, and chasing cats; crate training; and more. The lively, humorous text is well illustrated. To order a copy, send a $3 check or money order to Rick Johnson, Community Services Director, Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd., Novato, CA 94947.

Equally helpful is a set of 15 Behavior Booklets by Ian Dunbar and Gwen Bohnenkamp. Dunbar, a veterinarian, animal behaviorist,