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CHARLOTTE – MECKLENBURG

ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The area of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte can be generally characterized as an urban area - only 1.16% of those citizens living in the rural sections are engaged in farm activities. The area is an important trucking interchange and banking center with a small industrial base. The light industry of note includes dye companies, computer-related industries, and textile equipment manufacturers. The city itself is dynamic and progressive. The inner-city is currently undergoing redevelopment. The general population has an average age of 29.5 years with 72.2% over 18. There are 162,786 households in the area with a median income of \$17,837 per household (mean income is \$21,407) and an average of 2.69 persons per household. There are 98,951 single family and 52,676 multi-family dwellings. Seventy-two (72) percent of the population is white and 26.5% is black. Additional information on human and household demographics is provided in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

The governing municipalities pride themselves on their progressive approach to providing city and county services. Such an approach is evident in the animal control program which was reorganized and overhauled in 1978.

TABLE 1

	<u>Population and Area Statistics</u>		
	<u>City of Charlotte</u>	<u>Mecklenburg County</u>	<u>Total</u>
Population	314,447	89,823	404,270
Area (sq. mi.)	144.3	399.7	544.0
Dwelling Units	136,304	18,983	155,287

TABLE 2

	<u>Income Distribution</u>	
	<u>Household Income</u>	<u>No. of Households (% in parentheses)</u>
Less than \$10,000	37,280	(24.6)
\$10,000 - \$19,999	45,538	(29.9)
\$20,000 - \$29,999	33,225	(21.9)
\$30,000 - \$39,999	17,544	(11.6)
\$40,000 - \$49,999	6,852	(4.5)
\$50,000 - \$74,999	9,002	(5.9)
\$75,000 or more	2,387	(1.6)
TOTAL	151,728	
Median - \$17,837		
Mean - \$21,407		

TABLE 3

<u>Distribution of People in Households</u>	
1 Person	44,147
2 Persons	46,110
3 Persons	27,713
4 Persons	23,635
5 Persons	10,482
6 or more Persons	6,643

ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Division of Animal Control is operated as an agency for the protection of persons and property under the city government of Charlotte, N.C. and serves both the City of Charlotte and the County of Mecklenburg. For nearly forty years, the City of Charlotte has had an Animal Control agency which is authorized to enforce all state and local laws pertaining to animals and to ensure that all animals within its jurisdiction receive humane care.

The current operation consists of a staff of 40 employees, a fleet of twenty animal control vehicles, an animal shelter with 78 dog runs, an isolation room, a treatment room, a cat/kitten area, a two stall barn, and a

Spay/Neuter Clinic. The animal shelter responds to all calls for service concerning animals within its jurisdictional area. It provides 24 hours per day service and care for injured animals. The shelter maintains an ongoing education and publicity program.

In late 1978 the Animal Control Division underwent some significant changes in management and philosophy which has led to the current animal control program. This program consists of five parts:

1. A low cost Spay/Neuter Clinic which is available to all citizens.
2. Mandatory spay/neuter for all animals adopted from the shelter.
3. Differential licensing fee for dogs and cats.
4. A strong ordinance with stringent enforcement.
5. An on-going education and advertising program.

Tables 4 and 5 provide information on general animal control activities.

TABLE 4

Fiscal Year	<u>Animals Picked-Up and Reclaimed</u>			
	Stray Dogs Picked-Up	Stray Dogs Reclaimed (as % of total)	Stray Cats Picked-Up	Stray Cats Reclaimed (as % of total)
1979/80	9,491 *	1,055 (11.1%)	Statistics not kept	2
1980/81	4,579	1,063 (23.2%)	1,034	30 (2.9%)
1981/82	4,298	1,093 (25.4%)	1,659	42 (2.5%)
1982/83	4,469	1,095 (24.5%)	2,407	38 (1.5%)
1983/84 (11 months)	5,060	1,286 (25.4%)	2,072	71 (3.4%)

* Record keeping standardized and verifiable beginning February, 1980. Old record keeping system very inaccurate.

TABLE 5

Animal Control Budget, 1980-1985

	F/Y 1980	F/Y 1981	F/Y 1982*	F/Y 1983	F/Y 1984	F/Y 1985 (Est.)
Budget	\$443,680	\$503,797	\$579,963	\$800,783	\$1,153,737	\$1,094,270
Revenue (Shelter)	185,246	364,032	302,753	437,513	430,499	430,460
Revenue (County Payment)	N/A	N/A	N/A	170,257	415,345	399,122
Total Revenue	\$185,246	\$364,032	\$302,753	\$607,770	\$845,844	\$829,582
% Budget Offset By Revenue	41.7%	72.2%	52.2%	75.8%	73.3%	75.8%

* February, 1983 - Consolidation of City and County Animal Control agencies occurred.

LOW COST SPAY/NEUTER CLINIC - AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

The Charlotte Spay/Neuter Clinic opened its doors for operation on January 19, 1982. The Clinic is located on the grounds of the Animal Shelter in a separate building. The Clinic is run under contract to the city by the Humane Society of Charlotte. It is not a full service hospital (a concession to local veterinarians) but provides sterilization surgery only. To date this Clinic has performed over 8,100 surgeries and has met the goal proposed in the 1980 Spay/ Neuter Service Feasibility Report of 14.6 surgeries per day.

Initially the Spay/Neuter service was used predominantly by Charlotte citizens who already had animals. The general public was given six months to use the Clinic before the differential license fee went into effect so that no one could complain they had not been able to use the Clinic before having to buy a more expensive tag. In Figure 1 it can be seen that, during the first six months of Clinic operations, the general public used the Clinic heavily. The number of surgeries on animals adopted from the shelter was drastically reduced because the price of adopting animals had risen dramatically (Table 6).

FIGURE 1

SURGERIES PROFILE — GENERAL PUBLIC

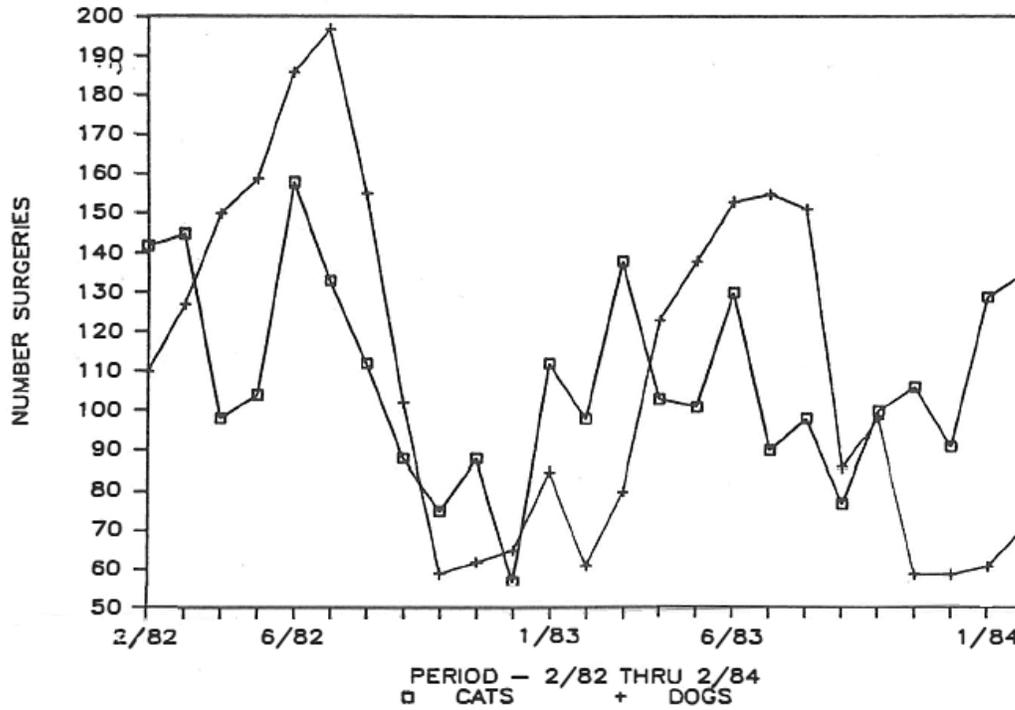


TABLE 6

Adoption Fees and Practice Before and After the New Program

	Price Before		Price After	Included in New Price
Adult Dogs	\$10.00		\$39.50	Spay/Neuter surgery, city license, DHLPP vaccination, heartworm screen.
Puppies	5.00		29.50	Spay/Neuter surgery, DHLPP vaccination, deworm.
		Male	Female	
Adult Cats	\$2.00	\$18.50	\$24.50	Spay/Neuter surgery, city license, FD-FVR-C vaccination.
Kittens	2.00	13.50	19.50	Spay/Neuter surgery, FD-FVR-C vaccination, deworm.

MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER

The trend of general public use of the Spay/Neuter Clinic has decreased over the two year operation. In the same way, the number of mandatory spay/neuters from the shelter (i.e. number of adoptions) has increased over the period. In Figure 2, the percent of mandatory spay/neuters of total surgeries performed has increased steadily from a low of 6% (average) to nearly 18% of total. This trend may indicate that the citizens are accepting the higher price of the shelter animals and adopting more sterilized animals from the shelter. This interpretation is strengthened by the data in Figure 3 which shows the plunge, in January 1982, in adoptions by the new laws and higher in prices. This change was expected and even encouraged since the higher prices became an excellent screening tool. Over the last two years, the adoption rate has slowly increased.

The mandatory spay/neuter program in Charlotte may be a little different from similar programs in that we require that adoptors of adult dogs and cats purchase their animal and pick it up two days later, after the spay/neuter surgery has been performed. There have been surprisingly few complaints about this requirement. Individuals who do not particularly want the surgery and voice their intention not to have it done are informed that the surgery is required by the law. If the potential adopter tries to refuse the surgery, we do not and cannot sell them the animal. By having the program set up in this way, 100% of the adult animals are surgically sterilized before leaving our custody.

FIGURE 2

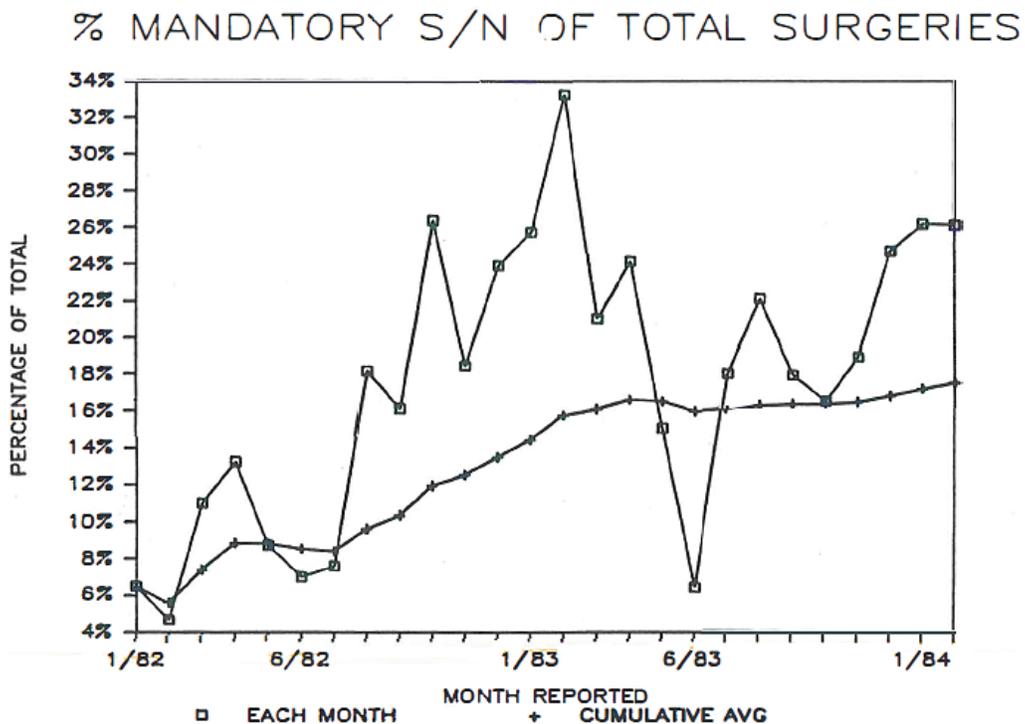
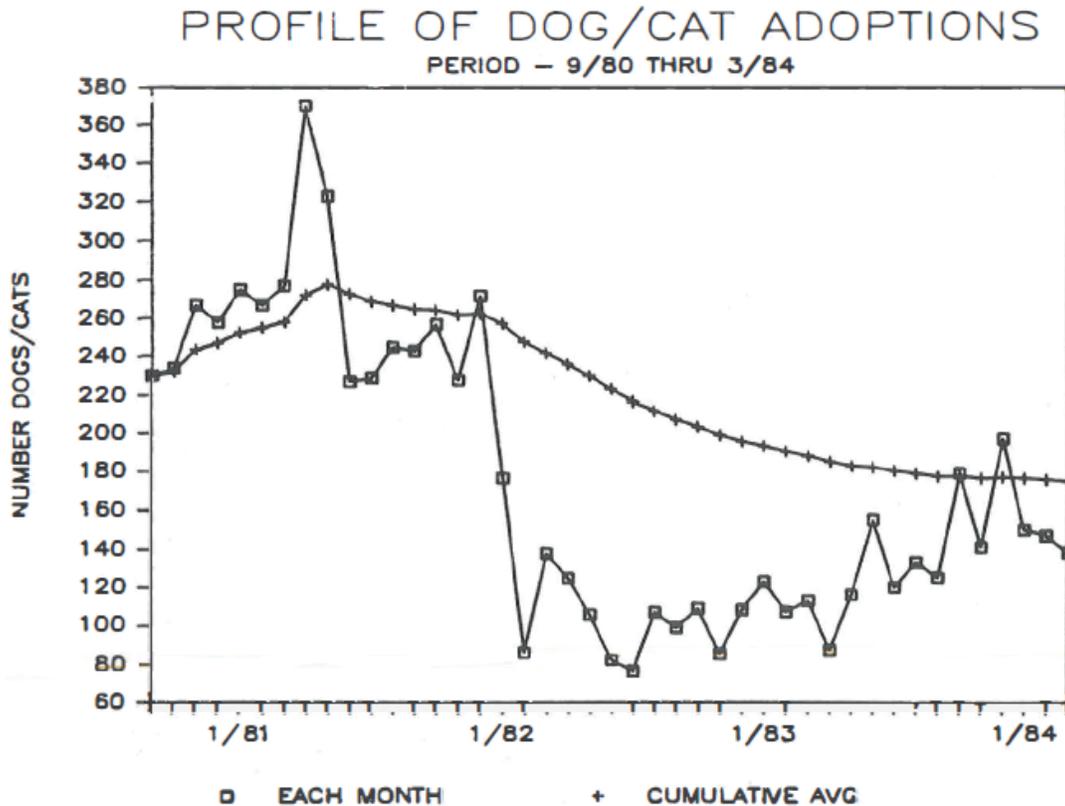


FIGURE 3



Of course with adopted puppies and kittens, we experience a problem very similar to other mandatory spay/neuter programs. Citizens adopt these young animals and never bring them back for surgery. We experienced a 29.6% no show rate on these young animals (see Table 7). To try to combat the problem each citizen adopting a puppy or kitten must sign a contract agreeing to forfeit the animal if they fail "to show" at the Spay /Neuter Clinic on the appointed day. To date, we have "reclaimed" six animals from citizens who have refused to comply. We actively telephone and contact in person all "no shows".

An added feature of our program is our "waiver" policy on reclaimed animals. Citizens reclaiming their dog or cat impounded as a result of a leash law or nuisance complaint can waive their reclaim fee and pay for sterilization surgery. Since January 19, 1982 we have had 121 owners opt for surgery.

TABLE 7

Mandatory Spay/Neuter Adoptions from the Shelter

	<u>Adults</u>		<u>S/N No Shows</u>			
	<u>Cats</u>	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Kittens</u>	<u>Puppies</u>	<u>Kittens</u>	<u>Puppies</u>
1982	79	477	333	321	81 (24.3%)	119 (37.1%)
1983	147	552	433	466	154 (35.6%)	163 (35.0%)
1984 (4 months)	80	222	70	176	5 (7.2%)	8 (4.5%)
TOTALS	1,557		1,792		530 (29.6%)	

The consequence of implementing mandatory spay/neuter has been an increase in the number of euthanized animals. Naturally the fewer animals adopted, the more left to be dealt with in the only manner available. In Figure 4, the number of euthanized animals increased after the new Animal Control program was implemented although the figures have now stabilized. Also, the peak during the 1983 Spring and Summer season was not as high as in past years. Although it is too soon to draw any definite conclusions, the trend is encouraging.

DIFFERENTIAL LICENSING

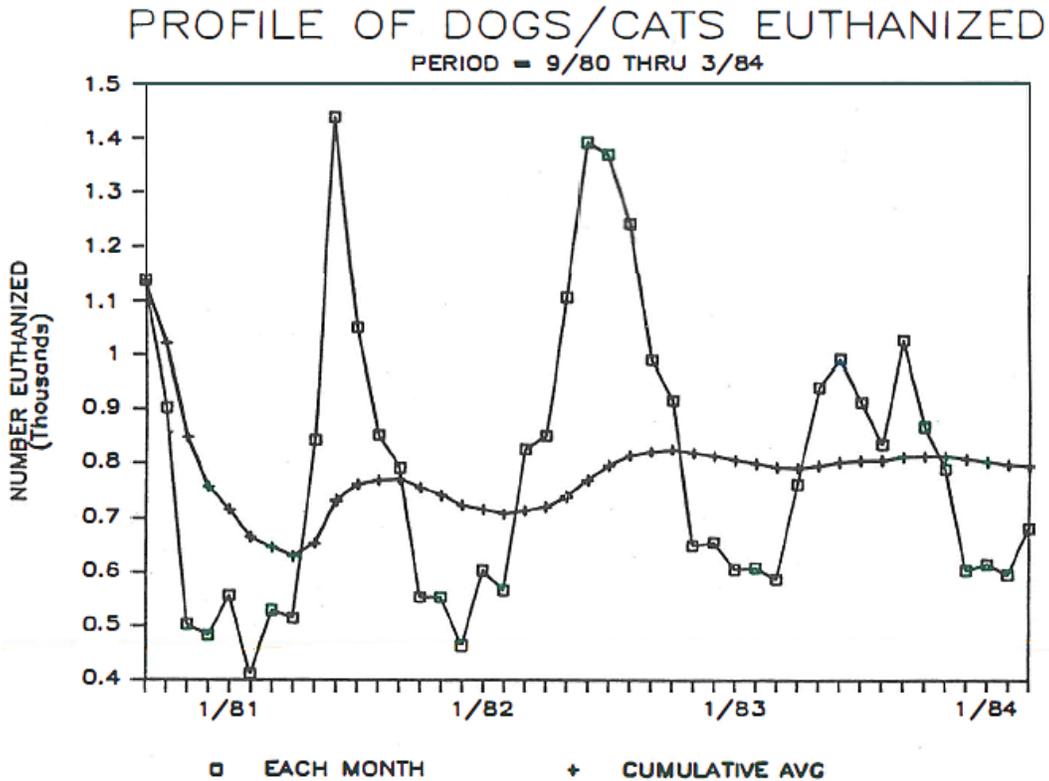
The Charlotte-Mecklenburg program has always stressed that, for any comprehensive animal control program to work, there must be an incentive. As a result, differential licensing was included in our animal control program (Table 8).

TABLE 8

Differential Licenses and Date of Implementation

<u>Sterile</u>	<u>Fertile</u>	<u>Year</u>
\$5.00	\$15.00	F/Y 1982
5.00	20.00	F/Y 1983
5.00	25.00	F/Y 1984

FIGURE 4



The public outcry against the differential was very loud indeed. Owners, especially those who had more than one pet, were faced with a significant license fee each year. Complaints flooded Charlotte's City Council members. Finally, in 1983 the Council decided to stop the escalation at \$20.00 and not to increase to \$25.00. Citizens were not happy but the outcry has subsided and the differential remains at \$5.00 and \$20.00 today.

Table 9 gives data on the licensing history since Fiscal Year 1981. The public's initial reluctance to comply with the ordinance is not evident, but it was certainly felt by the Animal Control personnel. However, the number of licensed animals has increased since 1981 and we are most encouraged by the tremendous increase in the percent of sterile animals being licensed.

STRONG ORDINANCE WITH STRINGENT ENFORCEMENT

The success of any Animal Control program, no matter how well designed, is dependent on stringent enforcement of a good ordinance. Since the 1982 passage of new laws for the comprehensive animal control program, we have experienced a general increase in revenue. Especially interesting is the increase in paid fines, from \$25,790 in Fiscal Year 1980 to over \$60,000 (\$52,742.50 year to date) in Fiscal Year 1984. Citizens not paying their fine within 15 days, must pay an additional \$10.00 delinquency fee. If citations

remain unpaid for 30 days, a criminal summons is issued, requiring appearance in Magistrate Court. Animal Control prosecutes 25 to 40 cases monthly, collecting \$200 to \$300 weekly through the courts.

TABLE 9

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dogs and Cats Licensed,</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Sterile</u>	<u>Fertile</u>	
1981	-----	-----	29,500
1982	6,350	27,650	34,000
1983	16,800	20,700	37,500
1984 (9 mo.)	18,000	18,000	36,000

The Animal Control Division had anticipated that bite reports and cruelty complaints would be positively affected by the new programs. However, both the number of bite reports and cruelty cases have increased since 1980 and 1981 (Table 10). In the last five years, we have made improvements in our reporting and investigating procedures. Until 1979, the Charlotte Animal Control did not investigate cruelty complaints. Citizens have discovered that we actively investigate and prosecute cruelty violations and are reporting these problems to us routinely. A change in our policies five years ago could account for the increase. In the Feasibility Report, we had anticipated a decrease in these numbers.

TABLE 10

<u>Year</u>	<u>Reports of Animal Bites and Cruelty Cases</u>	
	<u>Number of Animal Bites</u>	<u>Cruelty Cases</u>
1980	180	---
1981	280	168
1982	330	210
1983	370	270
1984 (est)	395	295

The number of reported bite cases had definitely been expected to decrease. The steady increase could be attributed to the publicity generated by the rabies epizootic. The Animal Control Division has also tried to communicate to the public the need to report every bite. Through our efforts to inform the public and our own improved in-house procedures, we may have caused the increase in numbers. Another interesting feature of the bite record is that, between November 1983 and May 1984; 64.7% of all bites were

by fertile males and a further 19.2% by fertile females. Thus, 83.8% of all bites were by fertile animals and only 5.5% were by animals known to be sterile. Thus, a spay/neuter program could reduce the problem of animal bites.

EDUCATION/ADVERTISING

We hold 30 to 40 humane education programs in our schools annually. Our long term goal is to have a regular curriculum of humane education so that we can reach all the children. Nearly \$7,000 is spent annually on newspaper ads, bumper stickers, bus placards, and water bill inserts. The local Humane Society also contributes to the educational effort. The Mecklenburg County Humane Society is most active in humane education activities and actively works to promote programs throughout the county.

OTHER PROGRAM RESULTS

In Table 11 and Figures 5-7, further data is outlined. In Table 11, it is evident that the number of animals killed in the street has been decreasing since 1980. We believe this to be a direct result of both our leash law enforcement and the spay/neuter program. However, we are also asked whether the number of animals passing through the shelter is decreasing. We are unwilling to commit ourselves to a definite answer at this time. The number of reclaimed dogs has remained constant (Figure 5) as has the number of stray animals we pick up (Figure 6). However, the number of reclaimed cats is increasing each year although the number by itself is not significant (58 cats to date this fiscal year). This is probably due to the passage and enforcement of cat licensing and inoculation laws. It is also interesting that the tattooing required on all animals sterilized at the Spay/Neuter Clinic has not significantly increased reclaims. Often the owners of tattooed animals call us looking for their animal before we have a chance to notify them.

Figure 7 shows the profile of donated dogs and cats and may be the most significant table in this packet. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Control believes that it is the trend of donated animals (i.e., animals released voluntarily by owners) that show the success of our programs. As you can see, the number is decreasing.

FIGURE 5

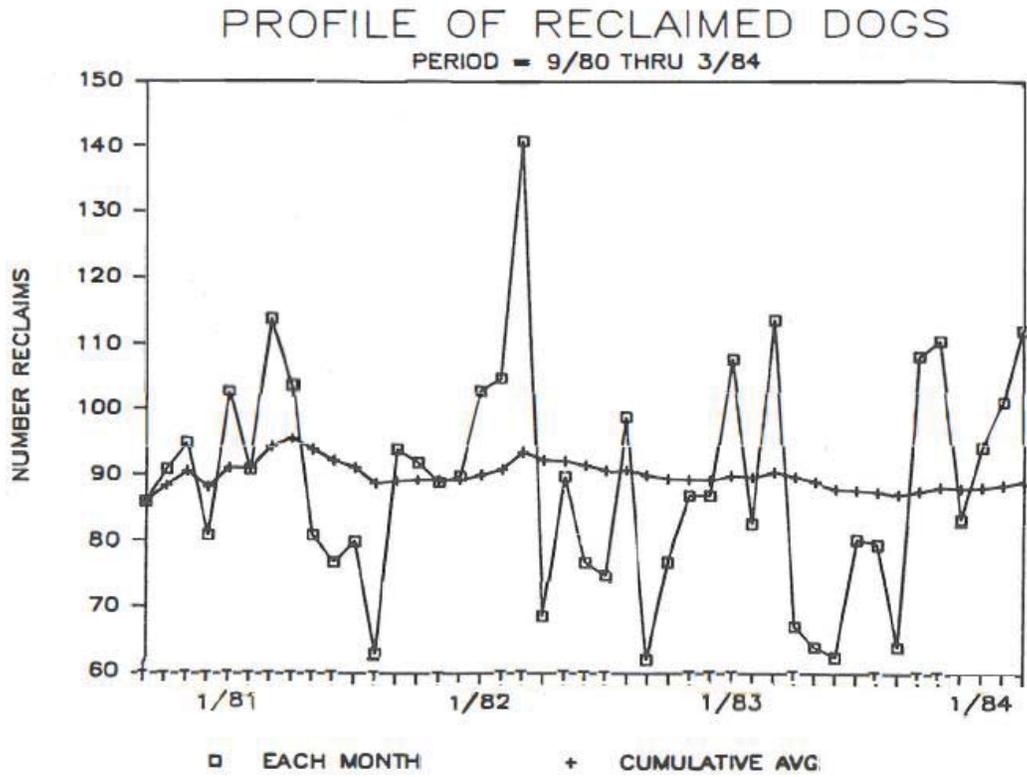
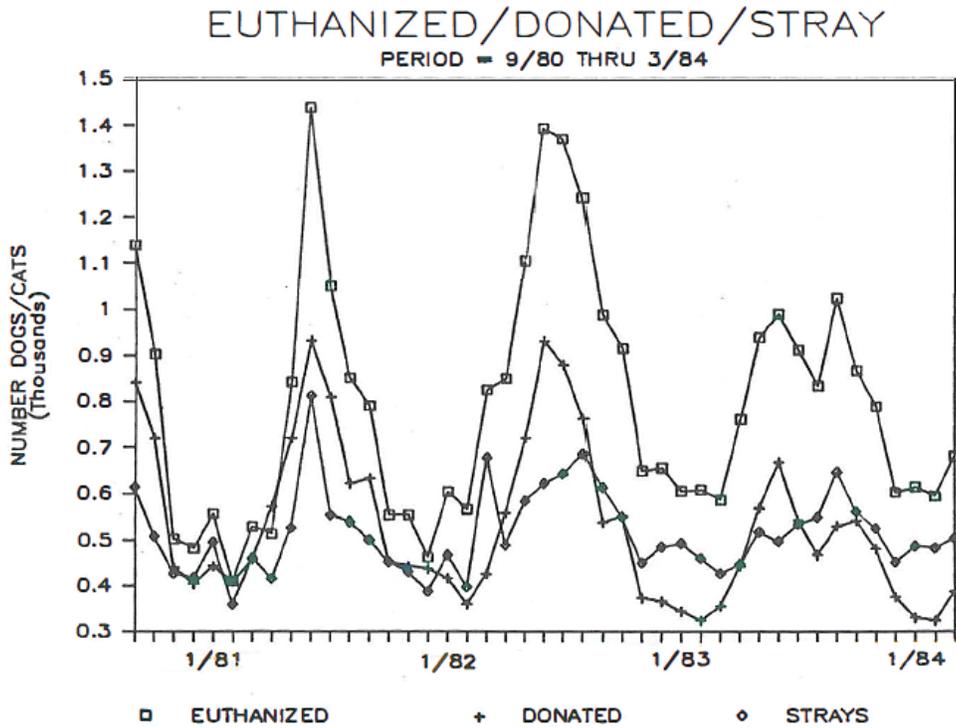


FIGURE 6



In our 1983 peak season, the numbers although high, did not reach the size they did in 1981 or 1982. This is very encouraging. In Figure 8 we have plotted three lines, the number of donated animals, stray animals, and euthanized animals. The peaks for euthanized animals follow very closely the peaks of donated animals, but not always those of stray animals. We believe that the donated population is the main contributing factor to increased euthanasia. The more donated animals that are controlled through our spay/neuter and animal control program, the sooner our goals will be met.

In the original Spay/Neuter Report, five to seven years under the total program was considered to be necessary before large decreases in the animal population would be observed. After two years, small trends can be identified in a number of areas, but more time is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Table 11

Number of Dead Animals Picked Up by The Sanitation Division

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>
1977	8,049
1978	8,403
1979	8,516
1980	9,732
1981	7,007
1982	5,029
1983	5,839
1984 (est.)	5,390

FIGURE 7

