

## A Better Bill for Horses

Thank you for your excellent article on the carriage-horse issue in New York City ["Trotting on Empty," May-June 2010, p. 10]. Our organization, the Coalition to Ban Horse-Drawn Carriages, had been opposed to the "eco-friendly replica cars" bill, Intro 86, because it did not consider what would happen to the horses. They would continue to fall through the cracks, being sent to slaughter auctions. But there is a solution, which should please everyone.

The current law indicates that horses are to be "disposed of ... in a humane manner." There is no description for what this means. It requires sales records to be submitted to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene if a horse is sold in New York City—but not if the horse is sold outside of the city. This means that the horse could go to an auction like those in Unadilla, N.Y., or New Holland, Pa., and the information would not be known or available to the public. Intro 86 would have continued with this provision.

Intro 92 is the reintroduction of Intro 658, the bill to ban the industry, originally introduced in 2007. It included a revision of the humane disposition section and required that horses could only be sold or donated to a private individual, animal sanctuary, or animal protection organization, who would sign an assurance that the horse would not be sold, would be kept solely as a companion animal, would not be employed in another horse-drawn carriage business or as a work horse, and would be cared for humanely for the remainder of the horse's natural life. Transfer records would be required to be sent to the Department of Health.

Council member Melissa Mark-Viverito, the sponsor of the car bill, has agreed to incorporate this section into her bill, and we are looking forward to supporting it. I believe all of the organizations and horse advocates will support this bill because they know it will really save the horses.

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MICHELLE RILEY/THE HSUS

There was a time when most shelters couldn't dream of having a veterinarian on staff. It was just too expensive, and most shelters didn't have budgets that would allow for their expertise. In some cases, animal welfare agencies would even find themselves in conflict with local veterinarians in private practice: As shelters attempted to open subsidized spay/neuter clinics, some vets protested that the practices would affect their business and lure away their customers. Shelter staff would even hear that local veterinarians had advised against shelter adoption because the animals weren't healthy.

Though such problems still come up now and then, overall we can safely say that times have changed for the better! Veterinarians—especially those working in and with animal shelters—have become a great force for progress on animal welfare issues. And by building bridges, shelters and humane-minded vets have come together to make progress for homeless animals.

In the 1970s, veterinarians helped animal shelters put spay/neuter in the spotlight, making it a common practice and a standard for socially responsible pet owners. That's a change that's helped drive the huge reduction in shelter intake numbers over the past decades.

As shelters have become more professionally savvy, increased their fundraising capacity, and grown their influence within their communities, some have hired veterinarians

to support them in their lifesaving missions. These vets have helped shelters develop smart protocols to keep animals healthy and behaviorally sound. And as more shelters focus on saving as many lives as possible, the input of veterinary experts becomes more and more critical—because there's no point in saving animals from neglect and abuse if they simply come into the shelter and become too sick to treat.

Shelter medicine has become a recognized specialty in the veterinary field, with multiple veterinary colleges adding programs to their curricula. And in 2008, the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association ([hsvma.org](http://hsvma.org)) was formed, to serve as a home for veterinary professionals who care about animal welfare issues.

For many shelters, though, hiring a veterinarian can be a challenge, for financial and other reasons. In this issue's "101" Department (p. 37), we look at ways shelters can recruit and screen doctors to help them in their work—and the kind of internal assessment shelters should do before even placing a job ad. We also feature a story on the need for cat identification, both in and out of the shelter; an essay by two veterinary students about the transport program they started to save the lives of shelter animals in Mississippi; and much more.

—Carrie, James, Jim, and Amy  
*Animal Sheltering* magazine staff