

The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy
Animal Studies Repository

1966

Our Pet Population Explosion and Operation SPARED

Kay Clausing
American Welfare Association

Follow this and additional works at: http://animalstudiesrepository.org/acwp_ca

 Part of the [Animal Studies Commons](#), [Bioethics and Medical Ethics Commons](#), and the [Nature and Society Relations Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clausing, K. (1966). Our pet population explosion and Operation SPARED. In R.J. Chenowith (Ed.), *The humane movement, 1966: Selected discussion papers of the National Leadership Conference of The Humane Society of the United States, September 24-26, 1965*, (pp. 32-36).

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the Animal Studies Repository. For more information, please contact eyahner@humanesociety.org.

Our Pet Population Explosion and Operation SPARED

By Mrs. Kay Clausing, Westmont, New Jersey

Education Director, Animal Welfare Association

A national campaign is being launched anew to create an awareness of the damage and cruelty which result from the uncontrolled breeding of dogs and cats — and to promote cooperation and remedial action on ALL fronts. As its chairman, I would have preferred first acting and then talking about accomplishments, for ideas are worthless until they are put into action. However, we do have a master plan, which I shall touch upon briefly, in part. Some of the plan is already in operation.

It has often been said that people in the humane movement spend too much time talking to each other. In a sense, this is true, but the adoption policies of a large percentage of shelters do not indicate that we have gotten our message through to them!

Large numbers of unspayed females are still flowing from shelters of humane societies across the nation. It is difficult to understand why these shelters continue to release females, without making spaying compulsory, having had the experience of getting mama AND her puppies or kittens back six months later, time after time. Although not excusable, even among smaller societies, we feel that these are sometimes motivated by the fact that they want to give the individual animal, which they see before them, a chance for life.

I believe that I also know the reasoning behind some of the larger societies refusing to acknowledge the surplus animal problem. I have heard it said regarding the term surplus animals that this is the trade-mark of another organization, meaning the HSUS, of course.

This evidence of rivalry among humane societies is difficult to understand, since we ALL are working (or should be) for a common cause. As chairman of this Committee, it is my ambition to achieve unity among humane societies regarding solutions to this tragic problem of surplus animals. Unity has already been demonstrated, at least in part, with the Rogers-Pepper Bill. So it is possible, too, with our Committee. To help achieve this, we plan to call this project "Operation SPARED" and invite top officials from leading humane groups who will embrace our unity of purpose to partici-

pate, making this their committee, too. Yes, what I am saying is that the purpose of "Operation SPARED" is not to serve any single humane group, but rather the entire humane movement.

All humane societies are dedicated to preventing cruelty and suffering. No society can effectively prevent cruelty unless it makes spaying compulsory for all females released for adoption and talks spaying to every owner of a female. Even if the home is a good one in every other respect, if a female is permitted to produce even one litter, the humane society is simply delaying or postponing cruelty. In fact, it is perpetuating it. When the female (which your society otherwise placed so carefully) has a litter, often its owners are not qualified to judge what constitutes a good home. In fact, they are relieved to find any home. Many of these puppies and kittens are reaching homes where they will be neglected or cruelly abused—but will continue to reproduce, possibly to be abandoned later. Some are given to wardens or wind up in marts where they are sold cheaply to children whose parents do not even want a pet—or they are sold by weight at rural auctions.

Societies continue to investigate and act upon cruelties which could have been prevented (but weren't) by shutting down the original kitten or puppy mill — and to which the abused animal which they are now trying to help is related. Thus, instead of actively preventing cruelty, I reiterate, many societies are merely delaying it — and perpetuating it.

Because I have worked at grass root levels, I understand how thinly we in the humane movement are already dividing our time and our energies. Thus, to facilitate the participation of individual humane societies, we plan to issue ready-to-use kits. These will include a brief outline of our purpose and goals, along with samples of materials for distribution, and concrete suggestions for putting them to use. Time does not permit my elaborating on this, but we have worked out some of the details, using materials effectively on a tri-county basis on my home grounds. Among them will be a new pamphlet, aimed at the conscience of individual owners of unspayed female pets and unaltered male cats.

There will also be a new folder written to convince dealers, pet shops, and individual breeders of pedigreed pets, of the importance and wisdom of making spaying compulsory for all animals sold or given as pets. Do not underestimate the numbers of these animals. Of the pet advertisements 80% are pedigrees for sale (the other 20% are free kittens and puppies, of course). Many of these end up producing mixed breed litters, too. I first spoke at local kennel club meetings regarding this and my approach was at once accepted. I have since written a condensation of this, entitled "Stop Them From Depreciating Your Breed" which appeared in Popular Dogs magazine a few months ago. As a result of the article, breeders from various

parts of the country have contacted me, all in complete accord — with some even wanting to make castration of their male pedigreed pets compulsory.

The essence of my message was this. Everyone who buys or is given a pedigreed pet fancies himself a breeder, often first because he wants one litter. But this soon becomes a hobby and then a means of making a “fast buck.” He knows little about selective breeding, thus depreciating the breed. You’ve seen this happen to the cocker, boxer, German shepherd, and collie. It is now happening to the beagle, poodle, and the Siamese cat. A pedigree is no longer assurance that the pet will be characteristic of the breed. Fanciers of the breed (and potential buyers) who see these poor specimens, not bred selectively, soon change their minds about owning one. And often the dispositions of these animals are defective, too. The unrewarding, though blameless, pet is soon neglected and given free access to the outdoors where it will mate accidentally and produce mixed breed litters whose offspring also continue to reproduce, ad infinitum!

These backyard breeders undersell the ethical dealers, thus attracting their customers away and flooding the market. Here, too, we have devised solutions for the breeders, along with the mechanics. Purchasers of a pedigreed pet are given a “Proof of Spaying” form, to be completed by their veterinarians, and the dealer or breeder withholds the papers until such proof is presented.

One of the chief obstacles of making spaying compulsory lies in releasing kittens and puppies, to be spayed at a later date. Even humane societies which collect the spaying fee in advance find that the pet owners often do not follow through. Also, a person who is convinced now of the importance of spaying can be less enthusiastic about this a few months later, especially if his financial conditions have changed, or if he has moved beyond the area of the humane society’s jurisdiction. Often, too, it is physically impossible to follow up effectively on these spayings.

For these reasons, this Committee has been exploring a new concept in spaying, which has already been proven to be practical. Whole litters of female kittens and puppies are spayed en masse, in less than an hour, between the ages of 5 and 8 weeks. Although it is a complete spaying operation, the animals are adoptable within 24 hours. There have been no noticeable side effects, long range or otherwise, and the mortality rate is no higher than from spayings performed at a later age. Males, too, can be castrated at the same time, so that no fertile pet need be released.

It has been demonstrated, too, that this spaying technique represents a savings in time, and thus spaying fees can be reduced. Actually, veterinarians using this technique would realize a number of advantages including a monetary gain, for through spaying more

animals, they would acquire many additional life-long clients who will use their services for immunization, etc.

Before this technique will be acceptable, we must first create an awareness among veterinarians regarding the dire need for this. Veterinarians who are not closely associated with humane societies normally see only the animals about which people care. The veterinarians are unaware of the flood of surplus animals which are born to die, almost at once — or which are doomed to prolonged suffering — until death mercifully releases them. These are the animals which reach us in such pitiful condition, if they reach us at all.

The next step in our working with veterinarians, after a local pilot project, will be education through every available means of communication. Our plans include a professionally produced film for veterinarians, demonstrating the technique and explaining its many advantages. It will be shown at county, state and national levels. We shall, of course, continue to explore new drug possibilities and new techniques.

Another area where large numbers of animals are released is public pounds. Here, of course, we shall educate officials on local and state levels regarding the seriousness and magnitude of this problem, through their own publications. We shall work for legislation to make licensing fees for unspayed females prohibitively high and to enact ordinances making immediate spaying compulsory for all females released for adoption.

Every writer knows that he must adapt his materials to the audience which he plans to reach. It is a fact that not everyone is as concerned as we regarding the moral aspects of the surplus animal problem. Thus, our educational efforts must include a variety of approaches.

Incidentally, “Operation SPARED” is meaningful in that the word “Operation” suggests the spaying operation itself, and “SPARED” implies that animals will be spared cruelty and suffering from being born, only to be destroyed promptly or otherwise. Compassionate people, too, will be spared the heartbreak and anguish of the situation. But “Operation SPARED” also has additional significance. The letters S-P-A-R-E-D spell: Spay Pet Animals (to) Reduce Enormous Destruction. The destruction which we plan to reduce is all-inclusive. Obviously it includes the flood of millions of animals destroyed by pounds and shelters, born to die almost at once — or after prolonged suffering. But there is also much destruction of property by stray animals and by those with irresponsible owners, destruction of farm animals and wild life by abandoned animals in an effort to survive, destruction of human life caused by pets on highways, etc. Truly, the surplus animal problem touches the lives of almost every man, woman and child in America.

The humane movement must succeed in creating a powerful public impression of the seriousness and importance of the surplus animal problem. We shall enlist in our cause, inactive, advisory and honorary capacities, prominent people from all walks of life. We shall use every available means of communication including radio, TV, outdoor advertising, newspapers, magazines, transit advertising, specialized publications, along with new and existing materials of our own.

We are confident that after "Operation SPARED" becomes a household word (and it will), the problem will be recognized by all as a major one. We plan to make the term "Pet Population Explosion" as familiar as the expression, "Population Explosion."

Additional plans for our committee, too numerous to even touch upon, are exciting challenges which we feel can be met successfully. Your societies will be contacted at various stages of our development. In the meantime, we are appealing to each of you to participate in this, your "Operation SPARED."

We ask each of you to send us a copy of any and all of your materials related to surplus animals, whether they are already in use or merely being considered. Perhaps you have drafted a model ordinance, or have radio or TV scripts on the subject — or simply a few scattered ideas. Do send them ALL to our clearing house, regardless of whether you feel that they have merit. Let our committee decide this. Possibly even a few words will suggest a new slant or a different approach to us. We do not have all of the answers; possibly you have some of them which we are seeking. Among other things, we are especially interested in learning the mechanics of various compulsory spaying programs in operation. Let us not waste valuable time duplicating efforts, when perhaps you have already said or done it better.

We are counting on each of you to be a member of our brainstorming team in absentia, via long distance. Please flood us with all of your materials, sending them directly to me for expediency, c/o my local society: Animal Welfare Assn., Box 35, Collingswood, N.J. And if you wish to participate more actively in the work of our committee, we would like to hear about this, too.

It is our fondest hope that, with time and continued effort, we shall have disseminated our message so widely that harboring an unspayed female dog or cat will be considered a stigma, and public opinion (and law) will be such that persons will be eager to conform.

Actually, Goethe has given us the magic key: "Only begin and the mind grows heated. Only begin and the task will be completed."

How Can We Best Help Laboratory Animals Now?

By Oliver Evans, Washington, D. C.

HSUS President

Instead of making an attempt to describe all of the varied activities of The HSUS during the past year and to discuss plans for the coming year, I think it is appropriate that I devote my time exclusively to the announced topic, "How can we best help laboratory animals now?"

This is a subject of tremendous importance to The HSUS and to its members. It is a subject of tremendous importance to the humane movement as a whole. And, above all, it is a subject of critical importance to the welfare of the animals themselves.

It is only appropriate that I do so for—as head of The HSUS staff—I made or approved of all decisions involved in the process of drafting the new bill, H.R. 10049, and of negotiating it with Rep. Paul Rogers.

Various drafts of bills were submitted to The HSUS Board of Directors and then, when the last draft was prepared, it was at my suggestion that our Chairman, Mr. Chenoweth, appointed a committee consisting of those five members of The HSUS board who had displayed the greatest interest in laboratory animal legislation and who had examined the drafts submitted with the keenest scrutiny and who had been most discriminating in rejecting some provisions and in making suggestions for improvements in others. This five member committee spent two full days before making its recommendation of approval to the full Board.

It is worth reviewing the events of the last five years. The strategic situation of laboratory animal legislation in the Congress cannot be understood without doing so. The decisions taken by The HSUS Board have validity only in the context of these events.

Five years ago the first bill for the protection of laboratory animals, the Cooper bill, was introduced in Congress. The Cooper bill was followed in the next Congress by The HSUS sponsored Moulder bill and the Clark bill. As most of you know, the Clark bill and the Moulder bill, though much stronger, followed the same general administrative framework: licensing of laboratories and individuals,