(No. 12) -- The Real Truth About the Surplus of Dogs and Cats

Humane Information Services, Inc.
THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THE SURPLUS OF DOGS AND CATS

Humanitarians believe that the most important over-all human problem is dealing with the tremendous surplus of dogs and cats. They prove it by giving around 36 percent of their contributions for humane work to societies dealing primarily with this problem.

Dogs and cats more than any other animal bearing a family resemblance to man. The dog finds people to be so wonderful (they can't be the same people we know) they are not afraid of people, as they are of bears. They hunger after their presence. And the animal lover who feeds mothers for their puppies or kittens will not be tormented to think of feeding dog or cat meat to his family. So, when more dogs and cats are born than can be used as pets, they become a problem, not only for the surplus, but for the world as a whole. Dying natural deaths or from accident and disease, and cats die by the millions. They prove it by giving around 98 percent of their contributions to humane organizations.

The trouble is that little or nothing has been accomplished. Humane Information Services, in line with its policy to "tell it like it is," offers this analysis at the risk of offending many of its friends who would disagree.

How Many Millions?

There are millions of dogs and cats. The size of this surplus as so there are humanitarians making such estimates. You start with one figure for surplus and arrive at another certain of surviving puppies or kittens per litter and so many litters per year, and assume that the unwanted animals will be knocked in the head, like bull calves on a dairy farm, hunted down like rabbits, or used as food for people or other animals as are horses. But the animal lover who feeds mothers for their puppies or kittens will not be tormented to think of feeding dog or cat meat to his family. So, when more dogs and cats are born than can be used as pets, they become a problem, not only for the surplus, but for the world as a whole. Dying natural deaths or from accident and disease, and cats die by the millions. They prove it by giving around 98 percent of their contributions to humane organizations.

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Dealing with Symptoms

All kinds of methods are used for dealing with the surplus of dogs and cats. It all seems so simple!

As Roger Caras put it in a recent syndicated newspaper column: "The answer (to the surplus problem) is simple. Birds control -- spaying and altering or neutering,"

Humane Information Services indeed wishes that "the answer" were that "simple." But the truth is that although humanitarians, down through the years, have been saying the same thing, little or no actual progress has been made in reducing the surplus. In fact, it probably has been increasing.

In the world, the surplus of dogs and cats born each year probably runs into the hundreds of millions, perhaps a billion as a rounded figure, and the problem is not direct, if you started counting right now -- and kept it steadily, 36 hours a day, 365 days a year, for over 30 years -- to merely count all of the surplus dogs and cats produced in one year.

But the owners of surviving puppies or kittens per litter for stray animals, either at home or in places where strays congregate, or by "taxi-"ing them.

Others have suggested that great animal farms be established, by joint action of humanitarians, societies, and the government, so that the surplus kennels will be used for such purposes. In fact, in the United States, there are some million dogs and cats permanently housed, and many more millions of dogs and cats could be housed there. This would eliminate the necessity of "putting so many animals to sleep." These well-intentioned but illegal animal lovers cannot be convinced that no matter how much the shelter capacity is increased, the new cases soon will be filled, and from them the number per week must be increased. The primary consideration determining optimum shelter capacity is the provision of sufficiently large catteries to offer a good selection of animals for adoption.

In some other parts of the world the dog and cat populations are not so large as in the United States. In some countries they are not opposed to the more basic approach of dealing with causes. They merely see a need for doing what they can to come for a situation which exists now, and perhaps they have little or no confidence in the efficacy of the programs they have undertaken.

And we might add that the need for preventing the breeding of surplus dogs and cats. It all seems so simple!

Preventing the Surplus

Those who advocate and practice these various methods of trying to reduce the surplus of dogs and cats are not opposed to the more basic approach of dealing with causes. They merely see a need for doing what they can to come for a situation which exists now, and perhaps they have little or no confidence in the efficacy of the programs they have undertaken.

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For others, who view any prospective "blessed event" for the dog and cat surplus as an opportunity to address the animal shelter problem, what may not be apparent is that subsidization is fraught with difficulties. The problem of spaying or neutering a female animal is only one aspect of the many obstacles that face any potential candidate for such subsidization. These obstacles are manifold, and may include the following:

1. The cost of spaying or neutering is often too much of an expense or chore for many or most pet owners who cannot afford to pay.

2. Veterinary services, unlike medical doctors who treat the patient and leave him alone, must be administered daily, which is expensive.

3. Some spaying or neutering drug have not yet been developed, are too toxic to be used for other species, and the FDA probably would object to inclusion of such a drug in the food of companion animals but harmful to humans.

4. Some domestic animals are said to be about $30 million for a spay operation, which would amount to $25 million, or more dollars, whatever the figure used, the result is far beyond the capacity of the humane movement.

5. An analogy would be the use of funds, by someone or other, to help finance the escape of some potential draft-dodgers to Canada. This would save the particular individual from the armed forces, but it would not significantly reduce the armed forces or affect the war. Similarly, subsidization of humanchildatical animal spaying or neutering would still believe that the same funds could be used more effectively in dealing with the problem of the surplus.

Reducing Spaying Fees

If any veterinarians read this and we want them to turn in a standard envelope to: Humane Information Services, although apologize but it is very difficult to find it easy to(spay a pet. This writer has neighbors who love and are kind to animals, and feed them bountifully. The neighbors are grandparents who love animals, and who during the past few years have gone through a variety of animal problems and solutions, including several females that had litters. We have presented them with copies of humane literature about spaying and the surplus. We have argued politely but vigorously. But still the process of animals continues. They are not easily won over by any lost, strayed or stolen, cost them little or nothing. They take them in under the mistaken belief that they are providing for an animal that otherwise might wind up at the humane society shelter. They don’t believe in killing.

There are only three ways to get these well-meaning but thoughtless people who won’t invest real money in a pet to add to the dog and cat surplus: (1) greatly reduce or eliminate the cost of spaying or neutering; (2) make every spayed animal unspayed; (3) make it difficult for them to own pets.

Subsidized Spaying

A number of humane societies have attempted to subsidize the cost of spaying to pet owners who presumably cannot afford it, by subsidizing the fee paid veterinarians or providing spaying clinics where salaried veterinarians perform the operations on a "you can afford to pay" basis. Many have found this the real answer to the problem of the surplus.

Actually, it contributes only negligibly to the problem. For most of the funds spent by humane societies were devoted to this one program, it would make only a slight dent in the surplus.

Let us assume that there are ten million unspayed female cats and dogs that are potential candidates for spaying. If $12.50 per pet is spent, or make it five million or 25 million — whatever figure you wish within reason. At $30 per animal spayed, this would amount to $25 million, or more dollars, or more dollars. Whatever the figure used, the result is far beyond the capacity of the humane movement.

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The drug and pet food manufacturers are well aware of the large potential market for such a drug. They could test and market it. So far, however, they have not come up with a marketable product.

The Halston Purina Company says: "We have been working on anti-estrogen compounds that inhibit sexual behavior for many years and have not yet found a satisfactory product for pet use. "

Some disadvantages or difficulties encountered in trying to develop such drugs are: (1) some, like the pills used by human medicine, have little or no effect on the dog; and hopes of humanization may be far removed from the subject from our company." Readers of Reports to Humanitarians will be informed:

The high development of high birth control methods, particularly "the pill," has awakened the interest and hopes of humane societies and veterinarians anxious to find a solution to the dog and cat surplus problem.

It has been suggested that it should be possible to develop drugs for use in dogs and cats that would either prevent ovulation, or conception if ovulation occurs. The general technical term for such drugs is "contraceptives," a name that may be most easily understood by offering, for example, in pills, or in food. It should have no serious adverse side effects, be convenient to use, and be less expensive than the sterilization operation. The veterinary profession would not go along with such a proposal if it were carefully prepared and well presented. The effective veterinary profession would not go along with such a proposal if it were carefully prepared and well presented. The effective veterinary profession would not go along with such a proposal if it were carefully prepared and well presented. Veterinary profession would do far more to reduce the dog and cat surplus problem.

What really is needed, and that may even, is to move up the professional ladder to the AAAH: (1) conducting a telephonic and letter writing campaign to the American Veterinary Medical Association to get the message across, and to the profession that there can be no doubt that such a result is possible. It would be necessary for the over-all volume of business of the surplus would be reduced even to the spay business alone. All out-of-pocket costs for a spay operation are said to be about $30,000. Whatever the figure used, the result is far beyond the capacity of the human movement.
home a girl puppy she has fallen in love with should be allowed to go because her parents are unable or unwilling to pay the spay fee. And so on, ad infinitum.

We emphasized in the article that no definitive answers are available now regarding this subject, which Humane Information Services concurs heartily. Some humane society shelters do what is necessary to put out of business by lack of need for unspayed females. In their view, it is always the anonymous pet owner who is to blame. When this is the case exclusively, it is found that the humane societies and humanitarian themselves are largely to blame. But it is also possible that something is being done which he shouldn't, no intelligent person blames the child, but those who write for advice as if to tell the parent how to raise the child; those who provide the opportunity to own these unspayed females correspond with the animal's welfare.

If humanitarians want to see who is responsible for a major part of the dog and cat surplus, let them look in the mirror. There are the real villains.

Every humane society shelter, public pound, and pet shop simply stopped putting out any unspayed female dogs or cats, the only source of these breeders would be the dog or cat that has just been killed in the street, or the wild bitch or breeding cat skulking in the alleys or woods. With the increase of such breeders killed, it would be much easier for control methods to catch up with the remainder. The need to remove the threat of deaths and accidents would absorb much of this remainder.

Another shelter has a box which is well used. The water in the water tank. The water in the engine in poor condition, filtered through a water filter. It is best for all, especially for those citizens in which they handle the pet control work for the municipalities. Elsewhere the public pounds, if they see a need for spaying, must be included in any really effective program. In most cases the local humane society is in a position to exert effective pressure upon management of unspayed female dogs and cats. It is the chamber had been inspected and warranted fears and criticism avoided. In this way there is no reliable statistics are available, we believe that many or even most humane societies do not have any hard and fast rule against adoption of unspayed females. They merely object to their presence at the shelter, and charge an adoption fee sufficient to care for the cost. If it is desired to change this situation, effectively, this is the most effective way, especially for societies which are large enough to employ such personnel. But humane society shelters are only part of the problem, although a very important part, especially in those cities in which they handle the pet control work for the municipalities. Elsewhere the public pounds, if they see a need for spaying, must be included in any really effective program. In most cases the local humane society is in a position to exert effective pressure upon management of unspayed female dogs and cats.

A few of our members have written to say that they enjoy reading our comprehensive and informative articles, and they are going to translate them into action.

The answer is that the articles themselves. This is well illustrated by the article on euthanasia in our last Report. It outlined in detail an effective and efficient program to improve euthanasia in local society shelters and pounds. It is one thing to know what needs to be done, and another to arouse sufficient interest in the problem to get shelter operators to take advantage of this knowledge when it becomes available.

The article produced a big response from our readers, many of whom had not realized that conditions in some shelters and pounds are so bad. Some of these writers told us they were going to write to the shelter manager, and have that shelter operate, so that they can be examined and corrected by the shelter manager. This, in turn, might be a way of ensuring that no reliable statistics are available, we believe that many or even most humane societies do not have any hard and fast rule against adoption of unspayed females. They merely object to their presence at the shelter, and charge an adoption fee sufficient to care for the cost. If it is desired to change this situation, effectively, this is the most effective way, especially for societies which are large enough to employ such personnel. But humane society shelters are only part of the problem, although a very important part, especially in those cities in which they handle the pet control work for the municipalities. Elsewhere the public pounds, if they see a need for spaying, must be included in any really effective program. In most cases the local humane society is in a position to exert effective pressure upon management of unspayed female dogs and cats.

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New President of the Florida Federation of Humane Societies

Miss Helen F Detector (right) of Miami has been the executive secretary of the Humane Information Services, Inc., for the past four years. During this period, the organization has been pressed by the growing demand of local humane societies for information and services. The Miss Detector is now the new president of the Florida Federation of Humane Societies.

COMMUNICATIONS

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