Why Cats Need To Be Licensed

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

Cats can’t wear tags. Everybody knows that.” How many times have you heard that one? Perhaps, way back in the dawn of dog control, people said the same thing about their canines. Now licensing a dog is expected—like taxes or the utility bill.

But a cat wear a collar and tag? The notion raises eyebrows and unfounded concerns. In reality, cats should be licensed for the same reason dogs are—so they can be returned to their owners. And with the ever-growing number of cats in this country, it is becoming more imperative that communities and states take action.

The number of owned cats continues to rise. With few exceptions, shelters are handling more cats now than five years ago, and in many communities, the number of cats now exceeds the number of dogs handled. Dennis Moore, director of Palm Beach County
Why License, Anyway?

To understand why cat licensing is necessary, it is helpful to look at the reasons for licensing dogs. Dog licensing has been used successfully to help build humane animal control programs, handle animal problems, curb pet overpopulation (through the use of differential licensing), and return owned pets to their rightful owners. People want dogs controlled to protect the peace and well-being of neighborhoods and to be able to identify roaming animals.

From a nuisance standpoint, dogs pose problems when they bite people or other animals, chase cars, get into garbage, bark, and dig up lawns, among other things. All these actions cause people to complain about dogs and to encourage the community to find means of abating these problems. License fees help pay for animal control facilities as well as officers to resolve complaints and impound stray dogs.

Through the use of differential licensing (charging a higher license fee for unaltered animals), animal control departments have been able to encourage the spaying and neutering of dogs and make an impact on pet overpopulation. In many communities where differential licensing has been in place for several years, the number of dogs handled has either held steady or even decreased, and the number of puppies has slacked off still further. Statistics from the Massachusetts SPCA (MSCPA) illustrate the point: in 1988, the eight MSCPA shelters took in 10,718 dogs and 3,000 puppies. In 1990, they took in 9,225 dogs and 1,933 puppies. Incidentally, the numbers of cats taken in during the same years were 12,968 in 1988 and 14,152 in 1990. For kittens, the numbers are even more astounding: 13,294 in 1988 and 13,200 in 1990.

As humane leaders, the ability to affect pet overpopulation is of utmost importance, as is the ability to return a lost pet to his or her owner. A dog with a license tag is just a phone call away from being returned home. Without it, the chances are very slim. For example, the average redemption rate for cats, who are traditionally not licensed, is about 2 percent. However, the rate for dogs runs between 25 and 30 percent.

Foremost in the minds of community agencies is the number of cats is growing exponentially. And given the rate at which cats reproduce, it is no wonder that the cat has surpassed the dog as the primary domestic vector of rabies, with 212 confirmed rabid cats in 1989 versus 160 rabid dogs.

“Why License, Anyway?”

Government, public safety, and animal control and the humane community.

Cats pose a much greater threat to wildlife than dogs. Countless wild animals die needlessly every year at the paws of free-roaming cats. Cats are independent and can’t tolerate being tagged, collared, and do wear elastic or break-away collars with tags attached to them.

Public safety, and hand-in-hand with a dog license goes the rabies vaccine, which should be given every year to dogs. It can work for cats, too.

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talk to their council. I asked them, for example, if they've ever been awakened at two o'clock in the morning by a female cat in heat under their bedroom window, or if they've ever smelled the urine of a tomcat who's sprayed the side of the house on a hot day? These examples made them see the problems cats cause every day."

Using the above arguments, Compton was successful in getting cat licensing in Ft. Wayne, and their program can serve as a model for others. Remember that licensing can also be a state-wide requirement. Maryland, Oklahoma, and Washington have cat licensing laws.

The first task Ft. Wayne faced was to inform the community about the licensing requirement. Newspaper ads and inserts in utility bills worked well for Ft. Wayne. An ongoing public relations campaign for the animal control division helps keep residents informed on all animal issues.

Regarding the license fee, Compton suggests initiating a high differential fee after the first so or the cat licensing requirement. Ft. Wayne began with a differential of $4 for a sterilized cat versus $20 for an unsterilized one. As a result, they lost a lot of volunteer licensing. "We really made more work for ourselves this way," she says. "If we had kept the differential down the first year, we would have had more volunteer licensing. Without that we had to find the cat owners ourselves. The hard part is identifying the cat owners in the first place." Ft. Wayne aggressively enforces its ordinance, which is the key to any cat licensing requirement. They devote two staff members to tracking down unlicensed cats as part of their duties. Two days out of the week, the permit officer goes door-to-door, checking on licenses. On the other days, the officers work by phone, contacting people who place pet ads in the newspaper. Ft. Wayne is tough on offenders. "We used to issue warning tickets," Compton says. "Now they get fined the first time."

Of course, community members are a great help in enforcing the law when they call in complaints concerning about adopting cat licensing. Without a cat licensing program, Smith wants to see cats licensed and protected. "I get 6,000 calls a year about cats, and I can't do anything. If a cat is injured in the street in Ohio, there is no one who can pick it up." Smith advocates that the public be informed of the fact that cats have no rights without licensing and that their owners are not held accountable for what their pets do. ACOs should be involved from the beginning when drawing up cat licensing laws. Professional training on trapping, handling, and sheltering cats should be sought. Most importantly, money for the required facilities and personnel must be raised to ensure that the cats will be properly cared for once the licensing law is enacted. A measure has been drawn up in Ohio that would fund animal control for cats and dogs via a two-cent charge per every pound of cat or dog food sold. This way, pet owners would be paying for the services, and the revenue to take on cat licensing would be in place. Additionally, Smith urges callers who complain about cats to write their lawmakers. This way, lawmakers will see that control and protection of cats is a viable concern of voters and taxpayers.

Why Some People Are Concerned About Adopting Cat Licensing/Control

Many ACOs are not very warm to the idea of cat licensing, and their concerns are legitimate. These concerns generally fall into two categories: funding and enforcement.

ACOs are afraid that if a cat licensing program is passed in their area that additional duties will be thrust upon them without the revenues or training to do the job," says Stephanie Smith, director of the Montgomery County Animal Shelter (6550 Webster St., Dayton, OH 45414). At a time when many animal control departments are already overburdened handling dogs, the last thing they need is the addition of controlling cats. But like many ACOs who are worried about the funding and enforcement of a cat licensing program, Smith wants to see cats licensed and protected. "I get 6,000 calls a year about cats, and I can't do anything. If a cat is injured in the street in Ohio, there is no one who can pick it up." Smith advocates that the public be informed of the fact that cats have no rights without licensing and that their owners are not held accountable for what their pets do. ACOs should be involved from the beginning when drawing up cat licensing laws. Professional training on trapping, handling, and sheltering cats should be sought. Most importantly, money for the required facilities and personnel must be raised to ensure that the cats will be properly cared for once the licensing law is enacted. A measure has been drawn up in Ohio that would fund animal control for cats and dogs via a two-cent charge per every pound of cat or dog food sold. This way, pet owners would be paying for the services, and the revenue to take on cat licensing would be in place. Additionally, Smith urges callers who complain about cats to write their lawmakers. This way, lawmakers will see that control and protection of cats is a viable concern of voters and taxpayers.
A Camcorder Can Be a Worthwhile Investment

By Geoffrey L. Handy

"If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video is worth a thousand times a thousand," says David Morowitz, a prosecutor with the attorney general's office for Rhode Island. Video to help prosecute civil and criminal cases. Videography in animal cruelty cases, and what advantages as evidence does a videotape have over still photographs.

According to Frantz Dantzler, director of The HSUS North Central Regional Office, increasing numbers of humane investigators are using video to help prosecute cruelty cases. "Video is now a common commodity that most organizations can budget for," he says. "It's a great tool to have."

But Dantzler stops short of a blanket endorsement of camcorders over still cameras for evidentiary purposes. "Only in certain instances would a video be better than still photos for prosecuting more cruelly cases," he says. "In man's cases, in fact, the best scenario would be a combined effort of video and stills."

So why use a camcorder at all when a still camera is much cheaper, easier, and more convenient to use, and often more useful in court? The answer to that question goes something like this:

Still photography is preferable for helping prosecute the majority of cruelty cases, but videography, in certain cases, can be far more effective. And video can be put to good use outside the courtroom.

Dantzler points out, one need look no further than the videotape of the Los Angeles police beating last March to understand how much more powerful video can be than still photos. The same holds true for incidents of cruelty to animals. In a well-publicized case involving the Animals' Farm Home in Ellenville, NY, over 1,000 animals were found living in horrendous conditions. During the initial raid, investigators from the Ulster County SPCA and county district attorney's office brought a camcorder with them. "When the investigators went in, they witnessed several dogs actually cannibalizing another dog," said Frank Ribaudo, program coordinator for The HSUS New England Regional Office. "On the videotape, you could hear the dogs growling and fighting, and you could actually hear the dogs chewing on the flesh and bone of the dead dog. To take a photograph of that makes an impact. But to take a video of the dogs cannibalizing and fighting among themselves over this dead animal—well, it could actually hurt your case."

According to Ribaudo, courts in many jurisdictions will allow investigators to submit a tape that has some segments edited out, as long as they submit the original tape in its entirety along with it. Other jurisdictions will accept only unedited tapes as evidence, but allow investigators to fast-forward through portions for the convenience of the court. A judge may also rule in advance that parts of the tape are inadmissible because they may be prejudicial or inflammatory, and order that they be edited out.

Investigators must be careful to videotape everything at a cruelty scene that is helpful to the case. This underscores the importance of planning, as much as possible, the sequence and flow of testimony and introduction of evidence, and they can't be passed around, held, or looked at repeatedly.

35mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera, for instance, a camcorder has instant playback capabilities. At the cruelty scene, the investigator can immediately rewind the tape and use the camcorder as a playback unit to view the footage on the tape; still cameras, unless they are Polaroid or other instant-film cameras, don't provide that luxury. Similarly, a camcorder can be used to quickly convince a magistrate or judge to issue a search warrant or complaint order. And, as HSUS Vice President for Companion Animal Issues Phyllis Wright says, video can also be used as a reference tool for writing up case reports later.

Despite these advantages, 35mm cameras remain the preferred visual tool for most investigative applications. They're several hundred dollars cheaper, to begin with, and many investigators find them easier to lug around during investigative work.

More significantly, videotapes suffer the same courtroom disadvantages as color slides. The investigator must make advance arrangements to ensure that there is a VCR and several video monitors in the courtroom so that the judge, jury, and defense can all view the videotape. Unlike photographs, videotapes tend to disrupt the smooth flow of testimony and introduction of evidence, and they can't be passed around, held, and looked at repeatedly.

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• Black out or tape over the red recording light on the camcorder. Not only is this a must for telephoto shots and for long periods of taping.
• Don't be afraid to use the telephoto lens. Remember that the lens is faster than the eye. When panning the camcorder at a cruelty scene, go slowly. Pause for at least five seconds when stopping to focus on an item of particular interest.
• Document your tapes by using the date but not the time, a reference tool for writing up case reports later. He or she, for instance, must be careful not to make remarks that could damage his or her case.

According to a local society that uses video to put together a program for schoolchildren, "They could illustrate some of the things that the ACO does, and some of the situations that a cruelty investigator encounters. It's a natural, because kids love to watch TV in any form." Or the society could create a general promotional tape of the shelter and the services it provides for viewing at local libraries and other community organizations' meetings.

Some Simple Videographic Techniques

Similar to still cameras, shooting effective videos for courtroom and educational purposes takes a little practice. Ribaudo offers these tips for improvement:

• Use a tripod as often as possible to ensure steady, controlled images—especially for telephoto shots and for long periods of taping.
• Don't be afraid to use the telephoto lens. Remember that the lens is faster than the eye. When panning the camcorder at a cruelty scene, go slowly. Pause for at least five seconds when stopping to focus on an item of particular interest.
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A humane society or animal control department, Dantzler says, could budget for one camcorder to be used alternately by the agency’s investigators and education or public relations coordinators. For smaller agencies that may not use a camcorder enough to justify the cost, Ribaudo suggests that they rent one for major cases such as those involving police raids.

Whether or not they are willing or able to invest in a camcorder, few investigators can deny the power of video in today’s age of television. “We live in a world where we see, hear, and even where we smell,” Ribaudo says. “A video comes the closest to showing what the investigator had actually witnessed.” When a video shows cruelty to animals, it can be persuasive indeed.

**Which Format Should You Buy?**

For organizations that decide to purchase a camcorder, Dantzler recommends either of two options: “I would look for a bargain first,” he says. “If that bargain happens to be VHS format, that’s fine. But if the agency is buying for the future and wants something that will probably last a few extra years as far as its appeal and advantages, then I would definitely go with 8mm format.”

Eight millimeter camcorders are likely to become the leader in the camcorder market within a few years. They provide excellent sound and image quality, use smaller tapes that provide two full hours of recording time, and are increasingly priced competitively with VHS units. They’re also more compact than standard VHS camcorders, although they’re no smaller than the compact VHS units (dubbed VHS-C) common­ly sold now. Like VHS-C camcorders, 8mm units are easier to tote around and easier to conceal for secretive work. However, as both Dantzler and Ribaudo point out, their size and light­ness also make them more difficult to hold steady without a tripod.

Another negative is that until the 8mm format really catches on, 8mm tapes will usually have to be transferred to VHS format to be used in court or shown for educational or promotional purposes. But this can be done simply by connecting the 8mm camcorder to a VHS recorder.

Regardless of which format you decide to buy, keep in mind that costly high-resolution variants such as Super VHS or Hi8 are unnecessary for most shelters’ needs. It is a good idea, however, to purchase a camcorder that works well in low-light situations (a lux rating of 3 is recommended).

**No Life for a Cat**

By Linda Reider, Educational Publications, Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV)

As the weather turns colder and the sharp ice forms, we see her, the ragged, hungry cat. She watches us with wide, soulful eyes as we hurried­ly leave the warmth of our homes for work each morning. At odd moments during the day, we think of her. Should she be a neighbor’s cat? Why does she look so thin? She’s probably just a stray. We feel guilty imagining our own cats, sleek and well fed, curled up on their favorite cushions by the window for an afternoon nap. Is she tame? Perhaps we’ll put some food out tonight.

It isn’t long before we are leaving a bowl of dry cat food on the stoop for her regularly. The stray cat appears every morning and then vanishes when the food is gone. Soon other scrappy cats and half-grown kittens begin to hang around the yard. We catch glimpses of them eating, but they scatter when a human approaches. One strangely red tabby seems to be ill. His red­rimmed eyes squint and run. The sick cat doesn’t jostle for the food like the others, and it is not long before he disappears completely.

We feed the hungry band of panhandlers through the winter. When the warm spring days arrive, we find that the group has grown and now includes a new litter of kittens. The babies are adorable, but wild. They hiss and lash out with tiny sharp claws when we try to touch them.

Unknowingly, and out of the kindness of our hearts, we have created, or at least increased, a gang of feral cats. The females give birth up to three times a year, during the warm months, producing litter after litter of wild kittens. The un­neutered males battle over territory and even at­ tack our own pets, inflicting gashes that run up vet bills.

Such a gang of cats acts as a pool for the dread­ful feline diseases: distemper, feline leukemia, even rabies. They are almost always weak and suffer from upper respiratory infections. Their wounds heal slowly and imperfectly as they are not treated by a veterinarian.

Death for feral cats comes early and never pleasantly. They freeze to death, die of starvation or disease, and many times are killed by cars, dogs, even humans. The average life span of a feral cat is only two to three years.

Where do they come from, these homeless, un­manageable cats? How many of them live in our country? What can we possibly do to help them?

Since domestic cats are not native to the United States, we can only surmise that feral cats are descended from unneutered stray and abandoned house pets. Their number is not known, but judging from the over 300 feral cats brought to our small humane society in 1989, it is frighteningly large. The Humane Society of Huron Valley (3100 Cherry Hill Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105) is called in hundreds of times each year to help livetrap wild cat populations at residences where they have become overwhelming. At one address alone, 64 cats and kittens were captured. At another, eight feral cats were livetrapped, and every single one tested positive for feline leukemia.

What can we do about the feral cat problem? The humane solution involves eliminating the ex­isting wild populations while at the same time preventing more cats from becoming feral.

Eliminating the feral cats should be accom­plished through livetrapping and humanely euthanizing. Although some people advocate poisoning, it is clear that this method is neither humane nor safe. Poisoning results in painful suffer­ing before death. In addition, other animals, both domestic and wild, and even children can in­gest the poisonous bait, making it extremely un­saf e to use.

Others assert that feral cats can and should be tamed and placed for adoption by humane societies. It is possible to tame some feral cats, although it is a laborious process complete with the risk of personal injury. Taming also is not
we advocate euthanizing feral cats instead of tam­
an average of 60 healthy, behaviorally sound cats
over four million felines are euthanized in
limited time and resources taming wild cats in
the face of such a terrible surplus.
die on their own without human intervention?
predictably successful. However, the main reason
couldn't we capture them, have them vaccinated
Surely this route is more natural? Or better yet,
and sterilized, and return them to the streets?
cats in just seven years!

What about just leaving the feral cats alone to
die on their own without human intervention? Surely
this route is more natural? Or better yet,
capture, have them vaccinated and sterilized, and return them to the streets? Certainly not!

We are convinced that a feral cat's "natural"
demise in the wild is inhumane. One-time vac­
cination and even sterilization won't prevent the
violent deaths described earlier. Although they
are no longer companion animals, feral cats are
by-products of our society. We domesticated the
cat thousands of years ago, and now our strays
and throw-aways make up the feral population. It
is therefore our responsibility to clean up this
mess, and do so in a humane manner.

We suggest a three-part solution to the feral cat
dilemma.
1. Do not feed feral cats.
2. Livetrapping feral cats and bring them to the
animal shelter.
3. Be a responsible pet owner. Responsible care
of your own pet cats will diminish the number of
cats who become feral strays, besides reducing the
terrible cat overpopulation problem.

Begin by keeping cats indoors at all times to
protect them from injury and loss.

Collar and tag your cats and make sure they
are boosted against rabies, distemper, and feline
leukemia. Since virtually every pet, including
indoor-only pets, becomes lost at least once in his
or her life, these precautions will help yours
return home healthy. To help make cat tagging
more widespread, urge your local representatives
to create cat licensing laws.

Of course, neuter or spay your cats by the age of
six months. If you do end up with a litter of kit­
tens, do not sell them, give them away free, or
turn them loose in the country. Please bring them
to the animal shelter so they can be adopted to
homes under sterilization contracts. Even one
unsterilized cat can be the source of over 420,000
cats in just seven years!

The fictitious feral cat at the beginning of this
article represents one of many living near your
house. Please care enough about the tragedy of
feral cats to become part of the solution.

Reprinted from HSHV's Shelter Life, Winter 1990.

New York Man Pleads Guilty to Horse Abuse,
Pays $4,000 Restitution to SPCA

By Geoffrey L. Handy

In October 1989, the Ulster County SPCA (P.O.
Box 3124, Kingston, NY 12401) received an
anonymous report of horse neglect on a local
property.

When SPCA officers went to investigate, they
found nine horses kept at a private dump about a
mile off the main road. According to Executive
Director Valeria McCusker DeSantis, the horses'
conditions could have been better, but were not
bad enough to prosecute under New York's ani­
mal cruelty laws. She said the owner was bel­
ligerent and resistant to education, and warned
her in a threatening manner not to return to the
property without a warrant.

On June 27, 1990, the SPCA received another
complaint about the horses—this time from a
woman willing to sign a statement that the
horses were starving and dying. SPCA Peace Of­
ficer Faye Ackert promptly contacted the district
attorney's office, which assigned Assistant D.A.
Jon Simonson to the case. Simonson helped them
with the search warrant application, and sched­
uled a meeting with a judge that evening. Judge
William Conner signed the warrant, and, upon
hearing about the previous encounter with the
horses' owner, told the SPCA to contact a police
agency for assistance.

Armed with the warrant, and accompanied by a
veterinarian and three police deputies from the
Ulster County Sheriff's Department, SPCA of­
ficers returned to the property the following day.
This time, there was no doubt about the cruelty
involved. They found three stallions and two
mares on the property, all appaloosas who were
severely malnourished. According to the
veterinarian, Dr. Lawrence Bartholf, the horses
were approximately 20-30 percent below their ac­
ceptable weight. The officials also saw the body of
a three-week-old foal who had died about 48 hours
earlier, and two adult carcasses severely decayed
with skin rotted and bones exposed.

Four of the live horses and the three carcasses
were found together in a crudely made paddock
formed of rusty underground fuel storage tanks,
each one about 8 feet in diameter by 15 feet long.
The other horse was alone in a similar corral
nearby. According to DeSantis, the horses were
well hidden by the tanks, so that visitors to the
owner's private dump and auto salvage yard
would hardly notice them. The group had to climb
over one of the tanks to gain access to them.
The horses had no food or water, save for a pud­
dle of seep water choked with algae in the main
paddock. A large pile of rotting hay lay just out­
side the corral where the horses could not reach
it. The horses had absolutely no shade or protec­
tion from the elements. Flies swarmed around the
carcasses, and a strong odor filled the area. Ac­
cording to DeSantis, mounds of dirt in the main
paddock hid the remains of other horses. "When one
of the deputies questioned him about what he was
doing with the horses," said DeSantis, "he said
they were his horses, and he was just going to let
them die, and that when they died, he would bury
them."

The man had apparently received as many as 25
horses as part of a divorce settlement a few years
earlier. "Whether he was trying to get even with
his former wife, or whether he had an interest for
a while and then lost it, who knows?" said
DeSantis. "Why do people do what they do?"
The SPCA issued an appearance ticket for cruel­
ty to animals to the owner, who remained uncoop­
After rolling one of the tanks aside, they were able to remove the horses that day and transport them by trailer to the large animal facility located on the shelter grounds.

On December 18, 1990, the owner pleaded guilty to five counts of animal cruelty. Judge Conner sentenced him to a six-month, suspended jail term, fined him $500, forbade him to own any animals (except for his dog) for a three-year probationary period, and ordered him to pay over $4,000 restitution to the SPCA. That was the full amount DeSantis had requested for the food and medical costs of the horses’ impoundment.

DeSantis attributes the smooth handling of the case to the cooperation between the SPCA and legal officials. “Assistant D.A. Simonson was instrumental in helping us obtain a warrant quickly and with prosecuting the case,” she said. “The sheriff’s department and Dr. Bartholf were also fantastic.”

In addition, Simonson was able to persuade the owner’s lawyer to have his client sign the five horses over to the SPCA on November 15, a month before the man entered his guilty plea. The last of the horses, who had been nursed back to health under the supervision of Dr. Bartholf, was placed in a new home two days before Christmas.

12 Reasons to Attend Animal Care Expo ’92

here are lots of reasons to attend HSUS's Animal Care Expo ’92, February 2-5, 1992, at Bally’s Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada. Here are the first.

Meet major animal care equipment and service suppliers.

Choose from a multitude of educational seminars, most of which will not be offered anywhere else.

See and compare state-of-the-art equipment, technology, and products that can streamline operations at your facility.

Discuss your needs with manufacturers, distributors, and sales representatives who can provide hard-to-come-by details and lowest cost quotes.

Learn about new products and services.

Discover energy-efficient equipment and environmentally safe products that can be used in sheltering domestic animals and wildlife.

Take advantage of special offers and savings that are only available at the Expo.

Enjoy and reward your staff by taking them to Animal Care Expo ’92.

Load up on lots of “trade show” samples and giveaways.

Take a break from your day-to-day routine and still get a great deal accomplished.

See old friends and make new ones.

Enjoy Las Vegas’ entertainment and natural

Phyllis Wright to Retire

Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals, will retire this summer after 22 years of service. Her wisdom, wit, and guidance will be greatly missed by everyone at The HSUS and many in the field whom Phyllis has worked with over the years. Although she is leaving The HSUS, Phyllis wants everyone to know that she will be involved in consulting work and that she wants to remain active on the property. Chemicals used to treat lawns seep into the ground and eventually end up in the water supply. Rather than using chemicals in the first place, homeowners can use natural means of caring for their lawns that don’t harm the environment or animals.

Poisoning treatment varies according to the type of chemical and the amount the animal absorbs or ingests. If the chemical is absorbed through the skin, AAHA recommends bathing the animal in cool to lukewarm water, not hot water. But any time an animal is exposed to a toxin, he or she should see a veterinarian right away to begin preventive treatment, if need be. In severe cases involving seizures or coma, the animal will require sedation and hospitalization.

“The best way to treat a poisoning is to prevent it from occurring,” Rucker says.

CA County Bans Pound Seizure

ith assistance from The HSUS West Coast Regional Office, Marlene Ingham wrote letters, drafted petitions, collected signatures, and

lobbed the Tuolumne County Board of Directors. Her efforts paid off last January 22 when the county passed an ordinance banning pound seizure. Although the animal control department was not relinquishing animals to research facilities, there was no written policy to prevent this from occurring. Ingham feared that because of the possibility of a new campus of the University of California at Tuolumne, among other reasons, the future safety of shelter animals was not adequately protected. Having the support of the board chairman helped her efforts, and now Tuolumne County residents can rest assured that stray and unwanted animals in their county will not be turned over to research facilities.

Health Risks Lurk in Lawns for Pets

hemicals, sprays, and powders used on lawns help keep the yard green and insect free, but may pose a health threat to pets, according to the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), a professional association of veterinarians who treat companion animals.

Veterinarians warn that powerful bug pesticides can be dangerous to pets. These chemicals are known as organophosphates, and include common pesticides such as diazinon and malathion.

“Cats are more sensitive to organophosphates than dogs,” says Peggy Rucker, DVM, hospital director of Southwest Virginia Veterinary Services. The effect any poison has on an animal’s nervous system depends on the amount of poison ingested or absorbed, although younger and older animals are generally more vulnerable.

“Poisoning symptoms include difficulty breathing, excessive salivation, drooling, vomiting, runny eyes, diarrhea, seizures, and in severe situations, coma,” Rucker says. In many cases, there is no one dominant warning signal because many of the symptoms are signs for a variety of pet ailments. Owners need to be aware of any strange behavior in their pets after the yard has been treated and consult a veterinarian if one or more of the symptoms appear.

Organophosphates are most potent when first applied and lose toxicity as they dry. Pet owners who are unfamiliar with the recommended drying time should keep pets away from the area sprayed for at least one day, according to Jeffrey Brent, MD, of the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center in Denver. Brent recommends reading the product’s label or asking the pesticide applicator when it’s safe to return animals to the area.

A romp in the grass can be dangerous if the lawn has been chemically treated.

According to Rucker, pets are most often poisoned by chemicals in containers that are left within their reach. Chemical storage and proper disposal is critical. Curious animals and teething puppies have been known to chew open pesticide containers left within reach or in a garbage can. Additionally, lawn chemicals pose a danger to people—especially if their water supply is from a well on the property. Chemicals used to treat lawns seep into the ground and eventually end up in the water supply. Rather than using chemicals in the first place, homeowners can use natural means of caring for their lawns that don’t harm the environment or animals.

Poisoning treatment varies according to the type of chemical and the amount the animal absorbs or ingests. If the chemical is absorbed through the skin, AAHA recommends bathing the animal in cool to lukewarm water, not hot water. But any time an animal is exposed to a toxin, he or she should see a veterinarian right away to begin preventive treatment, if need be. In severe cases involving seizures or coma, the animal will require sedation and hospitalization.

“The best way to treat a poisoning is to prevent it from occurring,” Rucker says.

CA County Bans Pound Seizure

ith assistance from The HSUS West Coast Regional Office, Marlene Ingham wrote letters, drafted petitions, collected signatures, and

lobbed the Tuolumne County Board of Directors. Her efforts paid off last January 22 when the county passed an ordinance banning pound seizure. Although the animal control department was not relinquishing animals to research facilities, there was no written policy to prevent this from occurring. Ingham feared that because of the possibility of a new campus of the University of California at Tuolumne, among other reasons, the future safety of shelter animals was not adequately protected. Having the support of the board chairman helped her efforts, and now Tuolumne County residents can rest assured that stray and unwanted animals in their county will not be turned over to research facilities.

12 Reasons to Attend Animal Care Expo ’92

here are lots of reasons to attend HSUS's Animal Care Expo ’92, February 2-5, 1992, at Bally’s Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada. Here are the first.

Meet major animal care equipment and service suppliers.

Choose from a multitude of educational seminars, most of which will not be offered anywhere else.

See and compare state-of-the-art equipment, technology, and products that can streamline operations at your facility.

Discuss your needs with manufacturers, distributors, and sales representatives who can provide hard-to-come-by details and lowest cost quotes.

Learn about new products and services.

Discover energy-efficient equipment and environmentally safe products that can be used in sheltering domestic animals and wildlife.

Take advantage of special offers and savings that are only available at the Expo.

Enjoy and reward your staff by taking them to Animal Care Expo ’92.

Load up on lots of “trade show” samples and giveaways.

Take a break from your day-to-day routine and still get a great deal accomplished.

See old friends and make new ones.

Enjoy Las Vegas’ entertainment and natural
Kat-Paks Help Educate Cat Owners

After the city of St. Louis, Missouri, passed an ordinance requiring rabies vaccination and license ordinance, the members of Animal Friends (P.O. Box 2225, St. Louis, MO 63109) got busy educating people about the importance of this measure. Although the ordinance does not require the confinement of cats, the group decided to take advantage of the opportunity to teach people about why cats should be inside as well as licensed and vaccinated.

To do this, they wrote letters that were printed by almost 30 local newspapers, explaining the new ordinance and stressing the dangers that outdoor cats face. In each letter, Animal Friends invited people to call them and request a free Kat-Pak, which included information on feline leukemia and a copy of the article “Why All Cats Should Be Indoor Cats,” which appeared in the August 1990 issue of Shelter Sense. Over 200 people requested the Kat-Paks.

Shelter Sense is glad to have readers use articles in this way, and we encourage other groups to do the same to help educate the public about animal protection issues. When reprinting articles, please give credit to the date of the issue the article comes from.

The Florida Animal Control Association (FACA, P.O. Box 6407, Ocala, FL 34478) recently developed policy and position statements on 23 issues related to animal sheltering and control and has published them in a 26-page booklet for easy reference. The booklet includes policy statements for the following subjects: pet ownership and responsibility, seizure, adoptions, licenses, dead animals, leash/restraint laws, guide dogs, guard dogs, attack dogs, injured animals, euthanasia, rabies vaccination, tattooing, cruelty to animals, exotic and wild animals as pets, nuisance livestock and wildlife, tranquilizer guns and blowpipes, neutering, obedience training, stray animals, lost animals, dangerous and vicious animals, pre-exposure rabies immunization, and training certification.

First drawn up in November 1990, the policies will be revised, as the booklet says, “as information becomes available that will improve the quality of life for the citizens and animals of Florida.” Although written specifically for Florida agencies, FACA’s policy statements can serve as models for animal control agencies in any state.

To obtain a copy of the printed booklet, send a check for $3, made payable to FACA, to the address below.

Order the New P.A.L. Brochure

The new, full-color brochure inside this issue was originally developed specifically for veterinarians to distribute to clients through their offices and clinics. But “Just One Litter,” produced by The HSUS for its “Be a P.A.L.—Prevent A Litter” campaign, has also been in demand by humane groups, animal control departments, and individuals ever since we introduced it earlier this year.

That’s why we’ve decided to make it easily available to out-of-print readers. Prices for additional copies of “Just One Litter ... Facts About Spaying and Neutering Your Pet” are as follows: 25¢ each, 50¢/$8.00, 100/$12.00, 1000/$100.00.

To order, send check or money order, made payable to HSUS, to Be a P.A.L., HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. Please specify item number P22116, and add $1 for shipping and handling. Allow four to six weeks for delivery.

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TEACHERS UP FOR ADOPTION? AT THE ANIMAL SHELTER?

You bet! By “adopting” a teacher, you make humane education possible for a whole classroom of children.

How does it work? Simple! Just fill out the coupon below. You can adopt a teacher you know ... or just tell us the name of a child whose classroom you would like to see benefit from humane education.

We do all the rest. We send an explanation of the Adopt-A-KIND Teacher program to the teacher, naming your organization as the generous donor. And each bundle of KIND News will carry a credit line on the mailing label, again recognizing your organization.

Mail adoption fees and coupons to NAHEE, 67 Salem Rd., East Haddam, CT 06423-0362.

A Fundraising Ad for You to Reproduce

From The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), a division of The HSUS

Can an ad bring in funds to expand or even create a humane education program in your community? This one can! It is designed for reproduction in your newsletter or local newspaper. You will receive certificates of adoption for each adopted teacher. In addition, NAHEE will send a card of introduction and explanation to each teacher, naming your organization as the generous donor. And each bundle of KIND News will carry a credit line on the mailing label, again recognizing your organization.

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The Carrot Approach

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals

Along with spring comes the reminder of what the animal shelter’s mission is—prevention of cruelty to animals. But in our desire to help animals, we sometimes direct toward the pet owner the anger we feel about the sheer number of animals coming in. As we see basket loads of puppies and kittens come into our shelters, we often wonder how can we educate these people without losing our tempers or offending them.

Remember that before shelters existed, thousands of animals were left in parks, along country roads, and in the woods. Now, fortunately, many unwanted animals are brought to the shelter. Despite the numbers, these animals are not simply turned out as in the past. The pet owners are actually doing what shelters have asked them to do for years—bring their unwanted animals to them. In return, shelters must not react with anger and impatience.

Having a plan to help pet owners and abate the problem will make dealing with these situations easier. The moment when a pet owner comes in to turn over a litter is the moment you can intervene and make a difference in the pet overpopulation problem in your community. This is not the time for anger, but for opportunity—a chance to offer a solution that will change the number of animals born.

Try a new, positive approach by having a “carrot” to offer the pet owner—a special certificate to have the pet neutered within 60 days, for example. Make the effort to let the owner know that his or her dog can reproduce again in four months or that their mother cat can get pregnant while she is still nursing her present litter. This is perhaps the only chance that you will have to change this person’s attitude. Try a new approach and offer assistance while you have their attention.

It’s surprising how often the carrot approach works once you give up the two-by-four.

As a special “carrot” to you, we are again offering Shelter Sense readers a free package of 50 “Hot Car” fliers. Just send requests on your agency letterhead to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.