

The Meadows Foundation

Animal Welfare Plan

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” Mahatma Gandhi

**Approved by The Meadows Foundation Board of Directors
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Executive Summary

In the United States, companion animals are an important part of society, with 63% of all households owning a pet. When humans are around animals, they experience positive physical and mental reactions such as lower blood pressure and heart rate, decreased feelings of anxiety, loneliness, depression, and increased self-esteem. Because of the positive effects resulting from human and animal interactions, animals are used in various ways to help individuals with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. For example, emotional support animals provide a calming presence for patients in stressful hospital and therapy situations. Animal Assisted Therapies (AAT), including equine and canine therapy, use specially trained animals to help individuals with emotional and developmental disabilities learn how to communicate more effectively and improve their social skills. And finally, service animals such as guide or hearing dogs increase their owner's independence by reducing their reliance on other people as well as boosting their confidence and feelings of self-sufficiency.

Despite societal importance and the benefits associated with companion animals, many animal issues, such as overpopulation and animal cruelty, continue to exist in the U.S. Despite a decline in shelter intake and euthanasia rates over the past decades, 8 million stray cats and dogs are taken in by shelters each year. Overpopulation issues continue as a result of low spay and neuter rates, pet abandonment, and low rates of shelter adoptions. Of those animals that end up in shelters, many are euthanized. In Texas, 58% of animals in shelters are euthanized.

Animal cruelty is also prevalent in Texas and throughout the United States. Not only is it important to stop animal cruelty for the sake of the animal victims, but animal cruelty is linked to other destructive behaviors, such as domestic violence and other crimes that have larger consequences for pet owners and their families. Every year, thousands of cats, dogs, and horses are neglected to the point of starvation, illness, or death by animal hoarders or individuals who can no longer financially afford to take care of their animals.

Many individuals make money off of animal cruelty in Texas through competitive dog and cock fighting, puppy mills, and greyhound racing. With thousands of dollars bet on a single fight, dog and cockfighting remain popular in Texas. Dog owners encourage aggression by giving the dogs anabolic steroids and narcotics. Rooster owners often attach knives or daggers to the rooster's legs so they are better able to kill an opponent. Often, when dogs or roosters lose a fight, they are left to die from their injuries or are killed.

Financial incentives drive individuals to engage in the business of running puppy mills. Puppy mills are large-scale commercial dog breeding operations where dogs are over-bred, and the

puppies are kept in small, unsanitary cages with minimal food, water, exercise, and veterinary care in order to maximize profit. Because of their upbringing, these puppies are more prone to inbreeding, disease, fearful behavior, and lack of socialization.

Greyhound racing and the means used to support the industry involve inhumane practices as well. In order to produce the fastest dogs, greyhound breeding farms produce thousands of puppies, killing any puppies that are not physically ideal. Once they move to the race tracks, greyhounds are housed in unsanitary conditions in stacked, wire cages and are prone to race-related injuries. Although demand for greyhound racing is declining, Texas is one of seven states in the nation that still has operational dog racing tracks.

In addition to stricter state and federal legislation making many of these practices illegal, there are many effective programs that aim to combat overpopulation and animal cruelty. Spay/neuter programs are widely regarded by animal welfare professionals as a crucial, cost effective method for controlling animal population growth. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs are the least costly and most humane method to control feral cat populations. Further, rescue groups for horses, greyhounds, and fighting dogs try to rehabilitate animals after they have been abused and find them responsible homes. Increased shelter standards and pet education programs have also been found to increase adoption success rates and decrease animal cruelty and euthanasia rates.

With shelter euthanasia rates above and live release rates below the national average, many cities and nonprofit organizations in Texas have made a concerted effort to address these issues. A recent surge has been seen in the No-Kill Movement, which promotes euthanizing animals only if they are too sick to be treated or too aggressive for suitable adoption. Through public awareness campaigns and the promotion of spay/neuter, foster, and adoption programs, the City of Austin became the first major no-kill city in Texas with the help of the ASPCA Mission: Orange Program. The San Antonio Area Foundation and its Animal No-Kill Fund hopes to turn San Antonio into a no-kill city by 2012. And organizations such as Maddie's Fund and PetSmart Charities have helped organize and fund overpopulation and cruelty projects throughout the state.

It is difficult to assess the impact of the no-kill efforts because there is no standard definition of "no-kill" or how sick an animal must be before it is considered too sick to be treated or adoptable. And while no-kill cities realize lower euthanasia rates, they can also end up with overcrowded shelters and more strays on the streets as fewer strays are picked up in an effort to keep shelter numbers manageable.

Numerous studies have documented the immediate and long-term benefits of humans interacting with animals. When people are around animals, their blood pressure and heart rate go down, feelings of anger, hostility, tension, anxiety and stress are reduced, people feel less lonely and depressed, and they have increased feelings of empowerment, trust, patience and self-esteem. For children, not only does owning a pet increase self-esteem, it also teaches responsibility and respect towards other living things. Senior citizens with pets tend to frequent the doctor less often with minor health issues, they have lower cholesterol, and they are more likely to actively socialize with others.¹ Because of the positive effects resulting from human and animal interactions, animals are now used in different therapy methods in order to increase therapy effectiveness. There are different kinds of animal therapies for different types of ailments.

Animal Assisted Therapy

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is the “deliberate inclusion of an animal in a treatment plan that is designed to accomplish a goal that could not be achieved without or is made better with an animal.”² Not meant to be a standalone treatment, AAT is used in conjunction with other therapies in order to engage patients in a more calming therapy alternative.

Equine Therapy

Used in residential treatment settings or as a component of outpatient therapy, equine therapy is used to help treat a variety of physical and psychological problems. Therapeutic riding is used to help individuals with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, stroke, amputation, and visual impairments. By learning how to ride a horse with the assistance of trained professionals, individuals are able to develop muscle tone, balance, and coordination. The rocking motion of the horse’s gait replicates the natural motion of the pelvis during walking, so the rider’s body is trained to move in the correct way, developing the muscles and coordination needed to stand and walk. This therapy can be tailored to target specific muscles to stretch, tone, or strengthen, depending on the patient’s needs.³

Equine therapy also helps individuals with Asperger’s, Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental disorders, learning disorders, emotional problems, anxiety disorders, and

¹ Delta Society, “Health Benefits of Animals” <http://www.deltasociety.org/Page.aspx?pid=315>

² Ibid

³ Equine Therapy, “Animal Assisted Therapy for Special Needs Children” <http://www.equine-therapy-programs.com/special-needs-children.html>

behavioral problems. When these children ride a horse, the rhythmic motion causes the children to focus on the slow, deliberate movement of the horse, which indirectly calms them and teaches them how to better focus. In addition to movement, their tactile senses are stimulated by the horse's skin and mane, which can help increase their verbal communication. Children also develop their motor skills as they learn to ride, groom, and tack. Finally, interaction with the horse and other individuals and children increase their social skills and improve their overall confidence and mood.⁴

Equine therapy achieves results similar to standard physical therapy, but individuals are able to achieve results in a more interesting environment than a doctor's office. This change of environment is especially beneficial for individuals who live in metropolitan areas and have little interaction with rural settings.⁵

Canine Assisted Therapy

Dogs can be used in therapy sessions with children with certain disabilities. Since dogs do not comment or criticize, children with reading disabilities feel more comfortable and are able to increase their reading skills by reading to a dog. By talking to the dog, children dispel their anxiety, depression, and tension, and are given the opportunity to open up and talk about emotional issues they would not mention to a therapist alone. Finally, dogs can assist individuals in their physical therapy by helping them stand or walk.⁶

Emotional Support Animals

Emotional support animals are animals that are not specifically trained to perform any tasks, but provide comfort to individuals with physical or mental disabilities just through their calming presence alone. Emotional support dogs in intensive care units are found to not only humanize the hospital environment for adults, but they serve as a relief or distraction for pain experienced by youth and adult patients. These animals also provide comfort at night and a connection to the outside world. Outside of a facility, emotional support animals can be prescribed by a doctor for patients with a disabling mental illness to help increase their mental health, socialization, activity level, and reduce their depression and loneliness.⁷

⁴ Equine Therapy, "Equine Therapy for Children with Asperger's and Autism" <http://www.equine-therapy-programs.com/aspergers.html>

⁵ Equine Therapy, "Equine Therapy for Disabled Children" <http://www.equine-therapy-programs.com/disabled.html>

⁶ Equine Therapy, "Animal Assisted Therapy for Special Needs Children" <http://www.equine-therapy-programs.com/special-needs-children.html>

⁷ Halm, Margo. "The Healing Power of the Human-Animal Connection" *American Journal of Critical Care*. Vol 17, p 373-6, 2008. <http://ajcc.aacnjournals.lib.utexas.edu/connect/17/4/373.short>

Service Animals

According to the American Disability Association (ADA), a service animal is any animal “that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental disability.”⁸ These animals increase their owners’ independence by reducing their reliance on other people as well as boosting their confidence and feelings of self-sufficiency. There are different kinds of service animals trained to accommodate different types of disabilities.⁹

- **Guide Dogs**—these dogs are trained to help the blind or visually impaired with daily activities. The dogs help their owners avoid obstacles, alert them to curbs or steps and when to cross the street, and help their owners find doorknobs and exits.
- **Hearing Dogs**—hearing dogs are trained to respond to noises and alert their hearing impaired or deaf owner by nudging him. The dogs can alert their owner to the sound of an alarm clock, doorbell, telephone, smoke alarm, or cell phone.
- **Service Dogs**—these dogs are trained to assist physically disabled individuals. Service dogs can pull manual wheelchairs, help balance a person or help a person stand up, bring in the groceries, get the mail, dump out the garbage, turn off the lights, or call 911 on a K-9 rescue phone.
- **Alert/Response Dogs**—more commonly known as seizure response dogs, these dogs are trained to work with individuals with epilepsy or other seizure disorders. They are trained to call 911 as well as fetching an insulin kit, respiratory device, or medication when their owner has a seizure.
- **Psychiatric Service Animals**—these animals are trained to help individuals with psychiatric illness by “preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors, reminding the individual to take medicine, providing safety checks or room searches for persons with PTSD, interrupting self-mutilation, and removing disoriented individuals from dangerous situations.”¹⁰

Overpopulation

Overpopulation of companion animals is a pressing issue for communities across the United States. Despite a decline in shelter intake and euthanasia rates over the past decades, an estimated 8 million stray cats and dogs are taken in by shelters each year. Almost half (3.7

⁸ Disability Rights California, “Psychiatric Service and Emotional Support Animals” April 2011, <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/548301.pdf>

⁹ AAHA “Canine Assistants” http://www.healthypet.com/PetCare/PetCareArticle.aspx?art_key=8fa1c1cb-ee58-4f82-b67e-a8b0b19c4fab

¹⁰ Disability Rights California, “Psychiatric Service and Emotional Support Animals” April 2011, <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/548301.pdf>

million) of the shelter animals are euthanized, which equates to one euthanized pet in America every eight seconds.¹¹ In addition to whether it is humane to be killing such a high number of animals, euthanasia is costly to taxpayers. It costs approximately \$105 for each stray animal to be picked up by animal control, transported to a shelter, provided food and water, euthanized, and disposed of in a proper manner. The overall cost to operate the approximately 3,500 shelters in the U.S. is an estimated \$2 billion annually.¹²

Overpopulation is the result of a number of factors. First, despite public awareness campaigns for the past 40 years, close to 35% of pet owners do not spay or neuter their pets.¹³ Considering the average fertile dog has one litter of 4-6 puppies a year and the average cat has one to two litters of 4-6 kittens per year,¹⁴ overpopulation will continue to increase if animals are not spayed and neutered.

Also contributing to the overpopulation of companion animals is pet abandonment. The majority of abandoned pets are adult age, which not only have a lower rate of adoption than younger animals, but are also less likely to be reclaimed by their owners.¹⁵ The number of abandoned or surrendered pets has increased over the last three years because of poor economic times.¹⁶

Finally, overpopulation continues to be a problem because not enough people choose to adopt pets from shelters. Each year, 17 million Americans become new pet owners, more than double the number of pet dogs and cats taken in by shelters each year. Yet only 20%, or 3.5 million, choose to adopt their pet from a shelter.¹⁷ If half of the 17 million new pet owners each year chose to adopt from shelters, it would offset the number of new stray animals taken in by shelters each year. Most people, however, choose to find their new pets through family and friends, internet ads, or buy them from pet stores or breeders.

¹¹ The Humane Society of the United States "Pet Overpopulation" June 2011

http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/

¹² Geoffrey Handy, *Animal Control Management: A Guide for Local Governments*, ANIMAL CONTROL MANAGEMENT (2001). <http://lawlib.wlu.edu/lexopus/works/487-1.pdf>

¹³ AHA, June 2011

¹⁴ APSCA "Pet Overpopulation in the United States" June 2011 <http://www.aspc.org/adoption/pet-overpopulation.aspx>

¹⁵ AHA, June 2011

¹⁶ American Veterinary Medical Association, "Frequently asked questions about pets and foreclosed homes," February 5, 2008. http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/pets_foreclosed_homes_faq.asp

¹⁷ AHA, June 2011

Feral Cats

Feral cats are free-roaming cats born and raised in the wild, or are strays that have reverted to wild habitats. They are not socialized and often fearful of human contact, making them difficult to physically handle safely. For this reason, feral cats are not adoptable.

The life span of feral cats is extremely short due to harsh living conditions, with 75% not surviving kittenhood. For the 25% that survive to adulthood, they typically live for about two years. Feral cat caretakers, people who provide food and water and monitor a feral cat colony, significantly increase the quality of life and life span of the cats. With a caretaker, a cat in a feral colony may survive to be as much as 10 years old.¹⁸

Consequences of Overpopulation: Euthanasia in Major Texas Cities 2009

Of the five major metropolitan areas in Texas, Dallas has the highest euthanasia rate (79%), followed by Fort Worth (74%), and San Antonio (71%).

City	High Volume Clinics	Other Clinics [†]	Spay/Neuter Capacity	Spay/Neuter Surgeries	% Capacity
Dallas	1	2	20,000	6,414	55%
Fort Worth	1	1	10,000* est	9,474	95%
Austin	2	1	30,000* est	27,763	93%
San Antonio	2	3	50,000	40,457	81%
Houston	3	3	40,000* est	36,383	91%

Source: The Big Fix for Big D, 2011

[†]These clinics are either in shelters, operate part time with volunteers, or operate outside the city limits but serve the area

Dallas performs the fewest number of spay/neuter surgeries annually, utilizing only 55% of the city's spay/neuter capacity.¹⁹ Contributing to Dallas' high euthanasia rates is a lack of high-volume spay/neuter clinics (clinics that are able to provide low-cost spay/neuter surgeries by using highly efficient techniques and performing multiple surgeries daily) and a lack of public awareness about the clinics that do exist.

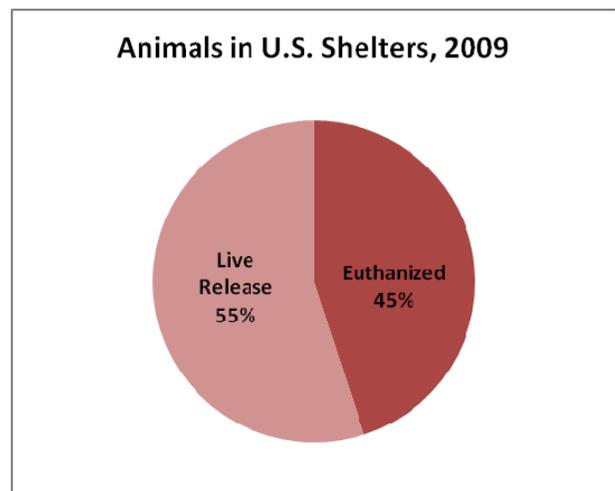
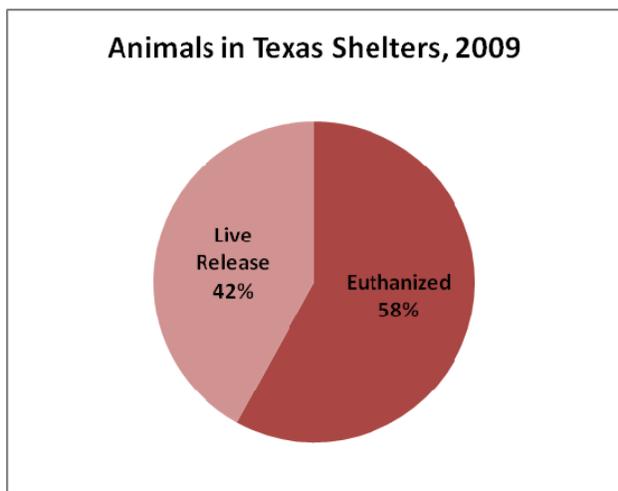
¹⁸ ASPCA, "Feral Cats FAQ" June 2011 <http://www.aspc.org/adoption/feral-cats-faq.aspx>

¹⁹ Bagwell, Jane. "Strategic Plan 2011," The Big Fix for Big D. January 7, 2011

City	Shelter Intake	Euthanasia	Live Release	Euthanasia %	Euthanasia Rank
Dallas	33,617	26,542	6,302	79%	1
Fort Worth	18,747	13,914	2,818	74%	2
San Antonio	35,443	25,000	18,369	71%	3
Houston	111,949	58,718	31,772	52%	4
Austin	21,859	3,644	15,101	29%	5

Source: *The Big Fix for Big D, 2011*

Euthanasia rates of animal shelters in Texas are higher than average U.S. rates. In a survey of 462 shelters across the United States, on average 55% of animals were released from shelters alive and 45% were euthanized.²⁰ In Texas, however, the majority of animals who enter a shelter are euthanized (58%) and only 42% are released alive.²¹



Sources: *The Big Fix for Big D, 2011* and *Maddie's Fund, 2011*

Animal Cruelty

Animal cruelty is a persistent problem in Texas and throughout the United States. Sections 42.09 "Cruelty to Livestock Animals" and 42.09(2) "Cruelty of Non-Livestock Animals" of the Texas Health and Safety Code "prohibits a person from intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly cruelly treating an animal."²² Actions defined as cruel treatment include:

- Torturing an animal
- Failing to provide food, care, or shelter
- Abandoning an animal

²⁰ Maddie's Fund. "Shelter Statistics." 2011. http://www.maddiesfund.org/No_Kill_Progress/Shelter_Statistics.html

²¹ Bagwell, 2011

²² SPCA of Texas. "Texas Animal Cruelty Laws" June 2011 <http://www.sPCA.org/page.aspx?pid=316>

- Transporting or confining an animal in a cruel manner
- Killing, seriously injuring, or poisoning an animal
- Causing an animal to fight with another
- Using a live animal as lure in a dog race
- Tripping a horse
- Injuring an animal belonging to another person
- Seriously overworking an animal

In Texas, both civil and criminal laws protect animals from cruelty. In civil cases, offenders can have their animals removed and/or pay the state restitution. In criminal cases, however, offenders may face fines up to \$10,000, jail time up to two years, or both. In addition to different sentencing guidelines, civil and criminal animal cruelty laws protect different categories of animals. Texas criminal law protects “domesticated living creature[s], including any stray or feral cats or dogs, and wild living creature previously captured and livestock,”²³ with convictions classified as either a felony or a misdemeanor. Texas civil law is much broader in scope and does not distinguish between domestic and wild animals, but has a much narrower definition of animal cruelty. Texas also has additional laws specifically addressing dog fighting and cockfighting. Although animal cruelty laws have improved, the scope of animal cruelty laws in Texas are very narrow compared to other states. Unlike other states, Texas law excludes circus animals, wild animals, and animals used in experiments from protection under animal cruelty laws.²⁴

Not only is it important to stop animal cruelty for the sake of the animal victims, but animal abuse has larger consequences for pet owners and their families. When community members fear that animal cruelty and neglect are occurring in a household, there is good reason to believe other kinds of abuse exist as well. Multiple research studies have shown significant correlations between domestic violence and animal cruelty. In fact, an estimated 71% of women entering women’s shelters who owned pets reported that their abuser had beaten, killed, or threatened their pets in order to psychologically control them. Abusers also harm their children’s pets to force them to perform sexual acts or to not report abuse. Using pets as coercion not only furthers physical and mental abuse, but it can cause individuals to experience abuse longer without seeking help. Surveys show that 25% to 40% of women do not try to escape abusive situations because they are afraid of what will happen to their pets if they leave and go to domestic violence shelters that do not allow pets. The cycle of violence is further perpetuated when children observe and mimic these abusive behaviors. For example, 32% of

²³ Animal Legal and Historical Center. Michigan State University College of Law. August 16, 2010
http://animallaw.info/statutes/statestatutes/stustxset.htm?utm_source=MSU_statelaw&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=MSU_statelaws

²⁴ SPCA of Texas, 2011

women with pets entering a domestic violence shelter reported that their children had hurt or killed an animal.²⁵

Horse Cruelty

In 2007, the United States banned the slaughtering of horses for zoo and circus carnivores and human consumption. Before this ban, approximately 102,000 horses were slaughtered annually in the U.S. With the ban in effect, horses are often sent to Canada and Mexico for slaughter. More recently, reports of neglected, starved, abandoned, and abused horses have increased. One reason for this increase is the economy. On average, a healthy horse costs \$1,875 a year to maintain, excluding veterinary costs. Because of the downturn in the economy, it has become much harder for owners to sell or even give away their unwanted horses. And with a ban on slaughters, many turn to euthanasia or abandonment. As a result, many horses end up neglected, homeless, and in need of veterinary care.

Puppy Mills

Puppy mills are “large-scale commercial dog breeding operations” whose puppies are often sold to pet shops.²⁶ Puppy mills got their start after World War II during widespread crop failures in the Midwest. The U.S. Department of Agriculture promoted puppies as non-labor intensive, fool-proof cash crops, so many farmers converted their chicken coops and rabbit hutches to puppy kennels. As the pet industry boomed on the East Coast, puppy brokers taught the Pennsylvania Amish farmers to breed puppies as well. Today, Missouri is still the largest puppy mill state in the country, and Lancaster County, PA, has the highest concentration of puppy mills in the nation.²⁷

The puppies in puppy mills are kept in small, wire cages that are often stacked in columns. The puppies experience overcrowding and unsanitary conditions and a lack of adequate veterinary care, food, water, and socialization. They are sometimes kept outdoors, exposing them to harsh weather conditions, or are kept completely indoors with no exposure to the sun. Furthermore, they are not exercised or groomed properly. As a result, the puppies are more prone to disease and fearful behavior.²⁸

The dogs used for breeding in the mills experience inadequate living conditions as well. Because the mills try to maximize their profits, female dogs are bred as many times as possible with little to no recovery time between litters. And because puppy mills use a limited number

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ ASPCA “What is a Puppy Mill?” <http://www.aspca.org/fight-animal-cruelty/puppy-mills/what-is-a-puppy-mill.aspx>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

of dogs for breeding, there is a high level of inbreeding leading to puppies with a higher rate of genetic defects. Puppies born with obvious physical defects are killed because they are not sellable to pet stores. Once the breeding dogs are physically depleted and can no longer breed, they are usually killed and replaced with younger, fertile dogs.²⁹ Despite the terrible breeding practices and inhumane living conditions, puppy mills will persist as long as people purchase puppies and kittens from pet stores and online.

On June 17, 2011, Governor Rick Perry signed into law the Commercial Dog and Cat Breeders Act (CDCBA) establishing “minimum standards for the humane handling, care, housing, and transportation of dogs and cats kept by large-scale Texas breeders.”³⁰ The new law applies to dog and cat breeders with 11 or more female breeding animals and who sell more than 20 animals a year. It specifically requires breeders to undergo inspections to ensure that cat and animal living spaces have adequate drainage systems, are made out of safe material, and are large enough for the animals to “comfortably stand, sit, turn around, and lie down in a natural position.”³¹

Texas was one of the last states to enact legislation regulating commercial breeding operations. Before the CDCBA, many breeding operations came to Texas because they could operate free from oversight. Although the new law does not protect against wire cage flooring and the stacking of cages, now breeders will have to open their facilities to inspection, which will hopefully lead to more humane living conditions for animals in commercial breeding facilities.³²

Dog Fighting

Evidence suggests that tens of thousands of people are involved in dog fighting in the United States each year. Most individuals get involved in dog fighting for the money. Upwards of \$20,000 can be bet over a single fight, and stud fees and puppy sales from specialized bloodlines can bring in thousands of dollars.³³

The dogs are trained to be overly-aggressive fighters. They are isolated from other dogs, or kept on heavy chains just out of reach of other dogs, and exercised only under controlled conditions. Young animals are trained by letting them fight with “bait dogs” in well-controlled environments. If the dogs appear to lack the fighting inclination, they are abandoned or killed. As fighting dogs get older, they are sometimes given anabolic steroids to increase muscle mass and aggression. Right before a fight, owners will sometimes give their dog narcotic drugs to

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ APSCA, “Victory! Texas Gets Its First Puppy Mill Law,” June 24, 2011.

<http://www.asPCA.org/News/National/National-News-Detail.aspx?NDate=20110624&NType=National#News5>

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ ASPCA “Dog Fighting” June 2011, <http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/dog-fighting/>

increase their aggression and reactivity, and to mask the dog's fear or pain during a fight. Depending on the severity of the fight, the losing dogs are often left to die from their injuries because they are no longer of any use to their owners.³⁴

Dog fighting is a felony in all 50 states. In Texas, it is a misdemeanor to possess a dog-fighting dog or to watch a dog fight, and a felony for engaging a dog in a dog fight. Despite increased awareness of dog fighting after prominent football star Michael Vick was convicted of dog fighting in 2007, dog fighting continues to be one of the most difficult animal cruelty offenses to identify and prosecute. Because of the violent and extremely secretive nature of dog fighting, dog fight investigations require the same skills and resources associated with a major narcotics investigation. When dog fighting circles are uncovered, the dogs are recovered and their level of aggression is assessed to see if they are able to be rehabilitated and adopted. Dogs that are too aggressive and beyond rehabilitation are euthanized.³⁵

Cockfighting

Similar to dog fighting, cockfighting involves putting two aggressive roosters in a small ring and watching them fight to the death. Fighting roosters are developed through breeding, specialized training, and the use of steroids and vitamins. Before the fight, the owners pluck all the bird's feathers and cut off their waddles so the opponent bird cannot grab onto them during the fight. In addition, owners often attach knives or daggers to the rooster's legs so they are better able to kill their opponent.³⁶

In 2007, the U.S. Congress passed the Animal Welfare Act which charges felony penalties for any "interstate commerce, imports, or exports relating to dog fighting, cockfighting, and associated cockfighting paraphernalia. Each violation can result in up to three years in jail and a \$250,000 fine."³⁷ Although cockfighting is illegal in all 50 states, it remains popular throughout the U.S. as a gambling enterprise. On June 17, 2011, however, the Texas Legislature passed HB 1043 which "prohibits a person from attending a cockfight, owning or training a rooster to fight, owning or selling the knives, gaffs, or other weapons used in fights, and allowing one's property to be used in a fight."³⁸ Previously, cockfighting was a state jail felony in Texas, but there was no penalty for spectators of the fight, owners of cockfighting materials, or operators of cockfighting arenas. Now, staging a cockfight, participating in the earnings or operation of the cockfight facility, or allowing someone to use property for a cockfight are state jail felonies, and

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ ASPCA "Cockfighting" June 2011, <http://www.aspc.org/fight-animal-cruelty/cockfighting.aspx>

³⁷ ASPCA "Dog Fighting," June 2011

³⁸ The Humane Society of the United States, "The HSUS Applauds New Texas Laws on Cockfighting, Puppy Mills, and Animal Cruelty" June 17, 2011
http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2011/06/new_texas_animal_laws_signed_061711.html

attending a cockfight is a class C misdemeanor.³⁹ This bill will help close many loopholes in previous cockfighting laws, helping law enforcement crack down on the numerous cockfighting circles in Texas.

Greyhound Racing

Although not as blatantly cruel as dog fighting, greyhound racing and the means used to support the industry involve inhumane practices against dogs. It takes approximately 1,000 dogs to run a competitive race track. In order to produce the fastest dogs, greyhound breeding farms produce thousands of puppies to increase their chances of success. However, the slower, unwanted puppies that come from over-breeding are killed or sold to laboratories. For those dogs who are lucky enough to move on to race tracks, they are housed in stacked, wire cages that are just tall enough for the dogs to stand. Because of their close proximity to one another and lack of heating and air conditioning, disease spreads quickly among the dogs.

Greyhounds are usually retired from racing between 18 months and 5 years of age. Once they are retired, they either go to rescue groups, breeding facilities, or are killed. Because dog racing has been losing public appeal, and it often costs state governments more to regulate them than they gain back in revenue, only 22 tracks remain operational.⁴⁰ Texas is one of seven states in the nation operating dog racing tracks. With a decrease in racetracks, annual greyhound breeding has decreased from 27,000 dogs in 2001 to 16,000 in 2009. Due to the work of organized rescue groups, 14,000 to 18,000 greyhounds are adopted every year.⁴¹

Animal Hoarding

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) defines animal hoarding as the situation when an individual has more than the typical number of pets and is unable “to provide even minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter, and veterinary care, with this neglect often resulting in starvation, illness, and death.” Animal hoarding is typically carried out by individuals with attachment disorders in addition to personality disorders, paranoia, delusional thinking, depression, and other mental illnesses. These individuals often consider themselves “rescuers” and fail to see the implications of their actions. Elderly individuals are also prone to animal hoarding due to their isolation from community and social groups.⁴²

³⁹ Aquilar, Jennifer. “Texas Lawmakers: Loophole Allows Cockfights to Flourish,” *The Texas Tribune* <http://www.texastribune.org/texas-legislature/82nd-legislative-session/lawmakers-loophole-allows-cockfights-to-flourish/>

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Grey2K USA “Fact Sheet: Greyhounds in the United States” <http://www.grey2kusa.org/pdf/nationalfact.pdf>

⁴² ASPCA “Animal Hoarding” June 2011 <http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/animal-hoarding.aspx>

While hoarding is implicitly covered in every state’s animal cruelty laws, only Hawaii and Illinois have legislative language that directly addresses animal hoarding. There are nearly 2,000 new cases of animal hoarding each year, causing approximately 250,000 animals to experience some form of neglect. Unfortunately, animal hoarders are difficult to prosecute because “they tend to keep hoarding even after they are prosecuted and are typically emotionally troubled rather than criminally inclined.”⁴³ In addition to removing the animals from their homes, sentencing of animal hoarders can include long-term mental health counseling requirements to decrease the likelihood of repeating the behavior.

Best Practices

A difficulty in evaluating efforts made to reduce overpopulation is the lack of comprehensive data on animal welfare. Efforts are ongoing to create a national database on animal welfare with uniform definitions for healthy, unhealthy, treatable, adoptable, etc., and while this effort is in its infancy, it could impact Texas organizations in the future.

Spay/Neuter Programs

Spay/neuter programs are widely regarded by animal welfare professionals as a critical way to control animal population growth. Although the cost of spaying or neutering a pet is less than the annual cost of caring for puppies and kittens from an accidental pregnancy, many pet owners choose not to spay or neuter their pets.⁴⁴ Low-cost spay/neuter programs have proven successful in many instances. A survey of shelters with access to low-cost spay/neuter services admitted 22% fewer dogs and 31% fewer cats during the year, enabling the shelters to euthanize 35% fewer dogs and 31% fewer cats.⁴⁵ Beyond the reduced number of admitted and euthanized animals, these programs are cost effective to taxpayers as well. The state of New Hampshire, for example, spent \$1 million on subsidies to veterinarians to provide low-cost spay/neuter services but saved \$3.2 million in shelter expenses.⁴⁶ In other words, for every dollar the state put into the program, taxpayers saved \$3.23.

Trap-Neuter-Return

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs are especially important in controlling the rapidly growing feral cat population. TNR is a low cost method of humanely trapping feral cats, having them

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ ASPCA “Pet Overpopulation”, June 2011

⁴⁵ Stray Pet Advocacy, Need Low Cost Sterilization, November 2009
<http://www.straypetadvocacy.org/html/sterilization.html#important>

⁴⁶ New Hampshire Federation of Humane Societies, *Animal Control Management: A Guide for Local Governments*, International City/County Management Association

spayed or neutered, and then returning them to their colony. This process often involves ear-tipping, the humane surgical removal of the top quarter of a cat's left ear in order to indicate it has been spayed or neutered to prevent re-trapping or unnecessary surgery. Many programs like KittiCo Cat Rescue in Dallas (MFI grantee) offer TNR services at a discount, especially for feral cat caretakers. Other methods such as eradication and relocation are often ineffective and inhumane. Not only do TNR programs help with population control, but spayed and neutered cats are less aggressive, less prone to disease, and generally live healthier lives.⁴⁷

Adoption Programs

Shelters and other animal welfare advocates continue to promote adoption from shelters as a method of decreasing overpopulation. Many shelters are forced to euthanize a large portion of their intakes each year due to space limitations.

Controversy exists, however, between "unlimited intake" and "limited intake no-kill" shelters. Unlimited intake shelters take in every animal they receive while limited intake shelters are more selective about which animals they take in. Opponents of limited intake no-kill shelters argue that because these shelters refuse to take in sick and dangerous animals, they are merely passing the burden of euthanizing sick and dangerous animals to other shelters, which are typically large city-owned shelters. Until the number of spay/neuter surgeries and shelter adoptions increase significantly, along with educational programs on responsible pet ownership, shelters will continue to perform euthanasia procedures to protect the public's health and safety. And use of the "kill/no-kill" terminology can unfortunately become inflammatory and unhelpful for the effort.

Microchips

The American Humane Association, as well as other organizations, encourages pet owners and shelters to utilize microchips to mark animals. This process aids with future identification of lost pets so they can be reunited with their families even if they are not wearing a collar with identifying tags. A study of more than 7,700 stray animals recovered by shelters showed that dogs with microchips were returned to their owner 52.2% of the time (compared to 21.9% without microchips), and cats with microchips were returned to their owners 38.5% of the time (compared to 1.8% without microchips).⁴⁸ Most veterinarians and veterinarian hospitals charge

⁴⁷ ASPCA, 2011

⁴⁸ American Veterinary Medical Association. "Frequently asked questions about microchipping of animals," February 1, 2010. http://www.avma.org/issues/microchipping/microchipping_faq.asp

\$30-\$80 for the procedure and an enrollment rate of \$20 for the national registry. Many humane societies and shelters, however, offer the service at a discounted price.⁴⁹

Rescue Programs

Rescue programs are typically breed-specific organizations that take in abused or neglected animals and help them find responsible owners. For instance, greyhound rescue organizations take in retired racing greyhounds and find them “retirement” homes. There are similar organizations that work with dogs rescued from dog-fighting circles. The number of horse rescue facilities is on the rise in Texas, rescuing the increasing number of abused and neglected horses. Like other rescue programs, these organizations rehabilitate horses back to health and house them until they can find a new home.

Increased Shelter Standards

A shelter’s ability to establish and maintain the appropriate infrastructure for providing a safe, healthy, animal-friendly environment is always an area of concern. Research shows that good shelters should include the following elements:

- Proper areas to quarantine intakes from other populations prior to vaccinations;
- Full-time veterinarian on staff;
- Sufficient HVAC systems and ventilation to prevent the spread of disease;
- Outdoor areas for the animals to exercise and socialize; and
- Attractive design for visitors.

As a result of the 2008 recession and financial hardships, many shelters are struggling with an increased number of owner surrenders. In an effort to help, the American Humane Association has published several tip sheets for shelters dealing with this new reality.⁵⁰ Tips for animal welfare professionals include:⁵¹

- Offering goods and services obtained at a low cost by the shelter to pet owners in need;
- Creating a “foreclosure pet fund” people can contribute to;
- Providing pet owners with a list of pet friendly apartment complexes or landlords in the area; and

⁴⁹ The Friends of San Francisco Animal Care and Control. “What is Microchipping?”
<http://helpacc.org/microchipping.htm>

⁵⁰ “Keeping Pets and People Together in Hard Financial Times”. Winter 2009. The National Human Review. American Humane. <http://www.americanhumane.org/assets/docs/protecting-animals/PA-HR-keeping-pets-and-people-together-in-hard-financial-times-winter-2009.pdf>

⁵¹ “Tips for Shelters for Handling Home Foreclosures”. American Humane.
<http://www.americanhumane.org/assets/docs/protecting-animals/PA-pro-foreclosure-shelter-tip.pdf>

- Training staff to work appropriately with pet owners considering surrendering their companion animal.

Adoption Education

Adoption education services offered by shelters help educate adopters about their pet's needs. This includes appropriate counseling for adopters and support with behavioral issues following adoption. Many shelters are establishing help desks that community members and adopters can call for assistance.

Pet Education

Good Pet Ownership

The adequate education of current and future pet owners is also a good practice to follow. Owner education programs can increase adoption success rates and decrease instances of animal cruelty. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has published the "Golden Rules of Pet Ownership," some of which are listed below.

1. Avoid making an impulsive decision about getting a pet. I will learn about and carefully select a pet suited for my home, my yard, and my lifestyle.
2. Clean up after my pets and appropriately dispose of their waste. I will prevent my pet from being unnecessarily noisy or aggressive.
3. Adhere to local ordinances including licensing and leash requirements.
4. Provide identification for my pets by using ID tags or other means.

Texas Projects

ASPCA Mission: Orange

The American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals' (ASPCA) Mission: Orange program began in 2007 and involved a three-year commitment of \$300,000 to five initial communities, including Austin. The ultimate goal of the program was to achieve a 75% save rate within the community shelter partners by 2010. The community partner shelters in Austin were:

- Town Lake Animal Shelter (TLAS), the city-funded shelter;
- Austin Humane Society, a non-profit, no-kill shelter;
- Animal Trustees of Austin, a stationary spay/neuter and wellness service clinic; and
- emanciPET, a mobile and stationary spay/neuter clinic.

Since the start of ASPCA Mission: Orange in Austin, the Town Lake Animal Shelter increased its live release rate from 41% to 92% by March 2011, helping the City of Austin become a no-kill city.⁵²

The Big Fix for Big D

In 2009, Dallas euthanized 26,542 companion animals (79% of all animals in shelters) despite ongoing efforts to increase the number of spay/neuter surgeries in the city. The Big Fix for Big D partnership proposes to work “collaboratively with animal welfare groups, foundations, government agencies, and the community to achieve strategic, community-wide awareness and planning to reduce the number of animals born and thus the number of animals that are euthanized.”⁵³

Animal No Kill Fund—San Antonio Area Foundation

In 2006, the City of San Antonio committed to becoming a no-kill community by 2012. To achieve this goal, the Animal No Kill Fund, administered by the San Antonio Area Foundation, focuses on programs that provide or promote high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter surgeries, comprehensive adoption programs, pet retention, feral cat trap-neuter-return programs, rescue groups, volunteers, foster care, medical and behavior rehabilitation, and community involvement.⁵⁴

- *Talk About It!*—Talk About It!, the most recent program for the San Antonio Area Foundation’s Animal No Kill Fund initiative, is a bilingual grassroots campaign promoting spay/neuter surgeries, adoption, and responsible pet care. The program is a collaboration between the City of San Antonio, Alamo Area Partners for Animal Welfare (AAPAW), the San Antonio Area Foundation Consortium of Partners, and animal welfare organizations.

Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project

Founded in 2003, the Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project (KCAAP) aims to “eliminate the needless death and suffering of companion animals in Kaufman County, City of Dallas, and surrounding areas of Texas”⁵⁵ by performing low-cost spay/neuter surgeries. KCAAP specifically focuses on providing spay/neuter surgeries for disadvantaged residents, multiple pet owners,

⁵² “City of Austin Reaches ‘No Kill’ Status” Fox Austin. March 4, 2011.

<http://www.myfoxaustin.com/dpp/news/City-of-Austin-Reaches-'No-Kill'-Status-20110304-ktbcgd>

⁵³ Bagwell, Jenny. “The Big Fix for Big D Strategic Plan 2011.” January 7, 2011.

⁵⁴ San Antonio Area Foundation. “Animal No Kill Initiative.”

<http://www.saafdn.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=271>

⁵⁵ Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project. “Eliminate the needless death and suffering of all companion animals.” <http://www.spayneuternet.org/>

feral cats, and dogs over 40 pounds. Since 2004, KCAAP has provided over \$500,000 worth of free services and over 40,000 surgeries on North Texas pets.⁵⁶

- *Sterilization, Adoption, Vaccination, Education (S.A.V.E.) Campaign*—KCAAP’s S.A.V.E. Campaign aims to increase sterilizations, adoptions, vaccinations, and responsible pet education through direct sterilization and vaccination services and awareness campaigns. In 2009, the S.A.V.E campaign helped KCAAP complete over 10,000 surgeries, find homes for over 2,500 animals, administer over 14,000 vaccinations, and work with partnering agencies to educate over 60,000 Northeast Texas residents on responsible pet ownership.⁵⁷

Maddie’s Fund

The Maddie’s Fund Foundation was created to save the lives of dogs and cats. The organization’s main goal is for the U.S. to achieve no-kill status by the year 2015.⁵⁸ Maddie’s Fund has funded the following programs in Texas:⁵⁹

- Data Collection Grant 2011 - led by the SPCA in Bexar County and Dallas to establish baseline data for shelters in Texas.
- Starter Grant in Bexar County, April 2008 - lead agency was Humane Society/SPCA of Bexar County.
- Spay/Neuter Program 2002-2003 - administered by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project. “About the Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project.” <http://www.spayneuternet.org/kaufman-county-animal-awareness-project/index.php>

⁵⁸ “No-kill Progress”. 1995. Maddie’s Fund. http://www.maddies.org/No_Kill_Progress.html

⁵⁹ “Grant Guidelines” Maddie’s Fund. http://www.maddies.org/Grant_Guidelines.html

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Foundation adopt the following overarching goal:

Protect the safety and well-being of companion animals and other domestic animals in Texas.

To achieve this goal the Foundation should consider the following objectives and strategies:

Objective 1: Reduce overpopulation of dogs and cats in four major metropolitan areas and increase their “save rates” to 70% or better by:

- Increasing the number of low-cost spay/neuter facilities
- Increasing the number of low-cost Trap-Neuter-Release programs for feral cats
- Increasing the capacity of existing low-cost spay/neuter facilities and animal shelters
- Promoting city-wide adoption and foster pet campaigns
- Encouraging local shelters to increase their live-release rates

Objective 2: Promote and strengthen the capacity and coordination efforts among animal-focused nonprofits to increase their collective impact on reducing overpopulation by:

- Working with other funders to build data collection capacity to effectively track overpopulation
- Providing low-cost training to smaller organizations on management and fundraising to improve their effectiveness and efficiency
- Encouraging coordination efforts of organizations to reduce overlap of services and ineffective, isolated campaigns to address animal-related issues
- Supporting public information and advocacy efforts to develop state and local policies that work toward reducing the kill rates in shelters across Texas

Objective 3: Increase the capacity of local enforcement authorities to investigate and prosecute incidents involving animal cruelty.

- Support and expand the capacity of local enforcement authorities to prevent animal cruelty particularly related to puppy mills, dog fighting, cockfighting, greyhound racing, and animal hoarding

Objective 4: Look for opportunities to partner with veterinary schools to support efforts to reduce overpopulation.

- Look at best practices and national projects to replicate in Texas

Objective 5: Promote state and local policies that improve the protection of animals.

- Conduct research and data collection necessary to inform state and local policies
- Engage and support advocacy groups to focus attention on public policies that protect animals

Objective 6: Encourage the human-animal connection in all the Foundation's grantmaking by:

- Adding language emphasizing the human-animal connection as a value statement in the Foundation's Central Values and Guiding Principles and Practices by adding the bolded statement below:
 - All living things have an innate worth bestowed by the Creator.
 - 2a. We will be responsive and courteous in all interactions.
 - 2b. We will demonstrate environmental sensitivity.
 - **2c. We will promote the welfare of all living things.**
- As with our efforts to promote and encourage green building, we should assign extra weight when considering competing grant applications to projects that foster the human-animal connection in their service model(s).
- Provide extra funding to foster and support animal-human relationships in grant awards as appropriate.
- Include information about the Foundation's position related to the human-animal connection on our web site and in our grant application materials.

MFI Grant Summary 2001-2011

Overpopulation

2001		
Hopkins County Animal Protection League	Toward purchasing a cargo van to increase pet rescue and adoption services	\$25,000
SPCA of Texas	Toward producing a direct response television program that will increase the agency's income and allow the agency to expand adoption, clinic, and educational services	\$100,000
		2 \$125,000
2003		
Humane Society of the United States	Toward developing and implementing a sustainable model of affordable veterinary care and educational outreach services to low-income neighborhoods in Texas	\$150,000
Kittico Cat Rescue	Toward hiring staff to increase the number of cats spayed/neutered throughout the state	\$75,000
		2 \$225,000
2005		
Cen-Tex Humane Society	Toward eliminating an operating deficit associated with increased care and adoption of animals of deployed Fort Hood soldiers	\$22,000
		1 \$22,000
2006		
El Paso County Humane Society	Toward constructing a new facility to alleviate overcrowding, increase animal adoption, and decrease animal return and euthanasia rates	\$150,000
		1 \$150,000
2007		
Metroplex Animal Coalition	Toward expanding a new program to provide free spay/neuter services to pets of low-income families in the Dallas area	\$20,000
		1 \$20,000
2008		
Animal Friends of Washington County	Toward constructing a clinic to provide low-cost spay/neuter services to a thirteen-county area	\$77,000

Overpopulation

2008		MFI Grant Amount
Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project	Toward constructing a clinic to provide low-cost spay/neuter services to a fourteen-county region	\$170,000
		2 \$247,000
2010		
Humane Society of Uvalde	Toward expanding the number of low-income families receiving low-cost spay/neuter services for their pets in an effort to decrease the euthanasia rate	\$25,000
SPCA of Texas	Toward establishing a new, expanded, and state-of-the-art shelter, clinic, and adoption center	\$500,000
Kittico Cat Rescue	Toward emergency funding to maintain low-to-no cost spay/neuter services for feral and domestic cats belonging to low-income, elderly, and/or disabled individuals	\$88,000
		3 \$613,000
2011		
Citizens for Animal Protection	Toward building a permanent shelter to increase capacity for homeless animals and to expand program adoptions	\$100,000
		1 \$100,000
	Total Overpopulation	13 \$1,502,000

Animal Cruelty

2004		
Habitat for Horses	Toward adding staff support in order to meet the growing need to care for abused and abandoned horses	\$25,000
		1 \$25,000
2008		
Habitat for Horses	Toward hiring staff to expand horse rescue and rehabilitation statewide	\$75,000
		1 \$75,000
	Total Animal Cruelty	2 \$100,000

Disaster Aid		
2011		MFI Grant Amount
SPCA of Texas	Toward emergency wildfire relief support	\$10,000
Humane Society of Austin & Travis County	Toward emergency wildfire relief support	\$10,000
	2	\$20,000
2010		
Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation for the Texas State Animal Resource Team	Toward establishing and training two teams of volunteers for deployment to rescue animals during significant disasters	\$25,000
	1	\$25,000
	Total Disaster Aid	3 \$45,000
	Total Animal Grants	18 \$1,647,000