Carson City
Agenda Report

Date Submitted: November 29, 2010   **Agenda Date Requested:** December 16, 2010
Time Requested: 5 minutes

To: Carson City Board of Supervisor
From: Health and Human Services

Subject Title: Discussion and possible action to accept The Humane Society of the United States Shelter Evaluation Report and send the Report back to staff to develop recommendations and an action plan. (Larry Werner)

Staff Summary: This report summarizes findings and recommendations by HSUS as a result of the Shelter Evaluation conducted in July 2010. The HSUS reviewed and evaluated Carson City Animal Services' current operations, services, and programs. The recommendations included in the report are based on what has been identified as best practices in the sheltering field.

Type of Action Requested: (check one)
(   ) Resolution   (   ) Ordinance
(X) Formal Action/Motion   (   ) Other (Specify)

Does This Action Require A Business Impact Statement: (   ) Yes (X) No

Recommended Board Action: I move to accept The Humane Society of the United States Shelter Evaluation Report and send the Report back to staff to develop recommendations and an action plan.

Explanation for Recommended Board Action: The HSUS reviewed and evaluated Carson City Animal Services' current operations, services, and programs. The recommendations included in the report are based on what has been identified as best practices in the sheltering field. The observations of the report are based on information gathered from several sources by the HSUS team. The report suggests forming a task force in order to prioritize the recommendations, and that it will be an ongoing process.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Explanation of Impact: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

Supporting Material: The Humane Society of the United States Shelter Evaluation Report

Prepared By: Marena Works, Director

Reviewed By: _____ Date: _____
(Health Department)

_____ Date: 12/7/10
(City Manager)

_____ Date: 12/7/10
(District Attorney)

_____ Date: 12/7/10
(Finance Director)

Board Action Taken:

Motion: _____   1) _____   Aye/Nay
                                     2) _____   _____
                                                            _____
                                                            _____
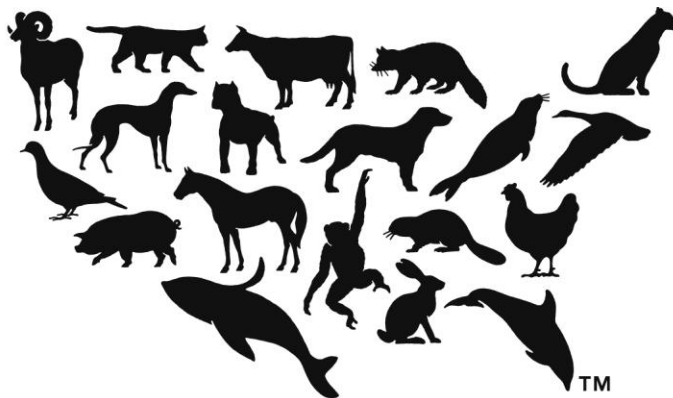   _____
_____   _____
(Vote Recorded By)

THE **HUMANE** SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

[Shelter Evaluation Program]

CARSON CITY ANIMAL SERVICES
CARSON CITY, NV

The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

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Site Visit – July 2010
Report Delivery – November 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) believes that the objective examination of shelter procedures and operations is best accomplished through independent consultations. The HSUS is the nation's largest animal protection organization and is uniquely positioned to serve local humane societies and animal care and control agencies.

Recognizing the need within the animal sheltering community for professional, standardized analysis, The HSUS has developed the Shelter Evaluation Program, a service created to effectively assist local humane societies and animal care and control agencies in managing their way to success.

In March 2010, The HSUS provided a proposal for a review and evaluation of select areas of Carson City Animal Services' current operations, services, and programs. A site visit was conducted July 20th through 22nd, 2010.

The team for this evaluation included the following HSUS representatives:

Kimberley Intino, CAWA, Director, HSUS Shelter Services

Penny E. Cistaro, HSUS Consultant

Notes:

The HSUS team would like to applaud Carson City Animal Services for taking this initial step towards improving services for both the people and animals of Carson City. We are optimistic that positive change will result from the collaboration of those overseeing, working for, and working with Carson City Animal Services.

Included in this report are many recommendations, some requiring substantial change, which we understand can be overwhelming. To start, we suggest reviewing the report several times and forming a task force in order to prioritize the recommendations. Some of the recommendations can be implemented immediately with just a change in procedure while others may take months or even years. Indeed, it will be an ongoing process.

The recommendations are derived from the expertise of The HSUS team as well as The HSUS's guidelines, which are based on what has been identified as best practices in the sheltering field. The recommendations in this report have been carefully chosen for the agency based on the environment at the time of the site visit. While this report has been written specifically for Carson City Animal Services, some of the recommendations are those that we would make for any agency receiving a report.

The HSUS team has attempted to make recommendations that are feasible; however, unbeknownst to The HSUS team, Carson City Animal Services may have already tried some of them in the past, and some may not be achievable with available resources. In short, The HSUS

team does not imply that Carson City Animal Services must implement every recommendation to be successful.

The observations included in this report are based on information gathered by The HSUS team from discussions with staff, local officials, and community members, and information such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), forms, statistics, etc. The HSUS has tried to ensure the integrity of the observations and the information used to derive them, but recognizes that some of the statements made to The HSUS team may not have been accurate.

By their nature, our reports focus on areas that need improvement, but the observations throughout this report are not meant to be unfavorable; rather they should be viewed as a snapshot of where the agency was at the time of the site visit and they should be used as a departure point to where management wants the agency to go. In addition, we do our best to highlight areas that are commendable. Unfortunately, some agencies that have received evaluations have been unfairly criticized by individuals and groups taking observations and recommendations out of context and using them to target individual shelter staff. Some of the issues discussed in this report are not uncommon in sheltering agencies around the country, and The HSUS urges those reading the report to use it as a tool for positive change.

Footnotes are included for reference purposes only. Footnotes with a "*" after the entry are included in the Appendix in the back of the report.

Please note that hereafter Carson City Animal Services will be referred to as "CCAS". The HSUS would like to thank the people involved with CCAS for their assistance and cooperation with The HSUS team. We are extremely pleased to assist in their efforts to improve programs and services for both the animals and humans within their community, and we remain available as a continued resource. With that in mind, The HSUS respectfully presents the following report.

Appendix

TASK FORCE

Once a task force[1] is developed to review this document and create a working plan of action, the task force should recommend priorities and action items and specify due dates. The document the task force develops then becomes CCAS's working document to implement the recommendations in this report. The structure of the task force and the people selected for it are critical.

This process will help CCAS prioritize and plan for the future both in response to this report and with respect to other potential changes and plans for CCAS. This process has been used successfully with other agencies that have received evaluations.

CCAS management, in concert with the task force, should prioritize and weigh each recommendation against available resources and decide whether it is to be implemented as suggested or used as a departure point for what is most realistic for them.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Put together a committee of no more than seven members who are willing to commit up to four months and who can work well in a group. It is important to appoint unbiased individuals to the task force. The task force should include the following:

    - ➢ Shelter staff representatives
    - ➢ Department of health officials
    - ➢ A veterinarian with a strong shelter medicine background

    Other members may include:

    - ➢ An individual with legal strength
    - ➢ Community members with expertise in short-term and strategic planning
    - ➢ Those interested in animal protection, but without personal agendas

- ✓ Consider hiring a professional facilitator if the agenda does not move forward due to disagreements.

- ✓ Create written guidelines outlining expected behavior and conduct for task force members. These guidelines should include stipulations for missed meetings.

- ✓ Convey the task force's responsibilities, which include:

    - ➢ Reviewing the report
    - ➢ Prioritizing each recommendation using a standardized form to rate each recommendation by expected financial/labor cost, time, potential benefits,

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1   Task force matrix example *

etc. The recommendations can be divided among the task force members, which will allow the agency, through the task force, to evaluate the recommendations as they relate to each other.

✓ Develop a reporting mechanism so the recommendations of the task force can be presented and CCAS can begin to implement the changes.

✓ Create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines the above sections and the role and outcome of the task force. All task force members should be required to sign the MOU so it is understood that the task force is to be a professional undertaking.

1.0 GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 SHELTER EXTERIOR/GROUNDS

<u>**Observations**</u>

The facility was built in the 1960's and is owned and maintained, along with the grounds, by Carson City. The main building's exterior was a pleasant blue and stone façade. Through the main gate was a large circle of plantings around a bench. The surrounding grounds appeared neglected, with many areas dried brown by the sun's heat. Staff stated that squirrels had chewed through the wiring of the sprinkler system, which prevented the area from being sufficiently watered.

To the right of the walkway leading to the main entrance were chain link cages in which visitors could temporarily place animals who were being surrendered rather than bringing them directly into the front office or leaving them in a hot car. Past the cages near the entry door were two trash containers.

The grounds surrounding the outside portion of the kennels were weedy and brown with a mixture of green patches and old beauty bark. The grounds in the staff parking area and storage building areas contained many small junk piles with a variety of old cages, carriers, equipment, tools, barrels, buckets, tires and fencing.

Public parking was located in the front of the building and was ample. Employee parking was located past the front parking lot behind a gated fence.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

- ✓ Develop a year round grounds maintenance schedule utilizing community volunteers who have an interest in gardening to implement a "shelter beautification program" Plant additional flowering shrubbery throughout that is attractive and easy to maintain.

- ✓ Organize a shelter "clean up day" to remove and/or organize the excessive clutter that has over taken the staff parking and outside storage areas.

- ✓ Place park benches along the front of the facility and on the grassy areas adjacent to the visitor parking lot.

- ✓ Relocate the trash container to an area closer to the parking lot rather than at the front entrance.

- ✓ Paint white lines in the visitor parking lot that will clearly define parking spaces.

✓ Consider removing the chain link cages near the main entrance. Staff should be able to attend to visitors in a timely manner and relocate animals from the front office as necessary.

Discussion

The animal shelter is the foundation of a community animal care and control program and the condition of its buildings and grounds is reflective of how strong and caring the internal programs are. The building and grounds should be presented and maintained so that they are attractive and inviting to the public.

1.2 EXTERNAL AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Observations

The HSUS team observed no City signs at any nearby intersections that directed people to CCAS.

On the front corner of the property was a large carved wooden sign identifying the shelter. This sign was handmade by a local scout troop.

Three signs mounted on the front gate informed the public of the hours and phone numbers, and that dumping an animal was illegal. The front entrance to the shelter also displayed three signs: one telling the public not to bring animals inside the office, one informing the public that if they had allergies they were entering a building that contained animals, and one that read, "concealed carry permittees --weapons forbidden in this building".

Visitors arriving at the shelter to view the cats were directed back outside and along the sidewalk to an unmarked door which led to the cat adoption room.

Recommendations

As a visitor approaches the shelter the first impression should be warm, friendly and inviting. To deliver a positive, welcoming atmosphere to the visiting public The HSUS team recommends the following:

✓ Mount an identifying sign on the front gate and above the shelter's main entrance.

✓ Post a sign on the main entrance door listing the hours and services offered, for example:

Carson City Animal Services

> *Customer Service   9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*
> *Receiving   9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*
> *Adoption/Redemption   11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.*
> *Closed Sundays and Holidays*

✓ Post a sign on the left side of the main entrance welcoming and thanking the public for visiting.

✓ Remove the sign that directs people not to bring animals inside the office.

✓ Place a sign on the door leading to the cat adoption room that identifies the room. Consider painting paw prints on the sidewalk for the public to follow.

✓ The City should install multiple directional signs at the major intersections and on the streets approaching the shelter. These signs should be clearly visible and similar in quality and style to other professional municipal signage.

1.3   HOURS OF OPERATION

Observations

The shelter is open six days a week, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The exception is Wednesday when the shelter opens to the public at 1:00 p.m. Wednesday mornings are available for staff trainings and / or meetings with all available staff.

During the site visit, the shelter began accepting animals at 8:00 a.m. and allowed the public to wander freely through the shelter. The HSUS team observed people interrupting staff during the cleaning processes in order to meet animals they were interested in adopting. These interactions took place in the midst of all the normal chaos that occurs during a morning cleaning session such as barking dogs, wet floors, and buckets, supply carts, trash cans, and hoses strewn across walkways.

Recommendations

Convenience is a major factor in choosing a source for a new pet, which is why shopping mall pet shops, neighbors, and relatives are often more popular sources than animal shelters. It has become common practice for shelters to be open extended hours to allow them to compete for a segment of the adoption market by being accessible during those hours most convenient for the general public.

✓ CCAS should be commended for being open on Saturdays for the public to adopt and potentially reclaim an animal.

It is admirable that CCAS is willing to be open to the public at 8:00 a.m. for adoption and redemption. However, being open at this early hour disrupts and extends the cleaning process for the animal care staff. It also creates a potential safety hazard for the public being in the middle of all the disarray and cleaning materials.

- ✓ Consider opening the kennels for adoption and redemption at 11:00 a.m. This will provide the animal care staff the necessary focused time to clean, feed and medicate the animals prior to opening. The front office staff always has the ability to escort a citizen looking for their lost pet should they arrive before the opening hour.

- ✓ CCAS should consider opening until at least 7 p.m. a minimum of one evening a week, potentially Wednesdays, so it is accessible to people working typical business hours . This change will greatly improve the shelter's image and therefore enhance the shelter's ability to place pets or return lost pets to owners.

1.4   BUILDING SECURITY

<u>Observations</u>

The main building had a security system through Stanley Security Solutions that consisted of a motion sensor in the long hall and front lobby. The doors, windows, and dog kennel areas were not secured by an alarm.

All CCAS employees have the same access code and ability to open and close the facility, with no one person actually assigned to do so. The SOP stated whoever arrives first and whoever leaves last, is responsible for those duties.

There was a recent break-in through a lobby window. The alarm did not go off and staff stated they did not know why the system failed. No one contacted the company to determine the cause of the malfunction and Stanley Security Systems did not provide a report on use.

The controlled drugs were in a wall mounted, double-locked cabinet behind a locked door.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Develop detailed SOPs for building security to include opening, closing, and alarm-setting procedures, and assign specific responsibilities and separate alarm codes for each staff member. This will help provide consistency and avoid oversights such as doors or windows being left unlocked.

✓ Contact Stanley Security Systems to address any malfunctions in the alarm system.

✓ Advise staff on how to respond to dangerous situations such as a security breach. This should also be included in the SOPs.

✓ Consider having an alarm systems installed on the windows and doors and in the rear kennel buildings to ensure a higher level of security.

✓ Ensure that the outside of the building is well-lit and install additional lighting if needed.

Discussion

Animal shelters can be easy targets for theft and vandalism since many of them store controlled drugs and house desirable animals. Day-to-day operational concerns often receive the most immediate attention in shelters, overshadowing the need for precautions to ensure building security and safety. These issues must remain a priority, and any problems must be regularly pinpointed, addressed, and resolved before a crisis occurs.

1.5 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/DISASTER PROCEDURES

Observations

There was a written SOP addressing an emergency evacuation plan and an evacuation map was located on the bulletin board in the long hallway of the main building. The SOP defined the evacuation plan as "removing animals to a safe location" and the map stated that the gathering point was in the new pet cemetery. The SOP also mentioned an emergency trailer vehicle to be used in case of an emergency. However when questioned, only some staff members were aware of the emergency evacuation plan and one stated there was a plan for the people but not the animals. Staff had not received evacuation training or practiced fire drills.

Carson City Health and Human Services had a comprehensive Animal Care Evacuation and Emergency Response Plan for the City; however, it was very clear through discussions with the staff at CCAS that they were neither aware of nor trained to administer this plan.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

- ✓ Review and enhance the emergency evacuation plan SOP. When an emergency arises, this information, as well as personnel and volunteers must be at the ready – armed with the proper knowledge, training and equipment necessary to put the plan into action. If these things have not been planned, practiced, and reviewed prior to an incident, they will be useless and the plan will not work. [2]

- ✓ Update staff training procedures regarding emergency evacuations and post them appropriately. The local fire and police departments should be good resources for this plan. The plan must be communicated to all staff members and should have provisions for both staff and animals.

- ✓ Staff should actively participate in any drills performed by the City's emergency management office, including drills at the shelter.

- ✓ Install an outside lockbox to allow fire and police personnel access afterhours in the case of an emergency.

1.6   GENERAL SAFETY AND OSHA

<u>**Observations**</u>

CCAS had available to the staff the safety manual for the City. It contained information on topics including forklifts, excavation and trenching equipment, as well as automotive and clutch repair operations. It was not tailored to the unique safety concerns that exist in an animal shelter. The safety manual included a monthly safety inspection report on which staff recorded checked items such as the fire extinguishers, some first aid supplies, a perimeter inspection, and sharps containers. A staff member had completed these inspections from May 2009 through to March of 2010.

Staff was unaware of the definition of a "Right to Know" station and the one at CCAS did not contain information on how to report a safety hazard. One staff member had received safety training at a prior job and knew how to operate a fire extinguisher.

The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) station was located in the long hallway in the main building. The MSDS binder contained sheets for the disinfectants on site but not for the drugs routinely handled by staff. With a couple exceptions, the staff members with whom The HSUS team spoke were unfamiliar with a MSDS or what was meant when referring to "personal protective equipment" (PPE).

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2 http://www.humanesociety.org/search/search.jsp?query=disaster+preparedness

The in-house training checklist indicated that staff was trained in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) posted rules, MSDS, and the safety manual. However, the staff with whom The HSUS team spoke had not received safety training.

The list of SOPs does not include safety training but does include eye/ear protection, hand/arm protection, and footwear. Additionally, the list includes the handling of aggressive people and animals, but there was no SOP pertaining to aggressive people in the manual and the SOP for handling aggressive animals was vague and would not provide the necessary training to a new staff member.

Most staff knew the location of one or two of the first aids kits and the location of the fire extinguisher closest to their work station. There were eye wash stations in three locations throughout the facility: the long hallway in the main building, the dog kennels, and the euthanasia/procedure room. First aid kits were located in the same areas as well in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room. The first aid kits were not fully stocked.

Many of the containers in use in the facility were not the original manufacturer's, but were unlabeled secondary containers. One spray bottle had the words "bleach" written in black marker. Another open, unmarked bottle contained a pink liquid that a staff member could not identify.

During the site visit, decibel readings were taken in dog housing areas to assess noise levels. The highest readings in the areas monitored were 104 decibels in the large dog kennel and 80 decibels in the small dog area. These levels were not consistent and the dogs quieted after the disturbance to their peace abated. Some of these levels were in the harmful to dangerous range, which is normal for a shelter setting; however, the lack of PPE, such as earplugs, was the concern.

Recommendations

- ✓ It is the employer's responsibility and legal obligation to ensure the safety and welfare of its employees. This is achieved by providing a safe working environment, along with the proper training and equipment. Contact OSHA as soon as possible for assistance in bringing the shelter into compliance with OSHA regulations.

- ✓ Place OSHA compliant labels on all secondary containers for all chemicals. If any chemical is transferred from its original container to another one, that secondary container must be properly labeled. [3]

- ✓ Provide eye wash stations in readily accessible locations. According to OSHA, "where the eyes or body of any person may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body

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[3] Disinfectant Product Labels, Iowa State University *

shall be provided within the work areas for emergency use." [4] Inform staff of their placement and train staff as to their proper use.

✓ Determine which hazards in the shelter necessitate the use of PPE and then require employees do so. According to OSHA, CCAS must also train employees required to wear equipment to do the following:[5]

  ➢ Properly use PPE
  ➢ Know when PPE is necessary
  ➢ Know what kind of PPE is necessary
  ➢ Understand the limitations of PPE in protecting employees from injury
  ➢ Don (put on), adjust, wear, and doff (take off) PPE
  ➢ Properly maintain PPE

✓ Develop and offer a formal safety training program. Proper documentation of all training should be maintained in each employee's personnel file. Include the following types of safety training:

  ➢ Animal handling and use of equipment
  ➢ Proper lifting
  ➢ How to complete an Accident Report
  ➢ How to report a maintenance problem
  ➢ Where to go for emergency medical treatment
  ➢ How to safely perform an animal decapitation
  ➢ Proper handling of chemicals
  ➢ Zoonoses: diseases of concern, routes of transmission, and prevention

✓ Consider purchasing information "stations" for "Right to Know" information, SOPs, security information, and emergency information. All staff should be aware of this station, which should include:

  ➢ MSDS Accident Report Forms
  ➢ Where to seek emergency medical treatment
  ➢ Safety Hazard Reporting and Maintenance Request Forms

✓ Assemble a Safety Training Manual to distribute to current and new employees. This manual may include:

  ➢ How to read an MSDS
  ➢ Location of the "Right to Know" station
  ➢ How to use the security system (in new facility, if applicable)
  ➢ Updated animal shelter evacuation map
  ➢ Locations of emergency exits locations and use of safety equipment such as eyewash stations and fire extinguishers

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4   OSHA Standard Number 1910.151
5   OSHA Fact Sheet, "Personal Protective Equipment"

- ➢ Proper secondary labeling of hazardous materials emergency evacuation procedures
- ➢ Use of PPE
- ➢ Zoonoses: diseases of concern, routes of transmission, and prevention

✓ Ensure that all chemicals being used in the shelter have a MSDS and contact the manufacturer if necessary. Compile a MSDS book that is consistently updated and in an easily accessible location (preferably near the Right to Know Station).

✓ Include volunteers in all safety training including appropriate response to minor and major injuries.

✓ Refer to additional safety resources available online. Examples include:

- ➢ MSDS Online: www.msdsonline.com
- ➢ Cornell University: www.ehs.cornell.edu
- ➢ OSHA[6]:   www.osha.gov

✓ Clearly mark the fire extinguishers with identifying signs and affix glow in the dark stickers to their location.

✓ Increase the number of first aid kits available. At minimum there should be a fully equipped first aid kit in all animal housing areas. Each kit should contain a minimum of band-aids of various sizes and shapes, alcohol swabs, topical antibiotics ointment, tweezers, sterile gauze pads and Betadine or iodine antibacterial swabs.

✓ OSHA has strict regulations regarding acceptable decibel levels (particularly on a continual or routine basis) to protect employees. Their guidelines state that when employees are exposed to 85 decibels or higher on an eight hour time-weight average, ear protection must be available and a general hearing conservation program instituted.

✓ To deter long-term hearing loss, Consumer Reports® developed a set of recommendations based on the findings of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communications Disorders, which states the following relating to sound levels:

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6   OSHA Fact Sheet, "OSHA Compliance Assistance"

Category	Decibel Level	Examples	Recommendations
Dangerous	About 110 dBA and up	Firearms; fireworks and jet engines at close range; loud concerts or music clubs	Always use ear protection
Harmful	About 100-110 dBA	Chainsaw; snowmobile; loud aerobics class	Protect ears when exposure exceeds 15 minutes
Potentially Harmful	About 85-100 dBA	Circular saw; loud string trimmer or power blower; motorcycle at high speed; loud wedding reception; loud mower; loud vacuum cleaner	Ear protection recommended, especially for regular, lengthy exposure
Relatively Safe	About 85 dBA or less	City traffic noise; hair dryer; electric string trimmer or mower; quiet vacuum cleaner; noisy dishwasher; noisy air conditioner	Ear protection not needed

1.7   FACILITY MAINTENANCE

<u>Observations</u>

The buildings are old and worn down and there were many areas within the facility that were in need of repair and maintenance. The plumbing in the dog kennels was causing major drainage problems and the concrete was chipped. Runs were rusted and broken and fencing was bent and being pulled up by the dogs. Venting ducts were rusted and dirty, and duct tape had been applied to light switches and the pass-through doors in the cat cages.

The City's maintenance department was responsible for caring for the facility. However, a shelter staff person was not available to provide the daily maintenance or janitorial services to the shelter and staff reported that safety hazards and repairs often go unresolved.

Recommendations

- ✓ It is the responsibility of CCAS management to ensure that the facility and equipment are kept in a manner that is functional and attractive. It is the responsibility of the City's maintenance department to maintain its properties and equipment, which include those of the animal shelter.

- ✓ CCAS management should establish with the City a preventative maintenance schedule program that includes walking through the facility on a regularly scheduled basis, recording areas of need, and scheduling preventative maintenance to anticipate and address problems before they arise.

- ✓ Develop and implement a SOP for maintenance requests and/or a work order system that ensures that all repairs are completed within a reasonable timeframe.

2.0   ANIMAL HOUSING, CARE, AND HANDLING

2.1   VENTILATION/TEMPERATURE (HVAC)

<u>Observations</u>

The main building operated on an HVAC system, but minimal information was provided to The HSUS team regarding overall ventilation and temperature control systems within the facility.

The cat area was comfortable at 75° with 32% humidity. In this area staff would open a window during the morning cleaning process; although the room was cool the humidity was at 40%.

In the afternoon the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room was 73°with 33% humidity.

The dog kennels were cooled through the use of swamp coolers. A cost efficient method, swamp coolers work by drawing in outside air using a fan. The air then passes through water-absorbed pads that cool the air down and then allow the air to pass through into the kennel areas.

The high outside temperature during the two-day site visit was 94° and 95°. The interior dog kennels remained warm at 81° with 26% humidity with a slight breeze moving through the kennels. The lights were off and the guillotine doors were open, which kept the area comfortable. The room that contained the smaller dog kennels was only slightly warmer at 82° with 22% humidity. But the room and kennel configuration prevented a breeze.

The euthanasia/procedure room had a small window-mounted air conditioner. On one afternoon the room was comfortable at 73° with 35% humidity, yet on another day it was at 81° with 32% humidity.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Heating, cooling, and humidity control systems should be serviced regularly as part of a facility's preventive maintenance program. These are crucial - not only to provide for the animals' health and comfort, but also for that of the staff and visiting public.

- ✓ A means of circulating the air must always be in operation in all animal housing areas. Ideally, the air in closed animal housing areas should be exchanged with outside air twelve to fifteen times per hour. [7]

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7 http://www.designlearned.com/

    ✓ Vents, air ducts and filters should be cleaned and/or replaced monthly.

    ✓ Evaluate the effectiveness of the window unit in the euthanasia/procedure room. Replace if necessary.

2.2 DOG HOUSING

<u>Observations</u>

The primary dog housing area consisted of 36 runs and was divided into three sections. There was a doorway separating the kennel sections.

The first section had 14 runs that measured 35" wide x 48" deep, each with a 10' outside run. The second section had 12 runs the same size. The runs in both sections were divided at the four-foot mark by a guillotine style door allowing access to the outside when open. All of the runs housed individual dogs, with one exception, which had what appeared to be a bonded pair. The walkway between the runs in the both sections was 8'6" with one drain located in the middle of the walkway.

The third section was the area that housed the dogs who had bitten and were in quarantine. This section had 10 runs total with eight that measured 28" wide x 35" deep, but only 36" high. The remaining two runs measured 46" wide. One side of the outside runs measured at 19'5" long, the other 10' long. On the inside these runs were constructed of cinder block boxes with a chain link gate and were small and dark. The walls were crumbling and the hardware on the front was rusted. The walkway between the runs measured 9'9" and doubled as a work area with a table and sink in the middle. There was a trough drain in front of these runs both inside and outside.

The second and third section of the outside dog runs had chain link fencing walls from top to bottom that permitted dogs to have nose-to-nose contact and fence fight, and also allowed floor level fluid contamination.

A stainless steel water bucket was hooked to the interior of the front gate of every run and food bowls were also stainless steel. The inside runs were furnished with raised, hard plastic pallet beds, leaving little room for the dogs to maneuver.

It was stated to The HSUS team that plumbing problems plagued the dog kennels and caused frequent backups during the morning cleaning routine.

As stated previously, the wire fencing on a portion of the outside dog runs had been pulled up and bent by the dogs, causing a safety hazard. The floors appeared to be unsealed concrete and were cracked, stained, and exhibiting a residue in some areas. The inside runs were also cracked and damaged at the guillotine door level.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

- ✓ Inspect all runs to insure that they are in good condition and repair all damaged runs. Replace or permanently repair the doors and supporting walls on the smaller dog runs in the third section of the dog kennels.

- ✓ For the health and safety of the dogs install metal panels on the chain link of the outside runs to a height that will be sufficient to prevent nose-to nose and visual contact.

- ✓ All guillotine doors should be checked for leaks and repaired as needed so that they are watertight.

- ✓ The shelter must have drainage and plumbing adequate to handle the heavy load of the daily cleaning. CCAS is an old facility that will require ongoing maintenance of the plumbing.

- ✓ Floors should be sealed making them non-porous. Cracked or chipped runs attract dirt and body grease, are unable to be properly sanitized, and promote the growth of bacteria and viruses.

- ✓ The HSUS team commends CCAS for supplying dogs with pallet beds. However, if beds are causing space or hygiene issues in any of the runs, consider replacing with smaller sized beds or blankets.

2.3   CAT HOUSING

<u>**Observations**</u>

CCAS had three different areas where cats were housed. One was located in a separate room adjacent to the dog kennels, and two rooms were located in the main building.

The main cat room was in the main building, had a public entrance off the front parking lot, and was also accessible to staff from the long hallway. This room measured 30' x 12' and had 45 cages.

Twenty-eight cages were built into a frame flush with two perpendicular walls forming an L shape. These cages had a wood veneer front, some of which was peeling, exposing pressed wood. They measured at 24" x 22" and were 38" high. Each unit contained two resting perches and a plexi-glass front. These cages provide the cats a means of exercise and a place to sleep away from their litter pan, greatly improving their attitude and well-being during their stay.

Staff provided each cat with a feral cat den and placed this den on the top resting perch of the cage. The den was too large for the perch and sat at an uneven angle, taking away

valuable space from the cage. The HSUS team observed dens being tipped by kittens or shifting with a cat's movements. The dens offered a highly social cat a place to hide when it was not necessary for the cat's well being.

Directly across the room were three 24" x 24" stainless steel cages mounted on a wall with a bank of four fiberglass cages next to them. The fiberglass cages had pass-through doors for easy handling of fractious cats; however, these were taped shut with strips of duct tape, leaving a sticky, dirt-attracting residue on the sides of the cages.

The room had a linoleum floor without a drain and was empty except for a bench. The walls were void of informational signs or educational brochures.

Staff stated that during the busy season, some cats were housed in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room across the long hallway next to the back door. This multi-purpose room experienced a fair amount of activity throughout the day, including members of the public visiting for adoption. In addition, the door to the room had been removed which unfortunately heightened the sounds of the inadvertent slamming of the back door and corresponding hallway movements. The room typically housed stray, unsocialized, and feral cats just entering the shelter, often those experiencing the highest level of stress. It was the opinion of The HSUS team that this hectic environment must have elevated the cats' stress levels.

The room measured approximately 16' x 12' and the floor was concrete with a single drain in the middle. There were 21 stainless steel cages, all measuring 24" x 24", one bank of nine cages, and one bank of 12 in the shape of an L. Both banks were stacked three high. During The HSUS site visit two kittens were loose in this room on two separate occasions. Staff stated one kitten had been loose for a couple of days.

Cats suffering from upper respiratory illness were housed in the euthanasia/procedure room. This room measured approximately 12' x 17', with a concrete floor with one drain, and contained a bank of nine stainless steel cages, six 24" x 24", and three 48" x 24". Euthanasia was also performed in this room and feral cats returning from spay/neuter surgery were housed overnight on the floor in traps or large wire cages. The room contained a large elevated tub providing the opportunity for grooming.

Generally, cats were housed individually unless they arrived together. Each cage was lined with newspaper; in some cases staff used the glossy advertisements, which tended to be non-absorbent. Litter pans were aluminum restaurant take out containers in various sizes. Food and water bowls were stainless steel.

Recommendations

- ✓ Replace or permanently repair the veneer cage doors. (During the writing of this report, The HSUS team was informed these cages have been replaced by stainless steel cages.)

- ✓ Remove the fiberglass bank of cages from the main cat room.

- ✓ Consider purchasing larger cages or retrofitting the current stainless steel cages as they do not provide adequate space for housing cats. According to the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program:[8]

  Studies have shown that a space allowance of at least $1m^2$ ($10.8ft^2$) floor area per cage for singly housed cats is required in order to prevent excessive stress levels. Cages in which cats are unable to stretch their full body length are acceptable only for very short-term housing (maximum 24 hours). Cages for housing cats longer than 24 hours must be large enough to allow separation of at least two feet between feeding, and resting, and elimination areas; a litter box large enough to accommodate a cat; and sufficient floor space for locomotion and play. Bedding material should be at least 3" thick.

- ✓ In addition, supply the cages with a resting shelf or perch. [9,10,11]

- ✓ Contact The HSUS for cage retrofitting references.

- ✓ Refer to Nevada Revised Statues 2009 for animal housing requirements:

  NRS 574.400 Floor space of primary enclosure. *An operator shall ensure that a primary enclosure in which a dog or cat that is at least 6 months old is kept has a minimum amount of floor space which is calculated by finding the mathematical square of the sum of 6 inches plus the length of the dog or cat measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, and dividing that amount by 144, to arrive at the minimum amount of square footage required for the floor space.*

- ✓ Remove the feral cat dens from the cages and alternatively provide cats with shoeboxes. This offers the opportunity to curl up in a box, yet still be easily viewed by visitors.

The use of stainless steel bowls is an excellent choice as it is easily disinfected when cleaned properly and holds up well to years of use.

- ✓ Discontinue using the aluminum litter pans and instead use stainless steel pans. These can be purchased from a restaurant supply store or possibly donated.

- ✓ Immediately replace the door to the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room and keep it closed.

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8 http://www.sheltermedicine.com
9 Crijo Kitty Crib http://www.crijopets.com/
10 Kuranda Kitty Bed http://kuranda.com/
11 http://www.petfinder.com/admin/hide-perch-go.html

    ✓ Place an automatic closure on the door leading to the back parking lot to eliminate its slamming.

The cat room locations were completely separated from the dog kennels; however the cats in the euthanasia/procedure room were subjected to having other animals placed directly in front of them. This close proximity and vulnerable exposure can be extremely stressful to any animal, but particularly cats.

    ✓ Install a rod with a shower curtain to draw across the front of these cages to diminish the stress on the cats when other animals are brought into the room.

2.4   OTHER ANIMAL HOUSING

Observations

CCAS did not have a room or any designated area in which to properly house small animals or birds.

When questioned staff went in search of a small animal cage or small birdcage. They were able to locate one large bird cage and a couple small plastic cages that would house a single guinea pig, but unable to locate any other housing or any supplies for other small animals. It was stated that if they needed something they would simply buy it. They also stated they would ask the relinquisher to leave the cage with the animal if possible. During the site visit a parrot was housed in the front office in a large wrought iron cage in which she arrived.

A huge flight aviary was located outside at the farthest end of the property. It had been unoccupied by birds for many years; however, the fencing was intact and staff stated goats were housed in this area when necessary. The grass was overgrown and quite weedy.

Although CCAS did not routinely house large animals or horses, there were two ample steel framed corrals with appropriate shelter if the situation presented itself.

One hen was housed near the staff parking area during the site visit. She was kept in a medium sized wire cage placed inside a large chain link outdoor dog kennel.

Recommendations

    ✓ Animal shelters must be able to provide housing for a variety of animals including birds, reptiles, fowl, fish, rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs and other small animals. If CCAS is going to handle animals other than dogs and cats, accommodations for these animals should be made for their unique needs.

✓ Develop a written SOP addressing the care and housing for every species that is likely to come into the shelter. Some exotics, such as iguanas and chameleons, are very difficult to care for and have very specific housing needs and nutritional requirements. Some of the more common species, such as rabbits, also have very specific feeding requirements and are very susceptible to digestive problems. There should be detailed written instructions for the care of all species so that the staff will consistently provide the proper care for these animals.

✓ Provide necessary training and appropriate equipment to adequately meet the needs of these animals.

✓ Animals should not be housed in the front lobby. Small mammals and exotics are especially sensitive to noise and disturbances and should be housed in a more quiet location.

✓ The following are examples of traditional and nontraditional caging and the species of animal that can be accommodated in each:

➢ Aquariums: Various sizes; appropriate for both aquatic and terrestrial amphibians and reptiles, as well as for small exotics such as hedgehogs and prairie dogs. As with any aquarium, make sure there is a tight-fitting screen or other suitable top, with a device or system for locking the top down.

➢ Household Storage Containers: Various sizes, clear and opaque plastic; usually with snap-on lids that can be punctured for ventilation; suitable for amphibians, reptiles, small exotics, and bats.

➢ Livestock Equipment: Watering troughs for cattle and other livestock, in either plastic or metal; can also be used for larger aquatic or terrestrial reptiles and non-climbing mammals.

➢ Commercial Wire Cages for Mammals: Various sizes and configurations; manufactured for use with rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets; they provide suitable housing for small to medium-size exotics like sugar gliders and flying squirrels, for whom glass may not be the best choice.

➢ Commercial Cages for Birds: Various sizes; cages that allow horizontal movement are preferable to tall, narrow ones; be aware of the gauge of bars when housing large parrots—gauge is used to determine the thickness and strength of the bars, and large parrots can easily bend or crush small-gauge bars.

> ➢ Miscellaneous/Other: In the event that an animal is too large for the caging discussed above, freestanding sectional dog pens and large dog crates can be utilized.

✓ Ensure that the aviary and the corrals are regularly maintained to ensure their availability and safety should the need arise to house large animals or horses.

✓ When housing fowl or other types of birds in dog runs or chain link enclosures, cover the tops with a mesh material to inhibit their escape and to allow for freedom of movement. Slip (and secure) broom handles through the fencing to provide perches for the birds to roost, if appropriate. Provide a large dog crate with straw for a nesting box and an elevated water trough. Scatter the feed to allow for a chicken's basic need to peck.

2.5 ANIMAL CARE AND ENRICHMENT

Observations

CCAS staff genuinely cared about the animals in the shelter and they were kind and gentle during handling. However, The HSUS team also observed a complete absence of nurturing animal care and animal enrichment programs within the shelter. It was clear that there was no awareness of the need to minimize stress and anxiety for the animals or to provide stimulus for their mental well-being. Staff did not make the connection between their actions and the animal's reactions and had no basic knowledge of an animal's body language or the signals that can alert one to angst or fear in an animal.

Some specific examples:

- Two cats, still groggy from anesthesia, were transported from the veterinarian's office to the shelter in uncovered humane traps. These cats were placed on the floor of the euthanasia/procedure room in full view and close proximity to each other and the other cats housed in that room. Both cats were given a full can of food.

- An ACO brought in abandoned cats in a large carrier in which they had been left by their owner and set it on the floor in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room. The cats were clearly stressed, demonstrated by their dilated pupils, tucked ears, and stiff body posture. They were left uncovered in the middle of room while staff and volunteers noisily worked and moved about them.

- Unsocialized cats and kittens were housed in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room without the benefit of a feral den or towel covering their cage. These cats typically cowered in the back of their cages.

- During the night, four unweaned kittens and their mother had spilled water, food, and litter all over the bottom of a double perch cage. The following morning, the newspaper was soaked and covered in feces. There was not a clean, dry space on the floor of the cage, but for one small corner where the kittens were huddled and shaking. The mother cat was up on a perch but the kittens were too tiny to jump up. A similar situation occurred with two four-month old kittens in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room. In both cases, staff members who were working in those rooms went about their normal cleaning routine and demonstrated a total lack of awareness regarding the distress of these kittens.

- An extremely frightened Chihuahua arrived at the shelter. Staff allowed the dog to stay with them in the front office because they thought that might calm her down. However, the dog was clearly demonstrating signals that she was stressed and anxious, including panting heavily, trembling, and not allowing anyone to pet her. She would approach a person as if she wanted to be touched, but would quickly back away. She startled at every movement and was unable to relax, continuing to pace the office. When questioned about her stress staff stated, "Oh she'll be ok".

- In the cat room cats were allowed to run loose during the cleaning process, interacting with strange cats and approaching cages housing other cats.

- Rock and roll music was played loudly in the main cat room throughout The HSUS site visit.

- In the main cat room only one of 44 cages had bedding or a toy. In the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room slightly more than half of the 20 cages had small towels, one had a feral den, and none had a toy. In the euthanasia/procedure room none of the six cages had bedding, a hiding box or toy. Cats were observed hiding under the newspaper or hunkered down in the litter pan.

- In the dog kennels the runs each had a hard plastic bed. In the first section 1% of runs contained a blanket, compared to 40% and 60% respectively in the second section and small dog area. No dogs had toys or other objects to occupy the time.

- The HSUS team observed extreme kennel stress in nine dogs housed at CCAS. One dog who had been there since November of 2009 displayed severe barrier aggression. Two dogs who were admitted in April 2010 exhibited extreme repetitive action behaviors. One dog housed for 33 days was displaying some repetitive action behaviors, and two others displayed barrier aggression. Finally, one dog who had been at the shelter for only three weeks was hoarse from his constant barking and barrier aggression. One pair of dogs housed in adjoining kennels routinely engaged in fence fighting.

- The HSUS team observed a dog in the kennels whose paperwork stated he was aggressive with dogs, cats and some people. He had been at the shelter for a

month and was exhibiting barrier aggression.

- When observed over the course of the two-day site visit a hen's water bowl was consistently dirty, although staff stated she had been cared for each morning.

There was a written SOP for conducting daily rounds. The SOPs stated these rounds are required in order for staff to have time with every animal to observe temperament, illness or injury and general information to determine how to best help the animal.

The SOPs stated that each dog should be evaluated for:

- Food and toy aggression
- Sensitive body areas
- Leash training
- Dog aggression
- Loud noises
- Eye stare

Staff had gone through "SAFER" training conducted by Emily Weiss of the ASPCA, but stated they did not perform temperament or behavior evaluations on the dogs because of a lack of space and time.

Volunteers were present during The HSUS site visit, but for only limited amounts of time leaving them unable to give attention to a substantial number of dogs.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Upon arrival at the shelter every dog should receive a thorough health and behavior / temperament evaluation. This will enable staff and volunteers to have a better understanding of that individual animal's needs, behaviors, fears, and personality. A program should then be designed to address any issues. For example, protocols should be developed to work with an individual dog to address, monitor and hopefully overcome any behavioral issues that may be seen as problematic, such as submissive urination or food possession.

- ✓ In addition, enrichment programs should be developed and implemented for each and every animal in the shelter, depending upon breed, personality, and temperament. This is the type of program that could be developed in concert with the Carson Tahoe SPCA (CTSPCA). These include but are not limited to:

  DOGS

  ➢ Weekly obedience training classes
  ➢ Daily obedience "workouts"
  ➢ A "Manners Class" with other dogs, at least weekly, if not more often

> ➢ Daily socialization and exercise with other dogs and people
> ➢ Depending upon breed daily / weekly brushing, with routine grooming / bathing
> ➢ Stimulation games such as Frisbee, fetch, agility courses, a "kiddie" pool in warm weather
> ➢ Volunteer programs to take active, sporting breeds running or jogging daily
> ➢ Introducing housebreaking techniques to puppies, begin crate training

CATS

> ➢ Exercise in a sunny room
> ➢ Cat trees to climb and stretch upon
> ➢ Exposure to catnip a couple of times a month
> ➢ Depending upon breed daily / weekly grooming, nail clipping
> ➢ Playtime with a variety of toys
> ➢ Daily socialization, a lap to sit on and be petted
> ➢ The ability to "use their claws on something" Consider the purchase of "Stretch and Scratch" [12]

Within the kennels and cages much can be done to improve the day-to-day surroundings by providing:

DOGS

> ➢ Dog chew toys with "worry sections" (such as Kong® toys) stuffed with kibble and peanut butter or canned food, or an interactive toy that requires patience to get the treat, such as a "buster cube"
> ➢ A bed and blanket for each dog. Even if the dog chews his blanket, he should have one.
> ➢ A kennel mate who has been temperamentally evaluated to be considered a good match. Animals who came in together should remain with each other.
> ➢ Dogs should not be overcrowded. When well suited to each other, two dogs, (dependent upon size), are appropriate in a dog run the size of CCAS'.
> ➢ And lastly, dogs are to be clean and dry. Dogs should not get wet during the cleaning process, nor should they be covered in urine or feces.

✓ Consider developing a "homeroom" or "real life room" that can imitate a home environment. Animals who have been in a home and are accustomed to sleeping at the foot of the bed or lying on the couch in front of the TV benefit greatly by

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12 http://www.stretchandscratch.com/

spending time, even overnight, in a room that resembles a home environment. A radio or TV turned on low can provide familiar background "home" sounds for the animal. It is quiet time out of the kennel, exercise out of the cage. Staff can take a break with an animal in this room.

✓ Any dog who is exhibiting barrier aggression, animal or people aggression, fence fighting, spinning, or any other sign of aggression or stress must be evaluated and placed in foster care if possible, or euthanized if his needs cannot be safely and humanely met in a timely manner.

CATS

➢ Upon arrival to minimize stress for cats a towel to cover the front of the cage to provide a dark place to "hide".
➢ Shoeboxes and beds for cats to crawl into and hide
➢ Film containers or ping-pong balls for cats
➢ Pipe cleaners tied to cage bars for kittens
➢ Used appropriately and responsibly catnip for adult cats
➢ Lots and lots of toys, rotated every few days (after disinfecting, washing) to always have them "seem new"

✓ Always cover traps or carriers with a towel when transporting cats.

✓ Remove cats from carriers and place them into a cage as soon as possible. Do not let them remain on the floor of a busy room. If cats must wait in a trap or carrier, cover the carrier with a towel, move the cat to a quiet location, and do everything possible to minimize the duration.

✓ Pay attention to stress factors in cat housing areas, such as abrupt movements, loud voices or music, and slamming doors (including cage doors), and do whatever is necessary to mitigate them.

✓ Make note of cats who are stressed and not adjusting well. Move them to a quieter location if possible and be sure to cover their cage door and provide them with a hiding box.

✓ Do not allow cats to roam freely during cleaning.

✓ Upon entering a room each morning to begin cleaning, staff must perform a cursory check on all animals and first clean or tend to those animals whose cages are extremely dirty or who are in distress.

✓ Food should not be given to an animal who has been anesthetized until the animal is completely awake and then only in small amounts to minimize vomiting.

✓ If music is to be played in animal areas, it should be soft music, preferably

       classical, and played at a low volume.

<u>Discussion</u>

Staff should always keep in mind that how they handle and house the animals will have an effect on how well or how poorly they respond to a shelter environment. Taking care to do "little things" such as covering the carriers as the cats are being transported goes a long way in helping to keep them calm.

Numerous studies have shown that long-term confinement can be detrimental to the psychological and physical health of companion animals. Shelters that house animals for extended periods of time must have in place programs that address the psychological and physical needs of the animals in their care. Above all, only the number of animals that can be humanely and effectively cared for should be kept in a shelter that maintains animals for extended, indefinite periods of time.

A shelter must have a clear idea of its direction, goals and philosophy regarding the long-term care and housing of animals in order to devote the time, energy and resources necessary to comprehensively address behavioral issues. If it is the intent of the CCAS to house animals for extended periods of time, there are several programs and considerations that must accompany such a plan to ensure the overall health and well being of each animal entrusted to its care.

As animal caregivers, it is important to continually recognize that in spite of the amount of attention, affection, exercise and care we give the animals in our shelter, when we close the door at night and go home - they remain in a cage. Regardless of how well managed a shelter may be it is an inherently stressful and unhealthy place for an animal. No matter how compassionate the staff may be or how well the animals are cared for - a cage or kennel cannot and should not take the place of a home.

Animals should not remain in a kennel environment any longer than they are mentally, physically, behaviorally or emotionally capable. Once an animal is available for adoption the question, "Is he or she still happy, healthy and well adjusted?" should be asked and answered on a daily basis. While the decision to euthanize an animal is difficult, an animal's deteriorating condition and the lack of an appropriate home may necessitate that euthanasia be performed.

Staff must be provided with the appropriate training in animal behavior in order to recognize and identify the warning signs for loss of quality of life in shelter animals and only a capable and experienced staff member in a position of authority should make these assessments.

Sue Sternberg[13], a nationally recognized expert in behavioral issues for sheltered animals describes has published "When Something Must Be Done – Warning Signs for loss of Quality of Life for Dogs in Shelters". Certain indicators to look for include but are not limited to:

Repetitive Action behaviors

- Spinning / circling
- Pacing, (slowly and fast)
- Bounding and rebounding off kennel walls and gates
- Leaping up and down repetitively
- Repetitive bark at seemingly nothing

Self-Mutilating Behaviors

- Excessive licking, lick sores, lick granulomas
- Flank sucking
- Wearing of toenails, (from excessive pacing, chewing, digging)
- Chewing, pulling at kennel gate

Overall appearance

- Decrease or increase in appetite and / or inability to gain or maintain weight
- Deteriorating coat quality, (excessive shedding, dull dry, often from lack of handling, petting)
- Pressure sores or calluses
- Trembling, shaking, cowering
- Dog smears feces all over kennel walls / door
- Dog is continually covered in feces
- Dog has strong stench from urine or feces
- Dog remains depressed
- Dog seems to have given up
- Dog appears stressed, dilated pupils, panting, excessive drooling

Repeated displays of aggression

- Lunging at bars towards humans or other dogs
- Increasing fear of external stimuli
- Has become food / toy aggressive
- Difficulty handling

Within "For Better Or Worse…Behavioral and Emotional Management of Long Term Shelter Dogs," Sue Sternberg states the belief that:

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13 http://www.suesternberg.com/

"We have a commitment to the dogs once they end up in our care, a commitment to ensure that they are happier, healthier, better dogs behaviorally, emotionally, physically, and mentally each day we choose to keep them alive…Dogs live in the present. They don't dwell on the past, and cannot daydream, fantasize, not hope for a better future…therefore, at the shelter, it is our commitment that every day is a nourishing and enriched day for the dogs in our care - behaviorally, emotionally, mentally, physically. It is, plain and simple cruelty to animals to let a dog spin obsessively in his own excrement day after day, while we hope that over the weekend someone will come in and adopt that dog."

Following their initial adjustment, cats in general seemingly cope better in a shelter environment than dogs, however their signs of deterioration are not as clearly evident as dogs. A well-trained eye and staff well-versed in cat behavior will be necessary to detect the behaviors of concern.

These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Becomes depressed, inactive
- Does not want to be handled, becomes aggressive or "cranky" upon attempts to pick up or handle
- Difficulty placing back into cage
- Deteriorating coat quality, (excessive shedding, dull dry, also may be from lack of handling, petting)
- Lack of appetite / not eating and / or inability to gain or maintain weight
- Development of upper respiratory infections
- Excessive licking, hair loss

Some of the many issues that face animal shelters housing animals for extended periods of time are:

- Can animal shelters provide the socialization, stimulation and comfort that dogs and cats need?
- How does being confined to a cage or kennel for extended periods of time affect companion animals?
- Does institutionalizing an animal afford that animal a quality life or an acceptable life?

2.6   ANIMAL HANDLING/EQUIPMENT

Observations

CCAS had a very basic SOP on animal handling which addressed dogs, cats, snakes and other wildlife. It described use of the catchpole, muzzles, leather gloves, net, cat grabber,

and tongs. Although it did not prohibit the use of a control pole on cats, it did direct staff to use cat grabbers.

There was no formal training program in place for staff with regard to safe, appropriate animal handling techniques. Staff stated they received little to no instruction on handling animals and most was self-taught on the job. A good number of shelter staff was fairly new, each having worked at the shelter an average of 2-3 weeks. When The HSUS team randomly asked both new and seasoned employees what changes they would like, they stated more training and to work more cohesively with their fellow staff.

The HSUS team did not observe any mishandling of animals during the site visit. All of the staff members were gentle and compassionate during handling, although newer staff members were clearly unskilled in working with problematic animals, such as cats who did not want to go into carriers.

The HSUS team did not have the opportunity to observe the staff handle any aggressive dogs but one staff member did handle a feral kitten. The kitten had gotten loose in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room and had been out for at least one night. The kitten was distressed and frantically fleeing from staff. Staff chased the kitten until they were eventually able to grab her with the use of leather cat gloves. Staff seemed unaware that a towel or net could have been an option.

On several occasions staff was observed vaccinating animals in a variety of places including the front office, the back parking lot, or in a staff office. In the front office a new employee received less than one minute of instruction on how to restrain a nervous dog for a vaccination.

Part of properly handling animals through a sheltering system is keeping accurate records of their location within the facility and maintaining their paperwork in a secure spot. In reviewing paperwork for shelter animals, The HSUS team discovered the following:

- The 21 cages in the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room were full, but 33% of the paperwork for those cats could not be located.

- Of the paperwork for the sick cats, 42% could not be located, part of which was a litter of five kittens.

- Paperwork for 2 cats was located in incorrect slots in the organizer mounted on the wall in the front office.

- Paperwork for three dogs could not be located.

<u>Recommendations</u>

✓ The animal handling SOP should be separated into dog and cat handling SOPs. These SOPs should detail not only humane handling techniques for the animal, but also safe handler techniques that will protect staff from bites and scratches. Procedures for the handling of small mammals and birds, wildlife, exotics, and livestock should be incorporated into the care and housing SOPs for these species.

✓ Animal handling techniques should be a standard part of the CCAS training program. Knowledge of safe and humane handling methods is essential in preventing serious injuries to both the animals and the staff. The HSUS, National Animal Control Association (NACA), American Humane Association (AHA), and other national and local groups offer animal handling and restraint seminars, textbooks and videotapes.

✓ Develop an in house training program to provide staff a safe way of learning techniques and the use of equipment on predictable animals. An animal handler's most important tool is knowledge. Personnel trained in animal behavior and humane handling can ensure that they are handling the animals in the safest, most humane manner possible. To make quick assessments, staff must be able to accurately interpret the situation and choose an appropriate response within seconds. The more humane and skilled a staff member's restraint or capture technique is, the more efficient and effective that staff member will be. Most often it is patience and skill that handles the animal, not an expensive piece of equipment.

✓ Staff should have accessible all necessary equipment in order to properly, humanely and safely care for the animals. Some examples are:

➢ Capture gloves - These can be critical in preventing injuries to both humans and animals, and in ensuring that animals are handled humanely. Gloves are a wise investment; they should be sized to fit snug, made of a penetration-resistant material, and lined with a puncture-resistant material. Welder's gloves, while similar in appearance, do not offer the needed protection, and lend a false sense of security. Do not use garden gloves as bite protection.

➢ Crates, cages and cardboard carriers - Many sizes and types of cages and crates should always be available for a variety of situations. Cardboard carriers can be used for many purposes, including transportation of diseased or dead animals, to provide a quiet environment for animals undergoing the euthanasia process, etc.

➢ Caging and transfer systems for unsocialized cats - Trap transfer cages, and squeeze cages are essential equipment for animal care and control. These caging systems provide for the anesthesia, euthanasia, or transfer of

feral and unsocialized cats without need for any human handling or intervention whatsoever.

The HSUS team was very pleased to see the number of feral dens available for the cats. These were designed to provide an alluring "safe place" for feral and unsocialized cats to hide, these versatile cages allow for the field pick-up, daily care, cage cleaning, monitoring, treatment, transfer, anesthesia, or euthanasia without handling.

➢ Nets - Nets are essential pieces of equipment which can enable any staff to handle a variety of animals with minimal need for restraint. Nets should be sturdy, at least twice as deep as their diameter, and flat on the end instead of round. Many nets allow for the capture and removal of un-socialized cats with little difficulty.

➢ Leashes - Leashes serve many purposes, and should be more readily available for all staff. A number of manufacturers offer sturdy rope-type leashes at a nominal price.

➢ Muzzles - Commercially manufactured muzzles are available from many animal equipment companies in a range of sizes to fit dogs and cats.

➢ Pole syringes and blow guns - These devices allow for humane chemical immobilization of fractious, feral, unsocialized or aggressive animals without physical handling.

➢ Stretchers - Most animal stretchers have plastic or vinyl covers designed to help transport injured, anesthetized, or sedated animals safely and comfortably. Many come with a cover that fits over the prone animal, attaching to the stretcher with a material, such as Velcro.

➢ Towels and blankets - These items can be used for a multitude of purposes, including capturing small animals, covering cages and traps, and providing comfort to animals housed within transport compartments.

✓ Immediately inspect all control poles to ensure that cables are smooth, release appropriately, and have intact bite sleeves. Any bent poles should be discarded to ensure staff and animal safety.

✓ Ensure that a high-quality cable cutter is available and easily accessible to allow for the quick removal of any defective control pole cable release mechanisms.

✓ Never use a control pole on a cat. Use of control poles on cats is not recommended as a primary restraint tool. A control pole should be used only when other alternatives for restraint have been exhausted and restraint of the animals is necessary so that the cat can be transported from one area to another.

The HSUS "How to Use a Control Pole" would be a useful training tool for staff as it provides guidelines on looping the cable under the foreleg.[14]

✓ In emergency circumstances where the pole is the only option, never loop the cable around only the neck, but be sure to also loop one front leg to prevent the cat from strangulation.

✓ Place all handling equipment on a weekly (at a minimum) maintenance program that includes the immediate repair or removal of any faulty equipment.

✓ It is recommended that the following measures be implemented to assist with animal identification:

> ➢ Complete paperwork for every animal received at the shelter as soon as the animal is received. The paperwork is to include a detailed description of the animal, including any identifying features, collar, identification and history. Identifying features should be specific in order to differentiate one shepherd mix from another, for example, "white sock on left hind paw". In the case of purebreds, such as a Rottweiler when each dog is black and tan, indicate for example how far up the tan on the legs may be.

> ➢ Place some form of physical identification on each animal as soon as that animal enters the receiving area.[15,16]

> ➢ Discontinue placing an animal's paperwork in the organizer mounted on the wall in the lobby. Instead, purchase and install cage card holders on every cage.

> ➢ All cage changes should be updated through the computer and not by hand. Ensure that the paperwork remains with the animal throughout the animal's stay, paying particular attention when the animal is moved from cage to cage.

> ➢ Ensure a daily inventory is completed. For example, as the cleaning process is taking place, staff verifies the animal being moved is wearing an identification band and that the paperwork matches that animal. Supervisory staff should perform random checks of animals and their status during their stay.

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14 HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, The Complete 'How To' Series, Section A, Animal Handling *
15 http://www.pdcorp.com/en-us/animal-id/6735-ident-a-band-animal-collars.html
16 http://www.beastiebands.net/

Discussion

Some training areas in animal handling and restraint may seem elementary, especially for "seasoned" staff. But if the staff has not been provided adequate information relating to basic concepts, they will not recognize the underlying reasons for correct animal handling techniques and procedures. As a result of staff's lack of awareness of basic principles, inappropriate techniques will be passed on from each employee generation to the next. The same might be said for many, if not all, aspects of a modern animal care and control program. The staff needs to know not only the right techniques, but also the rationale behind them.

Control poles, which have become a standard piece of equipment for most animal control departments, are designed as a defensive or protective safety tool for guiding fractious animals, and not for offensive maneuvers against animals, or as a matter of routine, convenience, or speed.

The routine use of control poles cannot be substituted for professional animal capture and handling skills. Although staff safety is an important priority, the humane handling of animals must also be ensured, and stress for both the animal and handler should be eliminated whenever possible.

In a shelter environment it is of vital importance that each animal's identity, history, status and condition be known at all times. Without identification or a detailed description on an animal, or in the case of feral or aggressive animals, it is nearly impossible to replace lost or damaged paperwork

Another issue to keep in mind is that during the euthanasia process correct identification is of the utmost importance. Euthanasia is one of the most difficult and emotional responsibilities entrusted to a shelter and its employees. This responsibility should not be made any more difficult by the possibility of the wrong animal being euthanized due to the lack of proper identification or confusion regarding the animal's current status.

2.7 FEEDING PROTOCOLS

Observations

CCAS did not have SOPs in place for the proper feeding of shelter animals. There was a posted sign in the small dog section of the dog kennels instructing staff that "all dogs get a full bowl of dry food and a ¼ can of canned food - small dogs get a small dish of dry and a couple of spoonfuls of canned". No written protocols for cats were noted.

The staff stated that the animals were fed a variety of foods that was always changing. An 8' x 12' food storage shed contained 35 bags of Atta Cat and six other varieties of dry cat food. There were three cases of Friskies canned food and five cases of Waltham

Veterinary Diet canned food. There were also seven bags of Atta Boy dry dog food, 38 cans of Hill's Science Diet kidney diet, and food formulated for puppies.

Over the course of the two-day site visit The HSUS team observed staff feeding the dogs dry food after the morning cleaning. Staff stated that if the dog ate the entire amount they would refill the bowl before the end of shift.

A juvenile, underweight Doberman had arrived at the shelter on July 17th. Dobermans, often highly stressed, do not thrive in a shelter environment and are notorious for losing weight during their stay. When questioned about his weight and if he was being offered canned food staff responded, "No, he doesn't eat all his dry".

One kennel housed two dogs and although they appeared to be a bonded pair there was only one bowl of food available.

Adult cats were fed Atta Cat dry and Nine Lives canned. Kittens were fed Special Kitty, Purina, or Meow Mix kitten food. Staff stated that kittens also received Special Kitty canned kitten food, although none was in stock.

A thin mother cat with four unweaned kittens was provided a bowl of dry food. When staff was asked if canned food would be given to her and the kittens, staff replied that the "mom was getting kitten dry". While it is appropriate that nursing mothers should receive dry kitten food for the extra protein, they must also receive canned food for the high fat content. The kittens were also at that early stage of trying to eat on their own and would have benefited greatly from having canned food available to them. The HSUS team noted the mother cat spent a considerable amount of time on the upper perches away from her kittens. The kittens were unable to nurse and unable to consume sufficient dry food to meet their nutritional needs.

In the euthanasia/procedure room there were nine cages that contained cats; four cages had multiple cats, five cages had kittens. None of the animals had been provided canned food and some bowls were empty.

Even after explaining the rationale for feeding canned food to nursing cats and kittens and cats and kittens with URI, and assuring them that the canned adult food would suffice in the absence of canned kitten food, the staff still did not provide any canned food to the aforementioned cats and kittens.

Although some kittens did have canned food (two kittens received an entire can and one cage with two kittens had dry food poured over the canned food) the vast majority of the kittens were routinely fed a diet of dry food.

Special food for finicky eaters was not available. The stressed Chihuahua was not eating and staff offered multiple foods till she finally ate canned cat food, which is a known cause of diarrhea in dogs.

Written records of an animal's appetite or food intake was not available and staff stated they did not track that information.

Recommendations:

- ✓ All animals should be fed in types and amounts appropriate to their nutritional needs. Staff should be trained to monitor and adjust an animal's diet accordingly.

PUPPIES/DOGS

- ➢ Dry food, (specially formulated for their ages), mixed with hot water, adding enough canned food to make a paste or gravy
- ➢ Less than 12 weeks should be fed 4 times daily or every 6 hours
- ➢ 12 weeks to 6 months should be fed 3 times daily or every 8 hours
- ➢ 6 months and older should be fed twice daily

Note:
- ➢ Take care to not overfeed thin / emaciated dogs in one portion. Feed small amounts 3-4 times per day
- ➢ Geriatric dogs may require strictly canned food or the above mixture, soaked.
- ➢ Dogs refusing to eat at second meal should be offered a portion of canned food mixed with a small amount of dry. If the dog is still refusing food, offer strictly canned food. Notify a supervisor if dog is still refusing food.
- ➢ Feed nursing mothers puppy chow 3-4 times per day.

CATS/KITTENS

- ➢ Less than 12 weeks should be fed 4 times daily or every 6 hours, canned food
- ➢ 12 weeks to 6 months should be fed 3 times daily or every 8 hours, canned food, with access to dry kitten food.
- ➢ 6 months or older should be fed twice daily, canned food in the morning only, with dry adult food available

Note:

- ➢ Take care not to overfeed thin / emaciated cats in one portion. Feed small amounts of canned food throughout the day
- ➢ Monitor cats and kittens closely for eating. Those not eating dry by second day should be offered canned. Notify supervisor if cat refusing to eat on second day of stay.
- ➢ Geriatric cats should be fed canned food, twice daily.

> ➢ Sick adult cats and nursing mothers should receive canned food, twice daily, (in addition to dry food).
> ➢ Do not mix canned and dry food together in the same bowl.
> ➢ If an adult cats has not eaten all the dry food, do not throw the food away; simply replenish the bowl.

✓ Since cats, on an average, like to eat 14 small meals a day, it is advisable to continue to leave dry food available to them all day long. Take into account that cats with access to "free food" must be monitored for eating.

✓ A cat eats by sense of smell; a cat suffering from upper respiratory infection has a compromised sense of smell. It is imperative that these cats in particular are provided with canned food, preferably one with a strong odor such as fish.

✓ Many animals, particularly cats, arriving or having difficulty adjusting to "life in a shelter" will discontinue eating. This can lead to or is indicative of a serious health concern; therefore establishing a system to oversee their dietary habits is of the utmost importance.

✓ CCAS must establish feeding protocols that:

> ➢ Enable puppies and kittens to be fed multiple times a day
>
> ➢ Require staff to feed in amounts appropriate for the size and requirements of the individual animal
>
> ➢ Ensure geriatric animals and those with dental problems are fed soft food accordingly
>
> ➢ Ensure animals, such as rabbits, are being fed a diet compatible with their nutritional needs.
>
> ➢ Outline special care be given to closely monitor those animals who are malnourished or have special health requirements.

✓ Consider participating in the Hill's Science Diet Shelter Feeding Program. Feeding one brand exclusively, especially a premium brand cuts down greatly on the number of animals who experience gastrointestinal problems while at the shelter, as well as the amount of waste matter produced. [17]

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17 http://www.hillspet.com/

<u>Discussion</u>

A kennel environment is a stressful situation for an animal and can dramatically impact his/her appetite and dietary needs. Observations of whether or not an animal is eating and/or how much can provide important feedback on the health and the adjustment and continued adjustment to the shelter.

All shelter animals, regardless of their length of stay, should receive a good quality balanced diet that is appropriate for their life stages, their health, age and physical condition. Food used should be produced by companies which guarantee complete and balanced nutrition. Because animals are in a stressful situation, they are more susceptible to digestive upsets from poor quality foods and changes in the brand.

3.0   SHELTER HEALTH / DISEASE CONTROL

3.1   VETERINARY STAFF/CONTRACTS

<u>Observations</u>

CCAS did not have a veterinarian or a veterinary technician on staff. There was no contracted veterinarian who came to the shelter to "conduct rounds" or monitor the animals in any capacity.

CCAS staff stated they utilized the six veterinary practices in the community to provide emergency medical care to the shelter animals. CCAS did not have a contractual agreement with any of the veterinary practices and each practice had its own fee schedule. CCAS staff expressed deep gratitude to the local veterinarians who would often discount large portions of their fees.

Injured animals picked up in the field were transported immediately to the nearest veterinary office for assessment and potential treatment. If an animal was not wearing identification CCAS asked that the animal be stabilized overnight and then weighed the options of treating the animal. If the animal was wearing identification they asked that treatment begin immediately. There were no written guidelines available regarding this practice. The local veterinarians stated they have a "sense of what they can and can't do for the animals".

When an animal being housed at the shelter displayed any medical condition, (upper respiratory illness, conjunctivitis, hair loss), the animal was transported to a veterinarian for an examination and treatment. Typically a staff member would drop off the animal and return to pick up later in the day. Because staff believed waiting for the animal to be examined was too time consuming, they most often opted to use the veterinarians who allowed for "drop offs". It was not uncommon for staff to make multiple trips in a single day.

If the animal required medication the veterinarians would provide it, along with verbal and written instructions, to the staff member who picked up the animal. The veterinarian's office maintained the medical records for the animals, but a copy was not provided to the shelter, nor did the shelter complete its own medical record for animals who had been treated. Therefore, the only medical records for the shelter animals were located at a number of veterinarian's offices and subject to different filing and tracking systems. The medical records at one practice were filed by the animal's name and / or cage number. If an adopter was interested in retrieving the animal's medical record, the veterinarian stated her office may "have to search for it but they'd find it".

Local veterinarians expressed genuine interest and desire in working with the shelter to improve the medical care of the animals; however they have not been asked and stated

that there is a general feeling that some of the staff displays behavior suggesting they do not need any assistance.

A local veterinarian expressed concern that the staff is unaware of:

- Infectious diseases
- Dogs who are experiencing kennel stress
- What to look for when examining an animal
- Certain medical issues that may get overlooked

It was mentioned that staff doesn't always know "who is who and where who is", and that the shelter's paper trail is often confusing. It was relayed that there have been two separate occasions when staff brought in dogs for sterilization surgery who had previously been neutered.

Recommendations

- ✓ There appears to be a good working relationship between CCAS and the local veterinary practices. CCAS is fortunate to have the support and interest of the veterinary community and should view this relationship as critical to the success of a medical program for the shelter.

- ✓ Because CCAS currently utilizes a pool of veterinarians in order to provide the health and emergency medical care to sheltered animals, written standardized protocols should be developed to indicate the standard of care expected by CCAS.

- ✓ Request the veterinarians provide copies of all medical records for the animals treated. Maintain these records with the animal's file. Provide an owner or adopter all copies of the animal's medical records at the time of redemption or adoption.

- ✓ It is imperative that CCAS provide additional training to animal care staff so they may better recognize and understand the basics of common injuries, minor conditions such as ear mites, and illness such as kennel cough, upper respiratory infections, panleukopenia, and parvovirus.

- ✓ Consider centralizing the care of all shelter animals through one veterinarian by means of a negotiated contract for services. While it is understood that many animal shelters cannot retain a veterinarian as a full-time staff member it is important that CCAS obtain the services of a veterinarian at some level to assist the shelter in reaching its goal to provide consistent quality care for the animals.

- ✓ The veterinarian should work in combination with the shelter management to provide staff training and offer recommendations about a wide variety of issues including disinfectants, vaccinations, and nutritional guidelines, to name a few.

✓ Additionally, the veterinarian should:

  ➢ Provide on-site services
  ➢ Conduct a regularly scheduled (daily, if possible) rounds and visual exam of all shelter animals
  ➢ Provide medical treatment to animals for minor conditions (i.e. ear mites, abscesses)
  ➢ Provide follow up treatment to injured stray animals upon return from another veterinarian
  ➢ Determine treatment and isolation or euthanasia for sick animals
  ➢ Medically assess animals prior to being made available for adoption
  ➢ Develop written protocols and oversee the implementation of vaccination procedures
  ➢ Detect, treat, control and prevent internal and external parasites
  ➢ Train staff to provide examinations of incoming animals and select animals for adoption
  ➢ Establish programs for infectious disease control and zoonoses prevention

✓ CCAS should provide as much detail as possible to assist the veterinarians in the decision making process of a course of treatment. An example protocol is as follows:

Requested Animal Emergency Services for Injured / Sick Animals

o *Assess overall physical condition.*
o *Provide minimal supportive treatment to alleviate pain and suffering of the animal. Administer pain medications as necessary.*
o *We ask that the veterinarian exercise professional judgment for each individual situation.*
o *Blood work should not be a routinely necessary procedure.*
o *No diagnostic tests, procedures or surgery unless it would change the immediate course of treatment or the veterinarian deems it absolutely necessary.*
o *No radiographs of a fracture; stabilize and administer pain medications and antibiotics if necessary.*
o *Euthanasia: If after physical examination the veterinarian assesses that an animal's injuries are beyond supportive treatment and / or the animal is suffering we request that euthanasia be performed.*
o *In order for an animal to be housed at the shelter it is necessary for the animal be ambulatory and able to eat and drink. If this is not possible for the animal we ask that you please euthanize him. An exception however, would be the dog with a fractured pelvis who is bright, alert and responsive.*

3.2 INCOMING ANIMAL EXAMINATIONS/VACCINATION PROTOCOLS

<u>Observations</u>

The SOP outlining the vaccination protocols stated that before an animal enters the shelter the staff is to mix a vaccine and prepare to vaccinate. Staff was instructed to vaccinate in the vehicle or in the outside drop off cages. Staff was then to place the animal into the appropriate kennel or cage in the shelter.

Cats received a feline rhinotracheitis, calici, panleukopenia vaccine; dogs a canine distemper, adenovirus type 2, parainfluenza vaccine. The SOP stated that puppies should be vaccinated beginning at 4 weeks and then every two weeks until they are 16 weeks old. It did not mention a booster schedule for kittens.

Animals were not vaccinated against rabies at the shelter, but instead were vaccinated at the veterinary hospital where sterilization surgery was performed prior to adoption. If a pet had not yet been sterilized or had not yet been vaccinated by the time of adoption, the adopter was required have the pet vaccinated against rabies by local veterinarian.

The SOP for the impounding of dogs and cats stated that the staff is to observe for any illness or injury, note anything found, and to check the animal's sex and whether the animal is altered. Puppies and kittens were to be dewormed upon entry although staff stated they were not deworming the animals and gave no specific explanation.

The SOP required staff to scan the animals for a microchip, check for a collar, and check Craig's List and the Lost and Found log. Staff followed these SOPs.

The SOP manual contained a Health Check Form; however it was not observed in use anywhere in the shelter.

Over the course of the three day site visit The HSUS team observed incoming animals being vaccinated in the front office, a staff member's office, the back parking lot, and the cat holding/kitchen/laundry room. Animals were then set up in a kennel or cage. Staff was not observed performing examinations on the animals.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Upon arrival at the shelter each animal should, as soon as possible, receive:

  - ➢ A physical examination to determine medical treatment or isolation from healthy animals
  - ➢ Scanning for microchip identification
  - ➢ Temperature and weight measurements
  - ➢ Vaccinations and deworming

> ➢ External parasite treatment
> ➢ Basic grooming
> ➢ Physical identification such as collar and tag or band

✓ Ideally the physical exam would be conducted by a veterinarian or a registered veterinary technician (RVT). However because CCAS does not have a staff veterinarian or RVT, a staff member trained specifically for that task should perform examinations.

✓ The examination should take place in a room that is dedicated for this purpose, should be methodical and comprehensive, and all staff involved should perform it in the same manner.

✓ Ensure that kittens receive booster vaccines at appropriate intervals.

✓ Develop and implement an easy to use form for recording the results of the examination. Document all examination findings (even if all is normal), and any procedures performed, (vaccinations, dewormings, etc). This form will ensure that staff has not overlooked an area or forgotten a step. Having documentation of an animal's condition upon arrival will also assist staff (and a veterinarian) throughout an animal's stay in determining if a condition was pre-existing or developed while the animal was at the shelter. This form should also contain the animal's name, number, and a brief description, noting any distinguishing features or abnormalities. [18,19]

Discussion

Proper training of staff is of incredible importance during the incoming physical examination. For example, untrained staff may simply raise the lip of incoming animals to look at the teeth and estimate the animal's age, while neglecting to examine the mouth. When examining the mouth it is important that not only are the teeth examined, but also the gums, roof of the mouth and throat. A small ulcer on the roof of the mouth, (easily overlooked), can indicate a serious health problem. Therefore, it is critical that staff understands the importance of attention to detail.

3.3   ILLNESS RECOGNITION AND TREATMENTS

Observations

Documents provided by CCAS to The HSUS team stated that all staff had completed PetSmart Charities' ® free webinar training on infectious diseases, which included canine

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18 Initial Health Exam Form *
19 Health Evaluation Chart *

parvovirus and feline upper respiratory infection. One new staff member who had been working at the shelter for three weeks stated that he had watched a video about cats. This new staff member was training a community service volunteer to clean and monitor the cats.

One staff member discussed receiving one-day of hands on training and knowing to watch for diarrhea and vomiting but nothing else.

The SOPs stated that if a dog or cat was showing signs of illness or injury it should be reported to the animal services director as soon as possible, but did not list what those signs might be.

The SOPs specifically addressed parvovirus and panleukopenia; however they lacked critical detail including a description of symptoms. They advised staff to perform a diagnostic test if they suspected an animal might have the disease and to notify a supervisor if the animal tested positive. They also instructed staff to isolate the animal but did not state where. The dog and cat housing arrangements in place at the time of the site visit did not provide for strict isolation.

The SOPs for daily rounds required that the animals be viewed three times daily and stated that staff should makes notes about an animal with issues in the daily rounds log. However, they did not define what the "issues" might be. The SOPs further stated the animal services director or a supervisor should be notified of any animal needing medical care or if there is concern about a particular animal.

Staff was observed in the animal areas at various times throughout the day visually conducting rounds. When questioned staff stated they were looking for anything unusual and doing a count to see how many open cages there were available.

Staff notified a supervisor when an adult cat in the main cat room was drinking an excessive amount of water. A volunteer told staff another cat was "not acting right" and that the cat was quiet and laying in the back of the cage. Both of these cats were transferred to a veterinary clinic for examination.

Two kittens in the main cat room that had diarrhea were brought to a supervisor's attention who in turn tested the kittens for panleukopenia. The kittens tested positive and were euthanized. The HSUS team later learned that the shelter experienced a panleukopenia outbreak after the site visit and had enlisted the assistance of veterinarians from Lone Mountain Veterinary Hospital with regard to treatment of the animals and disinfection of the animal housing areas.

Another pair of tabby kittens was lethargic and one had ocular discharge. These were also transferred to a veterinary clinic for examination. These kittens returned later the same day and were placed in the euthanasia/procedure room for treatment. A handwritten note placed on their cage stated, "Clean eyes twice daily start med today clavamox". Another

handwritten note on the clipboard attached to the cage stated the same thing along with the date and "in fridge" added to it.

As stated previously, veterinarians provided medical instructions to the staff member transporting the animals and also wrote instructions on the medication label. Upon return to the shelter, staff wrote the medication treatment plan for the animal on the dry erase medication board located in the main building on the wall of the long hallway. The medication was placed in the staff's office or the refrigerator in the same office. The two returning kitten's medication was written on this dry erase board.

The SOPs for animal care stated that when first arriving to work staff must check the dry erase board to see if any animal is receiving medication, but they do not indicate which staff was responsible for administering the medication. Staff was to review the medication instructions and confirm those by checking the animal's medical history on the computer and to enter into the record that the medication was administered. However the shelter had switched software programs and had not yet begun recording medical history in the animal's Pet Point record.

The SOPs also stated to record the administration of the medication on the dry erase board, which staff had done. The HSUS team was told that once the animal has completed the medication treatment, the board was erased and the animal's treatment record no longer existed.

The two tabby kittens with the upper respiratory condition that had returned from the veterinarian's office with Clavamox® were observed by The HSUS team the following day to be in worse condition. Both kittens were not responding well to treatment and were experiencing difficulty breathing. One was "open mouth" breathing due to heavy mucus build up in his nostrils. Both kittens were dehydrated and lethargic. The kittens had dry kibble, but no canned food available. Staff working in that area was not mindful of either kitten's condition.

The HSUS team asked the animal services director about the kittens who stated that the kittens had already seen the vet the day before. The team offered its opinion that the kitten's condition had deteriorated and they needed further veterinary care. The kittens were returned to the veterinarian.

The animal services director acknowledged that cats eat by sense of smell and the necessity of providing canned food to sick cats; however the staff working directly with the sick animals did not have this information.

Overall, CCAS staff was able to determine that an animal may be experiencing a problem, but their knowledge on animal care lacked depth. Once the animal was recognized to need supportive care it appeared as if there was uncertainty about what to do next and the process of providing continuing care was inconsistent.

Recommendations

- ✓ As mentioned previously in Section 3.1, Veterinary Services/Contracts, management should actively participate with the contracted veterinarian in developing revised SOPs that address in a complete and comprehensive manner the handling and treatment of all animals including vaccination protocols, disease control and sanitation methods, [20] products used, feeding protocols, isolation and separation protocols, zoonotic disease information, etc., to ensure that best practices are being followed in all animal-sheltering operations, including:

  - ➢ How are sick animals to be processed?
  - ➢ Which diseases, if any, will be treated?
  - ➢ What are the options for animals that cannot be treated?
  - ➢ How will diseases be diagnosed and treated, and who is responsible for diagnosis and treatment? What role does the veterinary staff play? The ACAs and ACOs?
  - ➢ How will treatments be documented and presented to potential adopters?
  - ➢ How will CCAS handle follow-up care and post-adoption ramifications?
  - ➢ How will CCAS handle major disease outbreaks?

- ✓ It is crucial that the care of all animals be monitored and treatments provided when necessary in order to:

  - ➢ Control the occurrence of diseases and parasites in the shelter;
  - ➢ Best protect the health and comfort of the animals;
  - ➢ Protect the public's health
  - ➢ Provide overall humane care and treatment of sheltered animals;
  - ➢ Bring about public trust in the level of care provided for their homeless animals.

- ✓ Assign a staff member(s) with knowledge of appropriate veterinary care for sheltered animals to be responsible for administering and recording medications. This position must be available for these duties seven days a week and a supervisor should randomly check to ensure consistency and completion.

- ✓ Update the forms used for health care and/or procedures to facilitate logging the information into Pet Point. The HSUS recommends the following forms; however, CCAS should decide if they meet the needs of the organization:

  - ➢ Treatment Log:[21] One for dogs, one for cats, and one for "other", if necessary. The Treatment Logs should consist of a list of each sick/injured animal being treated, their identification numbers, locations, and the name of the medications being given, the dosages, and the times per day. This

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20 "Developing Infectious Disease Policies and Protocols in an Animal Shelter," Kate F. Hurley, DVM *
21 Treatment Log Form *

form should be affixed outside the Treatment Room and utilized by the staff responsible for administering medications to make sure that no animal is unintentionally overlooked when medications are administered. The designated staff member should initial and check off the boxes when each animal on the list has received his or her daily medication. It is also important to make sure all treatments are entered into the computer consistently and accurately.

➢ Treatment Observation Form:[22] Every sick/injured animal receiving medication should have this form attached to his enclosure. The form should have space to record the following information:

- o Animal's identification number
- o Animal's description
- o Diagnosis/symptoms
- o The names of the medications being given
- o The amounts being given
- o How many times per day the medications should be given and the duration
- o Observations (i.e., temperature, appetite, urine, stool, nasal/eye discharge, activity level, etc.)

➢ Medical Record:[23] Each animal in the shelter should have a Medical Record. The Record should include the following:

- o Animal's identification number
- o Animal's description
- o Vaccination history
- o Initial physical examination findings and information such as flea treatments, microchip scan, etc.

✓ Include space to document both normal and abnormal findings on the medical record form and indicate that all body systems have been examined. "Check-off" forms make this process easy, time-efficient, and consistent from animal to animal. The individual performing the task should initial all information recorded on the medical records. Medical records should be maintained in Pet Point as well as a hard copy.

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22 Treatment Observation Form *
23 Shelter Medical Record example *

✓ All medical treatments should be meticulously documented in chronological order and kept as part of the animal's permanent record.

  ➢ The animal's overall condition upon arrival
  ➢ Any symptoms noted
  ➢ The veterinarian's diagnosis, the resulting treatment plan and care protocol
  ➢ The animal's response to treatment and the animal's condition over time

✓ These records should be available to all staff in order to monitor recurring conditions, note any potential trends or to understand the success or failure of previous treatment protocols.

✓ In addition staff must closely monitor and document the changing needs of animals undergoing treatment, including observations relating to appetite, behavior, urination and defecation. This information should be maintained on the animal's cage for easy access and assessment.

✓ Conduct a daily evaluation of the health status of all animals residing in the shelter, not just sick animals. Ideally, a person qualified to perform such assessments, such as the veterinarian or the veterinary technician, should perform this evaluation. This is not a full physical exam but rather a visual assessment of animals in their runs or cages to make sure their health has not deteriorated. This should be an assigned duty with a written checklist of what is being assessed so that the evaluation is performed consistently from animal to animal.

✓ Develop a program and train all applicable staff in recognizing and reporting signs of common shelter diseases such as upper respiratory infections, feline panleukopenia virus, kennel cough, and canine parvovirus.

✓ Develop a program to adequately train all staff on how to triage a sick or injured animal and how to recognize signs of pain and suffering such as dehydration, abnormal breathing, or animals not eating or drinking on their own.

✓ Ensure all kittens remain nourished and hydrated throughout their stay, as this is very important in maintaining their well-being in a stressful shelter environment. It is critical for the sick ones.

✓ Examine the healthiest animals first and the sickest last to prevent the spread of disease.

✓ Advise adopters of the medical condition of a potential new pet in order to determine whether they can provide the care required for that particular animal. A hard copy of an animal's medical record must be provided to the adopter, who in turn can present it to her or his veterinarian for ongoing care and treatment.

3.4   ISOLATION AND SEPARATION

Observations

The facility had four areas where animals were housed. Three were in the main building and dedicated solely to cats, and the fourth was in a separate building that housed all the dogs. While staff had made attempts to isolate and separate the animals, the strategy was ineffective due to the building's design and lack of usable animal space.

The main cat room housed cats available for adoption and those still awaiting their stray holding period. Two kittens with panleukopenia and two others with upper respiratory infection were removed from this room during the site visit.

The cat holding/kitchen/laundry room was, at the time of the visit, housing a combination of owner surrendered, stray, and feral cats. Staff stated this area was seasonally used as overflow from the main cat room.

The euthanasia/procedure room was housing cats who had upper respiratory infection, those who had recovered from upper respiratory infection and were waiting for an open cage in the main cat room, and overflow cats. Staff commented on a pair of spunky kittens in the room who had been recovered for three weeks and stated that there was no coordination of which animals were moved from that room to the main building.

The dog kennels housed new arrivals, stray, injured, and quarantine animals. It appeared that the dogs available for adoption were housed in the front section of the kennels but staff stated if any kennel was available a dog would be placed there.

Small dogs were placed in the last section because the inside of those runs was short and low. This was also where dogs who have bitten were placed for their quarantine period. One outside section of these runs was contained behind a chain link fence to restrict public access. The size of the indoor kennels would not accommodate a large dog, so if one needed to be quarantined, he would be housed in one of the other kennel sections.

The only area that was completely restricted from public entry was the euthanasia/procedure room where the sick cats were housed.

Recommendations

- ✓ CCAS should review the overall layout of animal housing areas at the facility and implement the concept of isolation and separation. In general, this means that the shelters would ideally have four separate areas each for cats and dogs. These areas would include:[24]

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24 Isolation/Separation Flow Charts *

    ➢ Adoption
    ➢ Healthy Hold
    ➢ Quarantine (bite, aggressive, and feral cats or non-contagious animals with conditions that warrant a quiet housing area)
    ➢ Isolation (sick)

✓ Housing areas should allow for (and policies should require) that all animals be separated in the following manner:

    ➢ Dogs must always be separated from cats
    ➢ Sick or injured animals must always be separated from healthy ones
    ➢ Puppies and kittens must be separated from adults (unless nursing)
    ➢ Nursing animals must be separated from all others
    ➢ Intact males must be separated from intact females
    ➢ Dangerous animals must be separated from all others, and the public
    ➢ Animals with special needs should be isolated from all others
    ➢ Wildlife, exotics and livestock must be separated from all others and from the public
    ➢ Animals available for adoption separated from animals who are not available

The HSUS recognizes and acknowledges that CCAS is extremely limited on space and usable animal housing areas. This is a huge challenge and one that does not have an easy resolution. The following are The HSUS team's suggestions; however, CCAS may decide to alter these based on policy decisions and what works best.

CATS

✓ Give serious consideration to the possibility of placing an administrative trailer on the property and relocate all staff offices to this space.

✓ Convert the animal services director's office into cat quarantine for any healthy cats who are pregnant or nursing, geriatric, injured, or bite cases, or for those who need quiet.

✓ The cat holding/kitchen/laundry room should become the healthy hold cat area for all healthy cats not yet ready to be placed into the adoption area.

✓ The euthanasia/procedure room that currently houses the sick cats is the optimum space for them in this facility. This room should become the isolation room for cats with contagious illness, such as upper respiratory infection. No other activities should take place in this room.

✓ Consider relocating the euthanasia room to the small building adjacent to the current euthanasia/procedure room. The limited use of that room and its small size make retrofitting a worthwhile investment.

✓ No animals should be housed in the euthanasia area.

✓ The main cat room should become the cat adoption area. Only cats who have completed their stray holding period, been examined and evaluated for their potential to be placed for adoption should be housed in this room.

✓ The lobby and front office area should remain as such. However, all non-essential equipment and supplies should be relocated to the administration trailer. The room should be reconfigured to allow for more space and seating in the lobby area.

✓ The ACO office should become the incoming examination/receiving room. Upon arrival animals would pass through this room to receive their physical examination, vaccination, deworming and overall assessment. CCAS would need to provide a small bank of cages, an exam table, and a work table with a countertop fridge and computer station.

DOGS

✓ Use the first (front) kennel section for dogs available for adoption. Close the door in between the first and second section.

✓ Use the second section for healthy hold, meaning healthy stray and other new arrivals not yet available for adoption. A few cages could be cordoned off and used to house bite quarantine dogs as necessary.

✓ Close the door in between the second and third section and use the third section as isolation for sick dogs.

✓ Install fencing to limit the public's movement through the outside dog areas. The side that accesses the large exercise pens would require privacy fencing that allowed for a walkway to the exercise pens. A straight privacy fence along the other side at the end of the first section would serve as a barrier for the public.

Discussion

The isolation and separation concept of managing the population will provide the staff with space flexibility, protect the public from potential bites, and protect CCAS from liability. Isolation and separation will allow CCAS to present only those animals who have been fully evaluated and selected for adoption to the public, and help the staff make better euthanasia decisions.

The isolation and separation concept is as follows:

- Evaluate and vaccinate the animal upon intake.

- If sick, house the animal in Isolation for the stray period.

- If a bite case or an aggressive animal, hold in Quarantine.

- If the animal appears healthy and potentially adoptable (regardless of whether it is stray or owner surrendered), hold the animal in Healthy Hold for at least two days.

In order for the isolation and separation concept to work, it must be strictly followed. Some organizations make the mistake of bending the rules by not using space as it is designated. There may be times when the areas become full and some agencies make the decision of placing a healthy animal in the isolation room, or treating a sick one in the healthy hold or adoption room. Exposing healthy animals to sick ones negates the logic and benefits that result from the isolation and separation concept.

Shelter animals must be housed in a way that minimizes stress, provides for their special needs, affords protection from the elements, provides adequate ventilation, and minimizes the spread of disease and parasites. In addition to separating animals by species, efforts should be made to house them in "life-stage groups" keeping animals with different stages of immunity, such as young animals, nursing mothers, sick or injured animals, and fully vaccinated adults, well separated within the shelter. Animals that are stressed or recuperating from injuries or illness must have a quiet place to rest during their recovery period.

3.5   CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

<u>Observations</u>

The animal care staff appeared to be very cognizant of the importance of disease control and proper sanitation in an animal shelter. Yet even though the staff worked diligently during the cleaning processes, their practices were not thorough or effective.

CATS

Cats were placed in their feral den and removed from the cage prior to cleaning. If the staff could not get the cat to go into the feral den or if the cat darted from the cage the cat was allowed to run freely during the cleaning process in the main cat room.

The floor was covered in debris from the cleaning process. Multiple cats jumped up on top of the cages or onto the sill of the open window. Staff did not disinfect these surfaces in between cats.

Staff changed gloves between handling animals but did not recognize the importance of disinfecting the cleaning equipment. Staff used a dirty whiskbroom and a feces encrusted dustpan to sweep debris from a cage that had contained two panleukopenia positive kittens and then used it on other cages in the main cat room.

Staff used a spray bottle to apply the cleaning solution on the cat cages but did not completely soak all five sides of the cage or the door, nor did they always clean the glass fronts of the cages. Staff stated they would allow the cleaning mixture to soak for three or four minutes.

Staff informed The HSUS team that the bleach water mixture used in the spray bottles was diluted at one tablespoon to a quart of water. The SOPs stated it should be 1 tablespoon to 24 ounces. Regardless, both dilutions were incorrect and would be ineffective in killing viruses or bacteria.

Staff mopped the floor with Trifectant and allowed it to soak for "five or so minutes". The SOPs listed the amount of Trifectant to be used as one cup but the bottle's label listed one scoop as the correct amount. The scoop was much smaller than one cup.

Staff stated the floor in the area housing sick cats was hosed twice a week. A rusty scraper was being used to remove the dried feces from the cages.

Most surfaces in the shelter needed to be dusted and cleaned. The cage doors and outside areas of the cages in the sick cat room were extremely dirty.

DOGS

Staff was properly using the guillotine doors in the kennels and shifted dogs from side to side when cleaning.

The dog runs were cleaned using a dish soap and bleach mixture. Staff would first scoop the runs, then rinse and apply the dish soap with the hose proportion regulator bottles. There was great confusion over the proper setting of the regulator on the bottles.

The bleach was applied and allowed to soak for 15 minutes, then rinsed. Although the water had been removed from the runs, they were still damp when the dogs were let back in.

The walls of the kennels were coated with a grimy film. This develops when dogs rub against them and deposit body oils and is exacerbated by an inadequate cleaning process. When staff members were asked if they used a degreaser as part of the cleaning process, they were unaware of the product.

Staff did not have scrub brushes to clean the runs and stated that when the inside walls of the runs became very dirty they would use the pressure washer.

During the cleaning process, one staff member tossed a bowl of dry food from a cage into the fresh food bin.

Staff used a bleach/water mixture to wash the food bowls but did not measure the amount of bleach poured into the sink and was unaware of how many gallons of water the sink held. A squirt of bleach was applied to water bowls and then they were rinsed.

The staff spot cleaned the dog runs on an ongoing basis and the runs were always clear of feces.

Management staff asked another staff member to bring mail to the post office during the cleaning of the sick cats. The staff member left five kittens in a crate while he ran this errand.

Recommendations

- ✓ Develop written SOPs that include very detailed step-by-step cleaning and disinfection procedures for all animal housing and public areas. All staff should consistently follow the SOPs.

- ✓ The HSUS recommends that CCAS adopt the following cleaning protocols for the dog runs on a daily basis:

  - ➢ The HSUS team commends CCAS for proper use of the guillotine doors during cleaning and supports the continuation of that practice.
  - ➢ Remove the food and water bowls. Wash and disinfect the bowls separately, returning them after the run is clean or purchase enough bowls to pick up the dirty ones, replace them with clean ones, and wash the dirty bowls before use the next day.
  - ➢ Remove all bedding from the run.
  - ➢ Remove all solid organic waste (feces, food, hair, etc.) by scooping it into a lined, five-gallon bucket. The scoop must be disinfected between each run. Rotate the use of two scoops in a bucket of disinfecting solution: use one scoop, place it in the bucket, use the other scoop and then place it in the bucket, and so on. Spraying feces with water scatters the organic material, which is a host for viruses, bacteria, and other contaminants. Removing organic waste is important because disinfectants are much less effective in the presence of organic material, and bleach is inactivated in the presence of organic matter. Furthermore, odor in shelters can be attributed to excessive organic material accumulating in drains. Ideally, the bucket of disinfectant solution should be changed several times during the process of cleaning, but at a minimum twice daily.

➢ Rinse away urine and any other nonsolid matter with water using a hose.

➢ Using a clean stiff-bristled scrub brush and a detergent, scrub all surfaces within the run including the floor, sides, and top. The gates on the runs should be cleaned and scrubbed on a daily basis, as should the drainage system.

➢ Rinse all surfaces thoroughly with water.

➢ Apply a disinfectant solution to all surfaces and let stand per the manufacturer's instructions (usually at least 10 minutes). See below for specific instructions on using detergents and disinfectants.

➢ Thoroughly rinse all surfaces, including drains, with a steady stream of hot water.

➢ Dry the run completely using a squeegee and good ventilation prior to returning animals to their runs.

➢ Clean and disinfect other areas including the aisles, walls and ceilings, as they can accumulate bacteria, disease, and odor on a daily basis.

➢ Use a degreaser on a weekly basis, after cleaning and disinfection has taken place.

✓ Scrub runs with either a detergent/disinfectant combination, or first with a detergent and then with a disinfectant. Use one of the two following options:

➢ **If using a detergent/disinfectant combination** (such as a quaternary ammonium product), use a bristled scrub brush of medium stiffness to scrub all surfaces within the kennel, including the floor, sides, and top, including the platform benches. Kennel gates should be cleaned and scrubbed on a daily basis. Use a disinfectant proven specifically effective against various bacteria and viruses common in a shelter environment. Allow the solution to remain on the surface for the time specified by the manufacturer's instructions.

➢ **If using two separate products (a detergent and a disinfectant)**, first scrub the kennel with the detergent (such as dishwashing liquid). Using a bristled scrub brush of medium stiffness, scrub all surfaces within the kennel with the detergent, including the floor, sides, and top, including the platform benches. Kennel gates should be cleaned and scrubbed on a daily basis. Rinse the kennel well and then apply the disinfectant (such as diluted bleach). Allow the disinfectant to remain on the surface for the time specified by the manufacturer's instructions or a minimum of 10 minutes for diluted bleach.

✓ Develop and implement a schedule that incorporates the regular use of a degreaser to remove the oil and surface film from kennels. Oil build-up on kennels prevents disinfectants from penetrating

✓ The uses of detergents/disinfectants for cats are similar to those outlined for dogs:

If a cat's cage is relatively clean, it is acceptable and preferable to spot-clean the cage. This is commonly referred to as the CCC method: Cleaning Cat in the Cage. Use the following steps to spot-clean:

> ➢ Use a feral cat den or create a makeshift refuge from a cardboard box or paper bag, allowing the cat to hide while the cage is being cleaned. The less the cat is handled, the better for disease control. Do not permit cats to wander on the floor while their cages are being cleaned. Keep a clean, disinfected carrier available for those cats that try to escape. Some shelters use a cardboard carrier which remains with the same cat throughout his / her stay at the shelter. If the cat is redeemed or adopted the carrier goes home with the cat.
> ➢ If dry food is offered and the bowl is not visibly crusted or grimy, it is acceptable to dump any day-old food and refill. Water bowls should be emptied, rinsed, and refilled.
> ➢ Dump and replenish litter daily.
> ➢ Shake out any bedding and place it back in the cage, replacing anything wet or visibly soiled. Leave clean cat toys, replacing only those that are dirty. Leaving items with a cat's scent on them will decrease his stress level.
> ➢ Use a water-moistened paper towel to wipe any soiled spots. Chemicals that may be irritating to skin, nasal passages, and the digestive system should never be used while the cat remains in the cage.
> ➢ If a cat's cage is noticeably soiled or has been vacated, it must be completely cleaned and disinfected before reuse.

✓ Provide staff training on the types of chemicals used so they understand correct dilutions, how the chemicals function, and why they must be used a certain way to fight disease and maintain safe conditions.

✓ Post specific instructions about dilutions and contact times in all areas where staff mix and use disinfectants. Instructions for proper dilution and time requirements are generally listed on product containers. It is important to ensure that these instructions are followed to maintain the effectiveness of the product being used.

✓ Provide staff with appropriate measuring tools wherever disinfectant solutions are mixed. Ensure that employees know the correct dilution ratio for all products and that, for their safety and the safety of the animals, these ratios are followed.

✓ Pay special attention to the misuse and overuse of bleach, especially within cat housing areas. Bleach is not only corrosive to objects, such as metal caging and clothes, but can also can be irritating to the mucosa of cats' nasal passages and upper airwaves and may even cause potential damage. Experts speculate that bleach can weaken cats' resistance to upper respiratory infections.

✓ Use the following formula whenever mixing bleach: Divide 21 by the percentage of sodium hypochlorite in the bleach being used. This is the number of ounces of

bleach per gallon of water to be used. For example if the bleach being used is 5.25% hypochlorite, 21 divided by 5.25 equals 4. This means four ounces of bleach should be used for every gallon of water. All diluted bleach mixtures must be mixed fresh daily, as bleach decomposes easily when exposed to light, debris and other factors.

✓ Great care must be taken to ensure animals are not exposed to water or disinfectant during the cleaning process. An animal who is stressed and wet is much more susceptible to disease. Enclosures should be completely dry before returning the animal.

✓ Runs and cages should be cleaned from top to bottom, including all sides, ceiling, fencing and doors. It is a waste of resources, as well as a potential source of infection, to clean the walls of a run only to the height of an animal.

✓ Ensure that all materials and equipment used in the cleaning processes are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Ideally, there should be a separate set of cleaning equipment for each animal housing area.

✓ Plastic, (unless hard and non-porous), cannot be properly disinfected. Once scratched, most plastic becomes porous, allowing for transmission of viruses and bacteria. Stainless steel is easy to disinfect and durable, making it ideal for shelter use.

✓ Mopping is not the most practical method of floor cleaning in a shelter. Any area that can be scrubbed and hosed should be cleaned in that manner. If mops are used, the water and mop heads should be changed between each animal area.

✓ Do not allow cats to roam freely during the cleaning process. Utilize the spot cleaning method that allows the cats to remain in the cage, or place cats in separate carriers if necessary. Be sure to disinfect carriers between each use.

✓ Seal all concrete with an epoxy paint and consider re-treating kennels, floors and walls with a lifetime sealant so that these surfaces will be non-porous and resistant to urine, feces, odors and disease causing organisms, and easier to properly disinfect.

✓ The tops of cages should be free from any accumulation of "stuff" that can catch and hold dirt or dust and should be cleaned daily.

✓ Do not interrupt the cleaning process unless there is an emergency. If that is the case, immediately return animals to their cages and never leave them in carriers.

Discussion

While it is impossible to totally prevent the spread of disease it is possible to dramatically reduce it. Circumstances and finances may affect the choice of cleaning materials and methods, but a daily cleaning schedule must be observed without fail. Any area of a shelter in which animals are housed or through which animals pass must be cleaned and disinfected daily. This includes, but is not limited to the animal holding rooms, the euthanasia/procedure room, the workstations, kitchens and the front office.

Communication with staff must go beyond instruction of task and include an explanation of why operational procedures are to be done the way they are. The effectiveness of disinfection is more a function of time, effort, and thoroughness spent disinfecting than anything else. For instance, effective cleaning of the cage requires not only a good scrub brush, but also a dedicated individual.

3.6 RABIES QUARANTINE/ZOONOSES

Observations

Written SOPs outlined the procedure for handling an animal who has bitten. Staff was not to touch the animal without personal protection equipment and the public may not come in contact with the animal. Any change in health, appearance or attitude was to be reported to a supervisor. The owner of an animal on bite quarantine hold must have a veterinary appointment for the animal on the day of release.

Staff stated that the animal services director or an animal control officer would observe the animal during the daily rounds and release the animal from quarantine. The staff was unaware of any paperwork or forms used but stated others may have the form.

Home quarantine procedures provided information that explained the animal must not come in contact with other animals, but this protocol was not followed in the shelter. The HSUS team observed animals in quarantine having direct contact with other dogs through the fencing.

When questioned, staff was completely unaware of the term "zoonoses" and what diseases could be transmitted from animal to humans. The SOP for handling an animal with ringworm stated it "can be passed from person to person or animal to person (Zoonoses)". Otherwise, there was no information on zoonoses or how to prevent them.

Some staff had received pre-exposure rabies vaccinations and those transferred from Codes Enforcement had been vaccinated against Hepatitis and been tested for Tuberculosis.

Recommendations

✓ Develop detailed written SOPs on zoonoses to include relevant zoonotic diseases and precautions staff should take to minimize exposure. The SOPs should include information on what to do if an employee thinks he or she has been exposed.

✓ Develop formal training for all staff regarding zoonoses control, most importantly, rabies. Staff should understand the most common zoonotic threats encountered in an animal shelter.

✓ Provide staff with a laminated card listing possible zoonotic diseases to which the staff could be exposed. In the event that an employee becomes ill, he/she should give this card to his/her physician. Zoonotic diseases are often late to be diagnosed because shelter employees fail to inform their physicians of the type of work they do.

✓ Immediately provide staff with face masks and eye goggles, as well as a supply of gloves, gowns, booties, and aprons in all sizes.

✓ Provide all animal care staff with pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis as per Center for Disease Control guidelines.[25]

✓ A daily supervisory check should be performed for all quarantine animals. Create and attach to the animal's cage door a 10-Day Observation Report form on which comments about the animal's health and behavior should be noted.

✓ Disinfect any areas or equipment that comes in contact with quarantined animals. If possible, designate a specific set of equipment to be used only in this area.

✓ As stated in Section 2.2, Dog Housing, install metal panels on the outside runs to a height that will be sufficient to prevent nose-to nose and visual contact.

Discussion

It is crucial that quarantine programs and protocols be handled as a high priority by CCAS. In many instances, the agency is caring for an animal with a known owner, who is typically very concerned about the pet and his or her well being during the stay. At the same time, a bite victim is involved, and often this person is physically – and often emotionally - scarred and needs to be reassured that the quarantine process is taken seriously. Therefore, the mishandling of such cases has an extremely high potential for exposure to liability.

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25   http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/prevention&control/preventi.htm

4.0 ADOPTIONS

4.1 SELECTION CRITERA/BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENTS

<u>Observations</u>

There were no written SOPs and no specific process regarding the selection of animals for adoption. Unless an animal was aggressive or obviously ill and unable to be treated, staff stated that the animal would most likely be made available for adoption. They did not perform behavioral assessments or diagnostic tests as part of the decision-making process in selecting candidates for adoption. However, there was an SOP that addressed the adoption of cats who were positive for FeLV and FIV. In addition, The HSUS had been provided a copy of a Medical Release form that informed a potential adopter of the pet's unresolved medical condition and the corresponding expenses.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Write SOPs to include adoption/euthanasia selection criteria that are compatible with the mission of the organization. When formulating guidelines, take the following variables into consideration:

    - ➢ The number and type of animals received
    - ➢ The regional location of your agency
    - ➢ The capacity of your facility
    - ➢ Staffing level
    - ➢ The services you provide
    - ➢ The availability of a responsibly-operated foster program
    - ➢ The animals' best interest
    - ➢ Available resources

- ✓ Consider establishing categories similar to the following when developing protocols to determine an animal's adoption potential:

CATEGORY	STATUS	EUTHANASIA
Adoption Potential	Animals that, given the space, time, staff, money, or availability of an appropriate home, could live well in a new home.	...is most often due to a lack of resources and/or appropriate homes.
Medical, Treatable	Animals in good physical condition with treatable, noncontagious medical conditions such as skin problems, bad flea or mite infestations, broken limbs, abscesses, or problems that could be fixed with treatment and/or time.	...is most often a result of a lack of the resources, space, or time to treat the animals.

Medical, Contagious	Animals in good physical condition with medical conditions such as upper respiratory infections, kennel cough, ringworm, or less severe cases of mange that may be very treatable but are highly contagious in a shelter environment.	...is often not only because of the symptoms of the illness but also to prevent the contamination of others.
Physical Condition	Animals in poor general overall condition and/or health (for example, old, emaciated, weak).	...is often the result as these animals can be poor candidates for adoption placement due to the extensive medical rehabilitation necessary.
Unweaned, Too Young	Animals that are too young to survive on their own or in a shelter setting and need extensive care and socialization.	...is often due to the labor-intensive nature of care and the lack of foster homes.
Breed	Animals of breeds that are banned or at an increased risk in a community (such as areas where dogfighting occurs).	...may be performed if no other options are available.
Behavior Problems	Animals with behavior problems such as chewing, inappropriate urination, separation anxiety, timidity, destructiveness, or lack of socialization.	...is generally due to a lack of an appropriate placement that will provide a commitment to adequate training, socialization, and the proper environment.
Kennel-Stress	Animals with a marked change in behavior due to stress as a result of an extended stay in the shelter.	...is generally performed for humane reasons, to prevent further suffering.
Space	Animals who would continue to make good adoption candidates but whose cage space is needed for others.	...is generally necessary when space in the shelter is limited and room must be made for other animals needing housing and care.
Inappropriate for Adoption	Certain species of animals.	...is appropriate even if the resources (space, time, money, staff, and isolation) and a potential home is available.
Medical, Untreatable	Animals with terminal illnesses or injuries, severe chronic illnesses, or other serious medical conditions.	...is appropriate to eliminate the ongoing suffering of the animal.
Temperament Issues	Animals that are extremely shy, timid, high-strung, stressed, or distressed.	...is generally necessary due to an unlikely chance for successful adjustment into a new home.
Aggressiveness	Animals that show signs of aggression, have attacked another animal or person, or have a history of aggression.	...is generally appropriate for humane, safety, ethical, and liability reasons.
Feral or Unsocialized	Animals that have not and cannot be handled and do not adjust to the shelter setting.	...is generally appropriate for animals with no hope of socialization.

Court Order	Animals that have been ordered to be euthanized by a judge, a hearing officer, or another public official with that authority.	...is performed to comply with this ruling.

- ✓ Use the variables of age, health, temperament, physical condition, behavior,[26] and available space to guide adoption and euthanasia decisions but also address the more thought-provoking questions of:

  - ➢ What are the prospects for providing this animal with a quality life? Or is it destined to spend day after day in the shelter?
  - ➢ Is the animal in physical pain or mental distress and is there hope of alleviating it within a reasonable amount of time in order to allow for quality of life? [27]
  - ➢ Does this animal, in its present condition, present health or safety risks to other animals or people?
  - ➢ Given the fiscal and practical limitations faced by the CCAS, does maintaining this animal reduce the organization's ability to humanely care for other animals?

- ✓ Offer only the best selection of animals in the adoption areas. Implement daily behavioral assessments and medical observations to ensure that this population remains healthy and well-adjusted. If their behavior or health deteriorates, they should not remain in the shelter but instead, be transferred temporarily to a foster home for rehabilitation. If they cannot adapt to shelter life, have little prospect for adoption, or have exhibited an unacceptable temperament, euthanasia should be considered.

- ✓ Perform a basic assessment to determine temperament until staff is formally trained in conducting behavioral assessments. Develop a "check-off" form, and conduct the initial assessment during intake.[28] Written guidelines that explain how to perform an assessment, what to look for, and what to do if there is an area of concern should be implemented.

- ✓ Research recognized behavior/temperament assessments and compile information that will aid in the development of SOPs. The SAFER™ test is one such program that has been utilized extensively in the animal sheltering community. [29,30,31,32]

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26 Cat Evaluation Matrix, Kate Hurley, DVM *
27 Bernard E. Rollins, "Euthanasia and Quality of Life," JAVMA, Vol 228, No 7, April 1, 2006
28 The HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, "Pet Temperament Status," September/October 1996
29 www.emilyweiss.com/safer.html
30 The HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, "Putting Your Behavioral Evaluation to the Test," September–October 2003
31 The HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, "Assess with Success," November–December 2003

- ✓ Train specific staff to conduct behavior/temperament assessments so that they are consistent among dogs. The results should become part of the animal's permanent record.

- ✓ Perform complete behavior/temperament assessments on all dogs before considering them for adoption.

- ✓ Limit the number of cats in the main cat room to a maximum of 30. When evaluating the number of animals to have in the adoption area CCAS must determine what population it can reasonably support and what number of animals can be adopted into the community.

- ✓ Assign a staff member with verified experience in handling cats to impartially assess the temperament and behavior of cats in the shelter, and create a form on which to record results. There is a significant amount of information regarding the behavioral assessment of cats including The ASPCA's program entitled Feline-ality™ that addresses pairing cats with potential owners.

- ✓ Carefully evaluate the reason for surrender when considering making owned animals available for adoption. Adopting animals with known aggression/biting behaviors places a tremendous liability on the organization. No amount of training or behavior modification can guarantee that certain fear or aggression issues will be resolved.

- ✓ Encourage staff and volunteers to interact with dogs and cats in a consistent manner to help enhance adoptability. For example, simple activities that teach a dog to sit or wait calmly at an open door and that discourage pulling when leashed and prevent jumping, lunging, and play-biting help develop good social skills with visitors, resulting in successful adoptions.

Discussion

A shelter's responsibility is to provide a *temporary* safe haven for unwanted and lost animals. The concept of "average length of stay" is one measure of the extent to which a facility is truly a *transitional* shelter for animals rather than a long-term sanctuary.

The goal of every organization should be to move the animals through the shelter and place them in a permanent setting as soon as possible. The HSUS does not believe it is a kindness to animals to keep them in a shelter environment indefinitely where they may be stressed, depressed, and possibly exposed to disease, with little hope for adoption.

A notion persists that any shelter, if committed enough or large enough, can easily place all the animals it receives. This perception belies the complexity of companion animal

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32 "How To Implement Behavior Evaluations By Letting The Dogs Tell Us Who They Are," Dee Ganley, CPDT/CABC/CDBC

overpopulation. Communicating honestly about the reality of euthanasia does not imply complacency, nor means that one condones it as "the solution." Animals are individuals, and each should be evaluated against established criteria to determine their ultimate disposition. Consistently adhering to an established policy regarding which animals are to be made available for adoption and which are euthanized is crucial to helping staff cope with these difficult decisions.

A large part of achieving balance is in determining which animals to move into an adoption area.[33] Many agencies believe adoptions will increase if the public sees all the animals. Although counter-intuitive, anecdotal and scientific evidence proves the "more is better" theory wrong. The sheer number of homeless animals often overwhelms the adopting public. Sometimes so overwhelmed they leave without adopting at all.

A behavior/temperament assessment program should be a carefully considered component of every professional animal management plan, but behavioral programs must be unique to each shelter's situation, staff time, and expertise. A behavior/temperament assessment of each animal is also extremely crucial to an adoption program and its success.

A formal behavioral assessment can provide valuable information regarding:

> ➢ A dog's or cat's personality and particular needs as related to the breed
> ➢ A dog's or cat's temperament and any particular related problems
> ➢ A dog's or cat's ability to interact and socialize with people
> ➢ A dog's level of submission or dominance
> ➢ Which training style would be best suited for the dog
> ➢ A dog's level of food or possession aggression

A greater emphasis on animal assessment will assist staff in making appropriate recommendations to adopters, as well as providing staff with constructive reasons as to why an animal may not be appropriate when denying an adoption. This approach assists a shelter with the determination of the type of home that will best meet the needs of the individual animal and provides potential adopters with information to assist them in determining the appropriateness of a particular animal for their lifestyle. The result is to increase the number of successful placements. Furthermore, accurate temperament assessments also play a key role in protecting the safety of staff members, volunteers, and the visiting public.

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33 Population Management, Capacity Planning, and Shelter Health papers, Sandra Newbury, DVM *

4.2 ADOPTION PROCESS & POLICIES, STERILIZATION SERVICES, AND LOST & FOUND

Observations

Adoption Process & Policies:

There was a brief SOP that applied to adoptions, but it covered mostly the fees and paperwork. CCAS offered discounted adoptions and a "cat month" adoption promotion.

The process of pet selection was very informal. Visitors were allowed to enter the adoption areas to view animals, but were accompanied by a staff member if they wanted to visit with a particular animal.

Although staff was cordial and helpful toward potential adopters, there was no adoption application, specific requirements, or counseling involved in the adoption process. Discussions with staff gave the impression that unless there was a blatantly obvious reason for denial, most anyone who was interested in a pet would be allowed to adopt.

Adoption fees were $90.00 for dogs and $70.00 for cats and included DA2PP and FVRCP vaccines, respectively, deworming, and the cost for sterilization. CCAS provided adopters with a variety of informational forms designed to help integrate a new pet into to the family.

As stated previously, animals were vaccinated against rabies at the veterinary hospital where sterilization surgery was performed prior to adoption, or in some cases, the adopter was required to obtain a rabies vaccination for the pet.

Staff performed no adoption follow up and did not know the adoption return rate, but said they recorded returned animals in Pet Point and would be able to run a report. Staff estimated that 1 in 20 animals is returned over a 1 ½ year period. After reviewing 18 months of data from the Maddie's Data Collection form, The HSUS team calculated an approximate adoption return rate for CCAS of 7%, which is on target with the estimated national average.

One of the local veterinarians who worked with the shelter was concerned because per the City, the shelter was not allowed to discriminate against adopters and therefore had little to no control over adoption decisions. The veterinarian cited an example of a person who wanted to adopt a dog to serve as guard dog and the shelter did not deny the adoption. In some cases, if an animal was at the veterinary hospital for treatment, the hospital had performed adoptions directly, without returning the animal to the shelter.

Sterilization Services:

Lone Mountain Veterinary Hospital and Sierra Veterinary Hospital performed sterilization for CCAS, with the majority performed by the former. Animals five months or older were sterilized by the time they were made available for adoption, but the veterinarians would not sterilize animals younger than four months old. Both hospitals were available to adopters for any post-surgical emergencies.

The Adoption Agreement and Sterilization Contract stated that if the pet had not been sterilized at the time of adoption, adopters were required to leave a deposit and have the pet sterilized within a certain amount of time based on the animal's age at adoption. Therefore, adopters of dogs or cats younger than four months old would receive a refund of $65.00 and $45.00, respectively, at a later date upon proof of sterilization. A license was issued and included with each dog adoption, but if the dog had not yet been sterilized, the adopter had to pay a $25.00 license fee. The adoption fee for an intact adult dog was $20 and shelter staff transported the dog to the veterinarian of the adopter's choice for sterilization surgery.

Staff stated that although they would definitely issue a citation to anyone in violation of the sterilization agreement, follow-up for compliance was challenging due to workload.

Lost & Found:

There was a lost and found binder kept in the front office and a brief written SOP. When answering a phone call about a lost animal, staff would go above and beyond what was written in the SOP. Staff told callers to come to the shelter to look for the animal. They also checked the newspaper and told the caller to place an ad in the paper as well as on Craig's List. Staff then completed a lost report and told the caller to check other shelters. Staff referenced the binder each time a stray animal was brought to the shelter, but was behind on removing outdated entries from the binder. If a stray animal was taken directly to the veterinary hospital, the ACOs made a card for that animal so office staff knew its location.

If a caller had found an animal, staff suggested the caller complete the same steps as above. The SOP stated that it was fine to allow the caller to temporarily hold the animal at the residence and to be sure to get contact information. It further stated that if the caller expressed the desire to keep the animal if no one made a claim, permanent custody would be in effect after 10 days.

There was a lost and found bulletin board in the hallway adjacent to the lobby on the way to the kennels. There was sign that stated postings older than 30 days will be removed, but the rule was not enforced as there were many postings that were not dated and one that was dated 2009. There were also postings for grooming services and "free to a good home".

After reviewing 18 months of data from the Maddie's Data Collection form, The HSUS team calculated an approximate return to owner rate for CCAS of 37%, for dogs, which is slightly higher than the estimated national average of 30%. The same data for cats reflected a 3.2% return rate, which is on target with the estimated national average of 2-5%.

Recommendations

- ✓ Establish written goals and objectives for the adoption program and identify processes for their continual evaluation.

- ✓ Conduct interactive interviews before adopters select a particular dog/cat. This engages the community in the work that CCAS does, offers the organization as a resource for animal-related issues, and affords animals the opportunity to interact with people other than their caretakers. Additional adoption resources can be found through the ASPCA's Meet your Match™ programs[34]. Canine-ality, Puppy-ality, and Feline-ality are all adoption partnership programs that assist the shelter in matching pets and people.

- ✓ Require potential adopters to complete a short adoption application[35] to:

  - ➢ Enable animals to be placed in an environment that is compatible with their individual needs.
  - ➢ Match animals that are compatible with the potential adopter's interests and lifestyles.

- ✓ Develop SOPs and guidelines to assist staff in determining the criteria necessary to approve an application. Ask open-ended questions that elicit honest answers from potential adopters. The process should be a counseling session, not a test. [36]

- ✓ Maintain applications by date for people who have come to the shelter, expressed an interest in adopting, but did not find the type of dog/cat that they were seeking. Contact these people when a similar animal becomes available or at least monthly to determine their continued interest. Although adopting to known, responsible owners is less time-consuming, developing new relationships in the community is important to the AWS's success of its adoption program.

- ✓ Develop a shelter-wide program to encourage strong client service and marketing skills. It is best for an adoption program to be known for being friendly, helpful, supportive, and fair.[37]

- ✓ Develop a "Homecoming Packet" for new adopters. Include information such as:

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34 ASPCA "Meet Your Match™" programs www.aspca.org
35 Sample Adoption Application *
36 The HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, "Judgment Calls: Adoption Perspectives", Sept-Oct 2007
37 Jan Elster, "Animal Friendly—Customer Smart: People Skills For Animal Shelters", 2008

➢ Introduction/acclimation to the new household and other pets
➢ A list of supplies and necessities such as litter and litter pans, grooming tools, collars, and identification tags
➢ The animal's diet, appropriate food, and feeding schedule
➢ Information on basic care and answers to FAQs
➢ Training issues, classes, and recommended reading on behavior and training
➢ Information on housetraining/crate-training
➢ The animal's medical records and health concerns
➢ A list of the participating veterinarians in the spay/neuter program
➢ Local ordinances and laws governing animals in the community
➢ A note encouraging feedback

✓ Create informational signage in the Lobby or an attachment to the application that communicates the fees, sterilization requirements, vaccinations administered, deworming, and diagnostic testing performed.

✓ Keep the lost and found binders and bulletin board up to date to ensure that old forms and postings do not hamper the identification of someone's lost pet. Do not allow items other than lost and found ads to be posted to the board.

✓ Revisit the no discrimination policy with City officials. Share the adoption program goals, objectives, SOPs, guidelines, and forms to give an understanding as to why CCAS must be allowed the discretion to deny an adoption.

✓ Discontinue allowing adoptions to occur directly from the veterinary hospitals. This creates a liability for the hospitals and removes the responsibility of the shelter to regulate the adoption process and track its success.

✓ Carefully track adoption returns. The reasons for the returns should help drive improvements of the adoption process.

✓ Schedule a follow up survey for all adopted animals.[116] A staff person or a responsible volunteer should be specifically assigned to make follow-up calls. One way to perform this follow-up is to have 31 folders in a file cabinet numbered 1-31, which correspond to the day of the month. If CCAS decides that two weeks post-adoption would be a good time, the adopter's paperwork can be put in the numbered folder that corresponds with the date that he/she should be called. Each day the paperwork should be pulled from the corresponding folder and calls should be made to the adopters. In addition, phone calls are also a friendly way to follow up on health and behavior concerns and catch problems before they result in the return of an animal.

✓ Implement the same follow-up system for sterilization compliance as recommended above for adoptions.

✓ Make it a standard practice to review incoming and lost and found animals at all

staff meetings. Ensure regular communication among staff members so that those who are absent may receive pertinent, timely information.

✓ Promote responsible cat ownership practices, such as keeping cats indoors, spaying/neutering, and providing cats with a collar and ID tag, at all outreach events and every interaction with the public to decrease the number of lost cats and increase their return-to-owner rate.

Discussion

A good adoption program incorporates policies and guidelines designed to assist with responsible matchmaking. A good decision is one that is based upon:
- Information presented by the applicant
- The appropriateness of that animal to that environment
- An adoption counselor's good judgment, common sense, and willingness to look at each situation individually

The purpose of an adoption program, whether conducted by a private or a municipal agency should be to find responsible, lifelong homes for animals suitable as companions. Such matchmaking requires knowledge of both the animals to be placed and their prospective adopters. The goal of any adoption program is not to place as many animals as possible but to place animals in appropriate homes.

Staff must be trained to evaluate potential adopters and teach adopters to be responsible pet owners. This can be a delicate task and selection of the right staff members to be adoption counselors is crucial; the organization needs to look to staff who are excellent communicators and who genuinely enjoy the process of talking with people and helping them to select the most fitting pet for their lifestyle.

Although certain adoption criteria are absolute, most are meant to serve as guidelines, enabling counselors to work within each set of circumstances individually. One of the keys to program success is to have consistent approaches, policies, and procedures in order to avoid any false allegations that the agency is either arbitrary or discriminatory. Evaluation of potential adopters can be based on three basic criteria:

1) Commitment to the life and needs of the animal
2) Compassion and a desire for mutual companionship
3) Capability of providing the essentials of a healthy, happy life for the animal

The adoption process should be a positive, friendly, and an educational process. Because potential adopters often initially view a refusal as a rejection or accusation, counselors must be honest and direct, as well as courteous and understanding. If done appropriately, explaining the rationale for adoption denial can serve as an educational experience and not a demeaning one. When staff fails to do this correctly, the potential adopter leaves without a true understanding of the message and will simply acquire an animal elsewhere.

4.3 COMMUNITY ADOPTION PARTNERS

<u>Observations</u>

There was an SOP in place for working with rescue groups which stated that a rescue group must be a 501 c3 and meet CCAS requirements. The HSUS team could determine no requirements other than the group must provide references from other shelters, rescue groups, or veterinarians. CCAS was currently transferring animals to approved groups, but did not impose an application, contract, or fees, and simply documented the transfer on a general receipt form.

The CTSPCA formed expressly to work in conjunction with CCAS. It is a non-sheltered group consisting of volunteers and foster homes that has been providing assistance with spay/neuter promotion, low cost spay/neuter, pet food bank, vaccinations, diagnostic testing, off site adoptions, and fostering for the last 2 ½ years. CTSPCA has also worked with CCAS to eliminate use of the gas chamber and assist with other daily operational challenges. A CTSPCA representative stated that the group was pleased to see recent changes at the shelter including the development of new SOPs, Maddie's Fund statistics tracking, and vaccination on intake. The group was very enthusiastic and expressed the desire to expand its assistance to include animal enrichment, humane education, and responsible pet ownership training.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ CCAS management should meet with a CTSPCA representative to review the current partnership and outline plans for future collaboration. Develop an MOU that outlines the agreed upon duties and responsibilities for each group and refer to that document to guide all activities.

- ✓ CCAS should enhance its current rescue group program by forming a small committee to research and implement additional components. This committee may include line and management staff, volunteers, and trusted representatives of placement partner groups. The committee should be responsible for:

  - ➢ Program design. Using examples from other shelters or national organizations as a starting point, the committee should design a workable program specific to CCAS that includes:

  - ➢ Setting goals for the program. CCAS should prioritize potential placement groups by evaluating data such as:

    - o What number and types of animals most need assistance at the shelter?
    - o Which animals tend to be euthanized for reasons of space or time?

- o Which ones deteriorate rapidly in the shelter environment or are difficult to house?
- o Do certain animals make up a large percentage of returns or failed adoptions?

➢ Determining philosophical alignment guidelines. The committee should identify which of the shelter's philosophies the placement partners must share. For example, mandatory sterilization is commonly a critical area of philosophical alignment between shelters and placement groups. Alternately, euthanasia of animals that bite is an important area about which there appears to be more philosophical variation. However, rather than complicating the screening process with minor issues, limit alignment priorities to those philosophies that are considered the most important.

➢ Developing a screening procedure. Having a standard screening protocol in place for all placement partners will help ensure fairness. The basic elements include:

　　o An application
　　o Required attachments (i.e., nonprofit registration status, standard forms used by the group, etc.)
　　o References (veterinary, etc.)
　　o An interview
　　o A site visit

➢ Developing a selection process. Selecting groups with which to partner involves reviewing their applications and attachments, calling references, and conducting interviews and site visits. A checklist may be helpful in summarizing the results.[119] Placement partners should be identified as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and a notification protocol should be established. For those not chosen as partners, the reasons for that choice should be clearly explained and a time period should be established to reapply.

➢ Record keeping. All original application materials should be organized by placement partner and maintained in a centralized location at the shelter for a designated period. Because most placement partners are comprised of several individuals, make sure CCAS knows each group's main contact person.

➢ Developing written guidelines/policies and eligibility requirements for working with placement partners.[38,39,40] These guidelines may be determined by answering the following questions:

　　o A site visit: Is CCAS willing to transfer animals to any group or individual?
　　o Do placement partners need to be nonprofits, or can they be for profit dealers, pet store owners, breeders, etc.?

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38 Placement Partner Screening Form *
39 Placement Partner Agreement example *
40 HSUS *Animal Sheltering* magazine, Placement Partner Application Form, March-April 2004

        o   How does the placement program guard against contributing to a hoarder's collection?

        o   What is the mission statement/overall goal of the placement partner, and does it match the goals set forth by CCAS?

    ➢ Program approval. Once the committee redesigns the program, it should go to shelter management for approval and be modified if necessary.

✓ Once the program redesign is completed, CCAS should send letters to the placement partners with which it is currently working or has worked with in the past explaining the development process and that they must reapply to become partners under the new guidelines. If a placement partner representative is included in the planning committee, the shelter may wish to share that person's name and contact information so that other placement partners can forward their suggestions and concerns to him/her. Some shelters have held open house-type events for placement partner representatives prior to and/or during the revamping or design of a new placement partner program. These provide avenues for two-way communication and also offer chances for shelter staff to meet representatives face-to-face and to provide tours of the shelter, etc.[41,42]

✓ Utilize a form releasing CCAS from any and all liabilities created by the actions of the animals being transferred to placement partners.

✓ An agency should not wait until it has an animal in need before contacting a placement partner. CCAS should start contacting and screening placement partners immediately. Placement partners may contact CCAS and ask to become partners, although this frequently happens only when an animal they wish to assist is in the shelter, putting undue pressure on the shelter's screening process. Immediate release is not a reasonable request from an unscreened placement partner. Proactive placement partner contact and screening are preferred and benefit both parties.

✓ Involve staff and volunteers in the placement partner program; new staff and volunteers should be introduced to it as part of their standardized training and should include:

    ➢ How animals are recommended for the program?
    ➢ Which groups are approved placement partners, and which are not?
    ➢ What criteria used by the shelter to choose its partners?
    ➢ Who coordinates the shelter's program?
    ➢ Breed identification training may also be obtained from representatives of placement partner groups.

✓ Require animal housing and care standards from placement partners. These standards should be reviewed carefully in order to ensure that adequate animal care will be given.

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41 Placement Group Survey Example *
42 Procedures for Rescue Groups *

✓ Inspect every placement facility or foster home as part of the screening process prior to the transfer of animals. If a placement partner has numerous members, each facility should be inspected. However, depending on staffing levels and resources, this may not be feasible. Another option is to inspect only the main facilities or those that house the most animals but facility inspection reports from the group's leadership should be required for every group member. Inspections should be done initially and yearly to ensure compliance. This is important because, unfortunately, some sheltering agencies have unknowingly sent animals to hoarders, whom they believed to be legitimate placement partners.

✓ Ensure compliance by rescue organizations by insisting on sterilization prior to release or by obtaining a signed, enforceable agreement to do so with an enforcement date.

✓ Research participation in PetsMart Charities'® transport program called Rescue Waggin'™.[43]

4.4   FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

For comprehensive volunteer recommendations, please refer to *Volunteer Management: A Guide for Animal Care Organizations.*[44]

Observations

There was a combined SOP that addressed foster parents and volunteers. Foster parents received a two-page Foster Care Manual, were required to complete and sign a foster application, and attend the training provided by the Volunteer Program Manager. However, there were no other qualifications or conditions required to serve as a foster parent. Staff members were also allowed to foster and followed the same process as the general public.

Candidates for foster care included animals who needed socialization, were injured, pregnant, or neonates. During the site visit, a woman who was interested in possibly adopting a young cat who was being treated for URI offered to foster the cat, but staff informed her that was not possible because they preferred to not send animals home with medication. There was no set limit on the amount of time an animal would remain in foster care and animals were adopted via off-site adoption events, Petfinder™, and from the shelter.

The Volunteer Program Manager kept file folders on all volunteers and foster parents (some who served both roles) and seemed to have a working knowledge of their history.

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43 http://www.petsmartcharities.org/animal-welfare/index.php
44 Betsy McFarland, "Volunteer Management: A Guide for Animal Care Organizations", Humane Society Press, 2005

There was a file from 2009 which consisted of a list of foster parents with corresponding records. There was also a folder containing completed and blank foster and volunteer applications, a list of potential volunteers who had been contacted and general community outreach information. A desk drawer in the lobby contained a list of animals currently being fostered and their corresponding foster parents, as well as individual folders on current volunteers and foster parents. Information on volunteers and foster parents was entered into the computer and all participants were placed on an email list for events and updates.

There was a small area in the lobby where volunteers could find information to help them do their jobs. It contained a volunteer time sheet log, a dog walking log, a list of dogs not to be walked by volunteers, and a bin that contained fact sheets on topics such as dog/cat handling, general animal behavior and temperament evaluations, Petfinder™, Wal-Mart adoption fair, Adopt-A-Pet Day at the shelter, foster information and volunteer badges. During the site visit, The HSUS team observed one volunteer and one person fulfilling community service requirements working at the shelter.

Recommendations

The HSUS team acknowledges that CCAS has limited staffing levels that may make it challenging to implement the following recommendations, but offers them as a departure point for future goals.

- ✓ CCAS should carefully consider the following questions with regard to its current foster care program: [45]

  - ➢ Do you have the time, staff, and resources needed to maintain a foster program?

  - ➢ Can your organization afford the general operational costs?

  - ➢ Can your organization provide food, litter pans, and other supplies that is involved in caring for an animal in foster care?

  - ➢ Do you need to set up a revenue source that can provide for the care of fostered animals?

- ✓ To be successful, a foster care program requires a high level of supervision and maintenance. A foster care program must be expertly supervised or it will quickly spiral out of control. Like an adoption program, a foster program must have goals and agencies utilizing a foster program should start by asking themselves the following questions:

  - ➢ What is the goal of the foster program? Are you fostering animals

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45 Foster Care Sample Forms and Information *

primarily to open up cage or kennel space in your shelter? (This should not be the primary reason for a foster program)

➢ What is the timeline for foster care? At what point does it become an adoption?

➢ Will there be space for the animal when it is time to return to the shelter? If not, how will the space situation be addressed?

➢ How many animals and what types can be in foster care at one time?

➢ What criteria determine whether an animal will be placed in foster care?

➢ How will animals with special needs and who require special care be handled and monitored?

➢ How will animals that require behavior modification be handled and monitored?

➢ Will the offspring of pregnant foster animals be sterilized prior to going to new homes?

➢ How will animals with an injury or illness be handled?

➢ Who will provide the food, litter boxes, and other supplies required for caring for an animal in foster care?

✓ To successfully monitor the foster program, the person in charge should:

➢ Keep track of animals and foster homes using a record-keeping system.
➢ Develop a volunteer base from which to cull foster parents.
➢ Develop written criteria identifying animals that are eligible for fostering.
➢ Develop written qualifications for potential foster parents.
➢ Solicit help from community veterinarians.
➢ Offer foster-parent training orientations.
➢ Develop an application and agreement form specifically for foster parents.
➢ Find sources of funding for supplies, vaccines, and medical treatments.
➢ Provide guidance, instruction sheets, and advice to foster parents.
➢ Set up schedules for preventive medical care, vaccinations, etc., for animals in foster care.

✓ Monitor and document the health and well-being of foster animals by visiting homes and periodically calling the foster parents.

✓ Determine the foster family's role (if any) in assisting with the adoption of the animal.

✓ Ensure that CCAS has the appropriate liability insurance, and develop a disclaimer to protect the organization in case a fostered animal causes injury or property damage.

✓ Before accepting someone as a foster parent, ensure that he/she:

➢ Completes a foster parent application
➢ Passes a home check
➢ Is initiated as a regular volunteer

> ➢ Attends a training orientation, and meets the foster-program coordinator
> ➢ Understands and agrees with the foster program's goals
> ➢ Meets CCAS's adoption standards
> ➢ Understands and is willing to accept any incurred costs
> ➢ Provides proof that his or her own pets are sterilized, vaccinated, and well cared for
> ➢ Understands the required time and energy commitment
> ➢ Recognizes euthanasia as a possible outcome

✓ Consistently maintain records for any animal in foster care. Files should be organized to ensure that they can be easily accessed. Each animal's record should contain the following information:

> ➢ Reason for fostering
> ➢ Foster home contact information, including name, address, telephone number, date of when the animal went to the home
> ➢ Expected date of return
> ➢ Medical information, vaccination schedule, veterinary history
> ➢ Treatment given by foster family
> ➢ All communications with foster family
> ➢ Ongoing progress and status of animal

✓ Provide foster parents with an understanding of shelter policies and their responsibilities as foster parents through orientations and regular training. Foster parents should be trained to isolate animals, properly disinfect cages, and feed animals correctly. Also, they should have a good understanding of vaccination requirements, common diseases of pets, and potential zoonotic diseases.

✓ Record the statistics on the number of animals being fostered and the reasons why.

✓ Discontinue routinely allowing pregnant animals to be fostered. With a few exceptions for animals who may be extremely close to term, pregnant animals who are considered to be good adoption candidates should be sterilized while pregnant to avoid further contributing to animal overpopulation.

✓ Consider fostering cats with URI. These are exactly the animals who need special attention and will recover more quickly outside of the shelter. CCAS should work with the local veterinarians to prescribe the necessary medications, should advise the foster parent of the nature of the illness (and possible risks to other animals in the home) and require them to sign the same Medical Release form used when adopting sick animals.

✓ Create a volunteer manual that contains the following information:

> ➢ Positions assigned to volunteers
> ➢ Job descriptions

> ➢ Duties volunteers may and may not perform
> ➢ Minimum age for volunteers
> ➢ Uniforms, color-coded clothing, name tags
> ➢ Volunteer contact with the public
> ➢ Volunteer contact with the animals
> ➢ Areas of the agency where volunteers are permitted to work
> ➢ How, when, and where orientations will be conducted
> ➢ Required training specific to each position
> ➢ Recording time donated
> ➢ Minimum time commitment per week and for how many months
> ➢ Resolution procedures for staff-volunteer conflicts
> ➢ Protocol for reviewing and dismissing volunteers
> ➢ Actions taken if a volunteer is injured "on the job"
> ➢ Insurance coverage for volunteers or separate under the shelter's general policy
> ➢ Goals of the agency and goals of the volunteer program
> ➢ Services CCAS provides
> ➢ The agency's philosophy on complicated issues such as intake, adoption, and euthanasia
> ➢ General information about CCAS, including operating hours and important phone numbers
> ➢ The agency's policies, such as adoption procedures and holding periods
> ➢ A brief history of CCAS and its achievements

✓ Establish a Code of Conduct that volunteers are required to sign and follow.

✓ Develop a formal volunteer recognition program. Tracking of hours, certificates of appreciation, public acknowledgment of exceptional work (such as a shelter bulletin board), and award ceremonies are easy to do and go a long way in maintaining volunteer morale.

✓ Implement the same program to recognize exceptional work by staff members.

✓ Meet with staff to determine their comfort level with volunteers. Address any concerns they may have by creating policies that put staff at ease. Allow staff input into the program. Staff needs to "buy-in" to a volunteer program. They must be involved with planning the program and need to see how volunteers will help them in their job, rather than create more work for them.

✓ Designate supervisors and staff to plan and oversee departmental assignments.

✓ Specifically earmark funds in the budget for the program for training materials and recognition options.

✓ Develop a written grievance procedure for volunteers that include a clear chain of command. A volunteer should take his complaint to the volunteer coordinator, and if the situation is irresolvable at that level, to the shelter manager, who would

then pass it onto the director of operations, if necessary. This procedure should be included in the Volunteer Manual, and violations should incur consequences. It is imperative that issues are addressed impartially and promptly and that a record be kept of verbal and written correspondence.

✓ Create volunteer jobs that are meaningful! If volunteers are not made to feel like an important part of the agency, they will leave. Consider utilizing volunteers in a "Head Start" program for adoptable dogs. Shelters across the country use Head Start programs to provide basic training for dogs and help relieve the stress of the kennel environment.

✓ In addition to the volunteer orientation part of the recruitment process, all volunteers need to attend a *formal* training class covering the basics of the work that is done in the shelter. Some shelters choose to have a mandatory animal-handling class, during which all new volunteers learn the basics of the shelter's operations and how to handle animals. Once that training is complete, the volunteers are trained in their specific job assignments. For example, a dog walker will have different training requirements than a volunteer adoption assistant will. It is important to tailor the training to the jobs that need to be done.

✓ Conduct a survey of current volunteers to identify their needs, concerns, motivations, and thoughts toward enhancing programs and care at CCAS.

✓ Explore quarterly "brown bag" dinners with community speakers willing to share knowledge in areas of interest to the volunteers. This may include behavior, animal handling, disease recognition, adoption counseling, etc.

✓ Keep in mind that volunteers will need to know much of what the staff needs to know when issues arise or there is a change in shelter policy. Be sure to keep the volunteers informed about current events related to the CCAS operations.

Discussion

Fostering is the placement of special needs animals into temporary homes until they are suitable for adoption. A foster care program can increase an animal shelter's responsible adoptions, decrease the numbers of animals euthanized, boost employee morale, and enhance public relations within the community. Or, unfortunately, a foster program can drain a shelter's limited resources, cause the organization to lose sight of its mission, and even jeopardize the lives of shelter animals. In order to maintain control, management must set realistic goals, develop strong policies and procedures, and adhere to them. All foster programs must have criteria for carefully choosing foster animals and caregivers. Remember that fostering is not a solution to pet overpopulation or irresponsible pet ownership.

It is extremely important to understand that a foster care program cannot save all the animals, replace a cramped facility, or mend holes in organizational policies. In addition,

no organized foster program should be based on emotional impulses and everyone involved must agree on both the concept as well as the practice.

These are difficult concepts, but ones that must be addressed in order to develop realistic expectations for how the program will function successfully. An effective program is more than just getting an animal out of the shelter. To operate a constructive and positive foster care program time and resources need to be devoted to the program, and CCAS must be prepared to provide the oversight necessary to keep the program running effectively should you implement one in the future.

For a full volunteer program to be successful, CCAS must lay a strong foundation for the program. Clear guidelines must be set or there is risk of damaging an organization's programs and reputation. Volunteers must be provided with established boundaries and staff supervision.

While the long list of benefits offered by a volunteer program is immediately compelling, the pitfalls of a poorly conceived and/or poorly managed program can be crippling. Difficulties involving volunteers are rarely brought about solely by the volunteers themselves; they nearly always occur because a shelter lacks sufficient structure for the program or the resolve to manage volunteers effectively. If the staff is not involved in the volunteer program, the organization may never hear or fully understand why volunteers leave the program.

More often than not, poorly organized programs leave shelters with dozens of ineffective, uncommitted volunteers. Volunteers who are not properly trained may make mistakes, alienate staff members, or leave if the program is not well structured. What's more, a few unhappy volunteers who quit in frustration may tell others of the shelter's failing program, ruining the shelter's reputation in the process.

If CCAS is willing to invest in the many benefits that volunteers can bring to the shelter and the animals, remember that volunteers give their time and talents for free. Keep in mind that it will still require considerable time and energy to make the program successful. It takes a great deal of work to recruit, screen, train, and retain volunteers in an animal shelter.

It is crucial that the CCAS staff and the volunteers have a mutual respect for one another, and see themselves as part of a team—working together for the benefit of the animals and the community. Just as crucial is that volunteers understand the hierarchy of leadership, who is in charge, and who has the final say in all shelter matters. A well-run volunteer program can be an organization's best publicity in the community, and happy workers its best ambassadors.

A volunteer coordinator should act as the human resources department of a volunteer program. The volunteer coordinator works with the staff to identify which job functions can be fulfilled by volunteers. The coordinator creates volunteer job descriptions, sets goals, implements training programs, and provides ongoing program evaluation. It is

important to remember that the day-to-day management and training of individual volunteers falls primarily on the managers and staff members working side-by-side with them. While the volunteer coordinator can lay the foundation for a successful program, he or she cannot be expected to individually manage, train, and evaluate every volunteer in the program. That is why frontline managers and staff must be committed to managing and working with volunteers, and why your organization needs to ensure that staff support the program.

While CCAS exists to serve the community, a volunteer program exists to serve CCAS. It is important not to lose sight of the goal of the program and to maintain control so it works to help the operation, not hinder it.

5.0 COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

5.1 PROMOTION/HUMANE EDUCATION/SPECIAL EVENTS

Observations

Information about CCAS is listed on Carson City's website under the "About Carson City" tab and then as the first item under the "Departments" tab. However, the "Animal Services" link yields an error message. Information is also listed under the "City Government" tab, then the "Health and Human Services" tab, and then as the first listing under the "Programs" tab. When a visitor clicks on this "Animal Services" link, the shelter's Petfinder™ web page appears.

However, visitors would have to guess what departments or tabs to try first and there is no way to locate information on CCAS with a single click from the home page. In addition, a visitor must specifically type "animal services" into the search box in order to find the correct information, as typing "animal shelter" yields a failed search.

The Petfinder™ page is attractive, thorough, and well-organized. The home page contains general information about the shelter, hours of operation, humane education, and licensing. The tabs inform visitors about lost and found, adoption, volunteering and donating, the local ordinance, and shelter statistics. However, a number of entries for animals who were lost/found or available for adoption were outdated.

A Google search leads to the City's website and the shelter's Petfinder™ page, but also to a page from 2007 that contains outdated information. The shelter also has a Facebook page which contains timely information about the shelter and adoption events.

Although CCAS did not have written SOPs for media inquiries or a marketing plan for advertising and special events, the shelter reported good relationships with the media, received mostly favorable coverage in the newspaper, hosted and participated in a number of community events annually, and maintained relationships with outside groups. The local newspaper, *Nevada Appeal*, had recently resumed featuring a "Pet of the Week" advertisement. Management of CCAS informed The HSUS team that newspaper personnel had expressed the desire to increase the number of articles that highlight the shelter and have asked the City's public information officer to begin submitting articles on a regular basis. The shelter has also regularly purchased advertisement space from the newspaper and submitted "Pet of the Week" advertisements for the City's humane resources department newsletter.

A health department staff member is also employed as a disc jockey for a local radio station and gives CCAS a discounted advertising rate on the "Adoption Days" event.

Shelter staff informed The HSUS team that they provided approximately six dog safety programs annually to local elementary schools, and allowed schoolchildren to visit the shelter and receive humane education information and tours. Staff also tabled and provided information at various community events including: National Night Out, Cops & Kids, the City's Health and Wellness Fair and the annual Cooperative Extension event Farm Days, which is attended by approximately 2,000 children.

Furthermore, CCAS staff members give presentations to local groups such as the Rotary and Optimists clubs, and provide information on responsible pet ownership to real estate agents. Area Scout troops perform projects for the shelter, such as building the large sign that stands at the street in front of the shelter.

In addition to working with rescue groups as mentioned above, CCAS also partners with CTSPCA to coordinate and operate offsite adoption events, as well as with Nevada Humane Society.

A City representative stated the belief that most citizens are aware of the shelter. Yet although the City has not received many complaints, the general impression held was that the public has a mixed perception of the shelter. It was also expressed that prior City management had not considered the shelter a priority but that the current administration hopes to build a new facility and provide staff training.

One of the participating local veterinarians was of the opinion that the citizens have a somewhat negative perception of the shelter, but that many of them do not understand the challenges of shelter work. The veterinarian acknowledged that the shelter has made good efforts through the various adoption and promotion events, but that it would be great to see an increase in advertising. Also discussed was a Chamber of Commerce volunteer project that would benefit the shelter, in which this veterinarian was participating along with other business people from the community.

The CTSPCA operated a TNR program with managed colonies for feral cats and the shelter recently implemented a similar program that assisted citizens with trapping, neutering, and releasing feral cats on or near their property.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ The City should update its website to include a prominent link to the Animal Services department from its homepage. At the very least, a drop-down box should appear when a person scrolls over the Health and Human Services tab so that they can easily see that Animal Services is under this tab without having to click every department on the list.

- ✓ The City should repair all broken links on the its website and expand the search box entries to include various key search words such as "animal shelter", "animal services", "animal control", "animals", etc.

✓ CCAS should immediately update its Petfinder™ webpage to ensure that the animals listed under lost and found and adoptions are current and assign a volunteer to make regular updates.

✓ CCAS should search its shelter name on Google and other search engines and if possible, remove any outdated pages.

✓ CCAS is to be commended for its various outreach efforts and is encouraged to increase advertising efforts as planned.

✓ Contact local teachers who may be interested in receiving KIND News.[46] This publication, which is produced for elementary, middle, and high school students, could go a long way toward helping to educate children regarding responsible pet ownership and other issues. This periodical is produced by Humane Society Youth, the youth education division of The HSUS, and is a unique national program.[47] This is an excellent way to provide humane education without having to have staff present.

✓ Incorporate information from "An Animal Care and Control Professional's Guide to Classroom Presentations"[48] into the lesson plans currently being used. This booklet provides an outline on how to do effective classroom presentations.

✓ CCAS is fortunate to have the interest and participation of local veterinarians and other animal welfare groups and should continue to cultivate and expand those relationships.

✓ CCAS and CTSPCA are to be applauded for their enlightened approach to the feral cat issue and should continue to work together to have the greatest community impact.

Discussion

Collaboration is crucial in order for animal welfare professionals to succeed in helping the animals. Partnerships and collaborations are likely to be by-products of strategic planning and it makes sense to take an inventory of the individuals and organizations in the community that are best equipped to work on particular issues. Rather than duplicating services, it might be feasible to outsource certain services to another agency through a formal strategic alliance.

Collaborations are obviously dependent upon the ability of all parties to work well together. When disagreements arise, they need to be handled professionally by all parties

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46 http://www.kindnews.org/
47 Humane Society Youth Programs and Materials Catalog 2008
48 An Animal Care and Control Professional's Guide to Classroom Presentations

or the animals and the community will suffer. That is not to say that every demand made by other groups must be accommodated, but a sincere effort must be made to listen to them and see what compromises can be reached. If progress is to be made, all of the groups involved must allow incidents that occurred in the past to remain in the past.

6.0   FIELD SERVICES/ANIMAL CONTROL

6.1   GENERAL OVERVIEW

The City recently combined the departments of Codes Enforcement and Animal Services. There were five staff members who served as ACOs, including the director, who focused primarily on animal related calls and directing all aspects of shelter operations. The other four officer's duties were broken down as follows:

The field supervisor had worked for the city for 20 years, the last five in Codes Enforcement, which continued to be his primary responsibility in addition to overseeing the work of the other field staff. A second staff member who had formerly been a police officer also focused primarily on Codes Enforcement, with a secondary focus on animal issues. The remaining two ACOs focused primarily on animal related issues with a secondary responsibility of Codes Enforcement. All officers had been employed by the shelter a minimum of 2 years and some had been previously employed by the City several years prior. The ACOs responded to approximately 107 calls per month related to Codes Enforcement (some of which were about animal issues). However, The HSUS team did not obtain information as to the number of animal-only related calls.

Based on the field response witnessed and discussions with ACOs during the site visit, The HSUS team learned that the majority of calls responded to in Carson City was for barking complaints and bite cases. A modest number of calls were concerning animals running at large; however, calls concerning cruelty or neglect were rare, and dog fighting was practically non-existent.

The field supervisor handled all pre-trail arraignments, but the actual ACO on the case would go to court if the arraignment resulted in a trial. An HSUS team member accompanied the field supervisor to the city courthouse to handle three pre-trial arraignments. The cases included a domestic violence dispute involving the pet, a dog that attacked another dog and its owner, and a dog running at large. The defendants were quickly arraigned with the ACO providing information as necessary.

6.2   OPERATING POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND FIELD OFFICER TRAINING

Observations

Staff members were not aware of any existing written job descriptions. The HSUS team was informed that new hires were provided with the SOP binder and received on-the-job training by shadowing an experienced officer. The amount of time a new officer spent shadowing was dependent on the level of prior experience. The field supervisor would

monitor the new officer's progress and spot check performance. Officers were cross-trained so they could perform aspects of each other's jobs if necessary.

Each officer kept a binder that contained the agency's SOPs in his/her supply bag, which was always kept in the vehicle. The SOPs covered a wide variety of topics pertaining to animal control and field service duties, but lacked detail and did not explain how to actually handle the various types of calls. Officers would take the printout of the complaint that had been provided by front office staff, write notes on it throughout the course of handling the call and then input those notes into the computer upon returning to the shelter. There was another SOP binder centrally located in the lobby to which all staff had access.

Four of the five ACOs had been certified as euthanasia technicians by the State of Nevada, and all of them had received a combination of training from various organizations including NACA, FEMA, and Emergency Management Institute of United States Department of Homeland Security, as well as public health, peace officer, codes enforcement and other pertinent training.

During the Wednesday meetings, management would discuss SOPs, make changes as necessary, and provide additional training on safety, the use of new equipment, health department issues, and review any incidences of concern and discuss how they could be better handled. ACOs told The HSUS team that when management updated or added an SOP, they were informed the new information was saved on the computer and each officer was responsible for printing the documents and inserting them into his/her binder. Additional ongoing training consisted of staff being encouraged to attend online webinars offered by PetSmart Charities®.

The HSUS team member who was reviewing field services rode along with two of the three ACOs who were available during the site visit and observed their response to calls in the field. One officer handled 3 complaint calls. The first was about a buildup of dog feces in a yard; the second was about the possession of a number of dogs higher than the allowed limit; the third was a barking complaint about a dog who could stick his head through the fence and had been previously running at large. All three calls were quickly resolved as either a misunderstanding between neighbors or with the person being informed of the violation and agreeing to comply. The officer handled each complaint in similar fashion, providing the person with the needed information about the problem and suggestions for resolution, and always treating the person in a calm, respectful, and professional manner.

The next ACO responded to calls using the same procedure and demeanor as the first ACO. It was clear that the officers knew what steps to take for each call, had a working knowledge of the city ordinance, and were committed to treating the public with professionalism.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

- ✓ If the City has job descriptions on file, ensure each CCAS staff member (both field staff and shelter staff) receives a copy that applies to his/her current position. If there are no job descriptions on file or if some do not exist for current positions, create detailed written job descriptions and distribute accordingly.

- ✓ In addition to the Wednesday meetings and PetSmart Charities® webinars, provide targeted hands-on training to new hires, as well as refresher training to all staff. Some examples of training are animal handling, reading dog behavior, and how to handle difficult people. Look for offsite courses provided by HSUS, NACA, American Humane and others, or seek consultants or other professionals to provide training at the shelter.

- ✓ CCAS is to be commended for having written SOPs and for providing copies for officers to carry in the field. Revise SOPs to include more step-by-step detail on how to perform certain duties, particularly on how to handle specific types of field calls.

6.3   COMMUNICATIONS/DISPATCH/ OFFICER ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

<u>**Observations**</u>

There was no SOP that specifically addressed the dispatching of calls or officer communication. There were two staff members who worked in the front office area and handled all client service responsibilities. One was a new staff member who primarily answered the phone and provided visitors with information, and the other served as the front office supervisor, overseeing all activities, but focusing on assisting visitors with adoptions, and managing the foster and volunteer programs. At the time of the site visit, one of the ACOs was on restricted duty due to a physical concern and was also participating in dispatch activities. All staff members were extremely cordial and helpful to visitors and callers.

Staff members answered the incoming calls and entered the details of the complaint into the computer system. They would then generate a print-out of each complaint and place it in the in-box of the appropriate officer. Each officer had established areas of expertise, and front office staff would triage and distribute the calls by importance and/or officer availability. If a particular call was urgent and there were no ACOs in the building, front office staff would call them on their cell phones or the vehicle radio. Staff stated that they were given general training on how to triage calls and stated that an injured animal or dangerous animal running at large would be given priority, but there were no formal

guidelines in place to dictate such decisions   ACOs carried pagers, in addition to their cell phones, for after-hours calls and the sheriff's office could be reached via radio.

The ACOs did not keep a call log, mileage log, or communicate with the shelter upon initiating or completing a call. It was stated that management and other staff were aware of when calls were being handled and by whom, simply through normal daily interactions and paperwork. It was apparent to The HSUS team that communication among staff was generally consistent and the system appeared to work well.

Recommendations

- ✓ Create detailed written SOPs for taking and dispatching calls so that there will be uniformity in the information taken, the way calls are handled and distributed, and the prioritization of calls. Set up a progression of priority calls from most important to least important which will help both the call takers and the ACOs identify emergencies.

- ✓ Provide front office staff with supplementary training on the City ordinance so that they can advise callers of the level of service and/or results that they may expect.

- ✓ Create a list of the questions that callers must answer so that the front office staff can determine the nature and priority of their calls.

- ✓ Maintain statistics on incoming calls based upon geographic area and type of complaint. Management should review these statistics to determine what kind of educational or enforcement programs may benefit specific areas, and then designate ACO teams to spend time in the areas focusing on problem resolution.

- ✓ Require each officer to have a field/truck logbook, which details his/her whereabouts and activities when not at the shelter. This log should have the beginning and ending vehicle mileage for the day, state the nature of the call, its location, travel time, time of arrival and departure, and action taken. Every action or response by an ACO should be accounted for, easily verified, and accessible upon request now and five years from now.

Discussion:

The prompt handling of calls and field response times are critical when dealing with animal control issues. The public does not call for animal services unless there is a problem, usually one that has escalated into what is then perceived to be an emergency. How a dispatcher or an operator responds to a request for service reflects on the credibility and reliability of the agency. SOPs can be critical in ensuring the most professional response, particularly in the case of new hires or when an unfamiliar or difficult situation arises.

Activity logbooks can be one of the most important tools in evaluating productivity and ensuring officer accountability. This type of recordkeeping protects the ACOs as well as the agencies governing them. In addition, management's knowledge of exactly what the ACO does, how long it takes, and the types of calls that are answered can be a valuable tool when making requests for budget, personnel, equipment, or legislative allocations.

6.4   VEHICLES/EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS

Observations

The city had commissioned four vehicles, two animal transport vehicles, one that was a box truck with installed cages and climate control, and one with a camper top that contained free standing cages in the back and a swamp cooler, and two pickup trucks. A fifth pickup truck was being used at the time of the site visit and was on loan from the city, mostly for the purpose of deer carcass removal. All vehicles had only the city's emblem on the doors and nothing else to designate them as animal services.

The City's mechanics performed monthly maintenance on all of the shelter's vehicles. If a vehicle had a specific problem outside of the monthly schedule, staff had to send a request for approval prior to the vehicle being serviced However, emergencies, such as a vehicle breaking down during a call were addressed immediately.

Although the interiors were somewhat cluttered, The HSUS team was pleased to see that all vehicles were adequately stocked with the supplies and equipment necessary for the ACOs to safely and humanely perform their duties. Supplies included:

- SOP binder, maps, phone books and other reference materials
- Latex gloves
- Towels
- Food
- Water
- Chalk markers
- Measuring tape
- Scissors
- Plastic bags
- First aid kit

Most equipment was in good working order, (except as noted below) and included:

- Fire extinguishers, all serviced
- Bite gloves
- Flashlight (one not working)
- Leashes

- Catchpoles, MDC Exports, Ltd. brand (some were difficult to operate)
- Snappy snare
- Nets (one with holes)
- Cat graspers (need to replace rubber coating)
- Snake tongs
- Snake bag

Certain trucks contained miscellaneous supplies as follows:

- Stretcher
- Stethoscope
- Shovel
- Bolt cutters
- Cooler for biohazard materials
- Litter pans and litter
- Reflector vest
- Paint
- Masks

As stated previously, all ACOs carried bags in their trucks which contained, among other items:

- SOP binder
- Digital camera
- Flashlight
- Microchip scanner
- Pepper spray

A locker in the euthanasia/procedure room contained chemical capture equipment, but the field supervisor reported that its use was seldom necessary.

All ACOs wore a uniform consisting of one of two styles of a City- issued logo shirt with jeans and sturdy footwear of the staff member's choice. Staff members purchased their own jeans and footwear. The staff who served primarily as codes officers wore a grey shirt and the ACOs wore a blue shirt. The field supervisor informed The HSUS team that the City had approved the purchase of new polo shirts of the same style for all officers, regardless of area of concentration.

Recommendations

- ✓ Display the CCAS name, phone number, physical address, and web site address prominently on both sides and the rear of each vehicle. Printed messages such as "Spay or Neuter Your Pet" or "Report Cruelty" can improve the department's public image and the delivery of its philosophy.

- ✓ CCAS is to be commended for providing the ACOs with a variety of supplies and equipment to help them safely and humanely perform their job duties. De-clutter and organize the interior of all vehicles so that items can be easily located.

- ✓ Routinely inspect, repair, or replace any damaged or ill-functioning equipment.

- ✓ Consider using animal control poles designed by The Ketch All Company [49] or Animal Care Equipment & Services, Inc. (ACES) [50] as they are more operator-friendly than the ones currently being used.

6.5 EMERGENCIES/AFTER HOURS/LAW ENFORCEMENT BACKUP AND RELATIONS

<u>Observations</u>

The HSUS team observed a phone number on the entrance gate for members of the public to call after- hours or in case of emergency. Officers rotated on call duty and someone was on call every day, providing 24-hour, seven-day-a week coverage. The shelter staff described a good working relationship with other city departments and stated that the sheriff's department would readily respond to a call if they were unavailable or back them up on a call if warranted.

The shelter staff also described good relationships with a number of local veterinarians, but worked most often with the local emergency veterinary clinic, Lone Mountain Veterinary Hospital, and Sierra Veterinary Hospital. Officers would bring any injured or severely sick animals, either from the field or from the shelter, to these facilities whenever necessary.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Create written SOPs for all aspects of emergency/after-hours procedures. The SOPs should include an emergency call-out list, which specifically details which calls are considered an emergency. This list should also be provided to police dispatch so they will know which calls are considered emergencies when answering animal-related calls.

- ✓ The HSUS team applauds CCAS for providing around the clock service to its citizens. Assess the current work schedules and make adjustments if necessary to ensure flexibility and quick response, as well as reduced overtime costs and staff burnout.

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49 http://www.ketch-all.com
50 http://www.animal-care.com

✓ Continue to maintain the good working relationships with other departments and local veterinarians.

6.6 FORMS/RECORDKEEPING

<u>Observations</u>

Until approximately two to three weeks prior to the site visit, CCAS had been using ARK software, but had switched to Pet Point. Some paper records were still being used, although the majority of data was being entered into the computer system. Information collected and recorded onto paper forms and into Pet Point was basic, and the staff had not yet begun running any statistical reports.

Citations and related details on bite cases, other types of animal cases and Codes Enforcement cases were kept in hard copy case folders and manually written into a log book. One of the ACOs was in charge of scanning the hard copy forms onto the computer's C drive. Because the use of Pet Point was so new, staff was unsure whether this type of information was able to be entered into the system.

Another ACO tracked spay/neuter compliance using a hard copy file folder, as staff had not yet computerized that information. Staff estimated a 35% loss in compliance.

Staff previously kept licensing information on the ARK software, but had transferred it to the Pet Point system, from which they generated reminder postcards for adopted animals.

<u>Recommendations</u>

✓ Immediately begin using the Pet Point system to its fullest capacity to minimize paperwork, increase effectiveness, and generate valuable statistics. Provide training to all staff by seeking assistance from Pet Point or neighboring facilities that are successfully using the software.

6.7 ANIMAL HANDLING

<u>Observations</u>

The HSUS Team did not witness any ACOs handling animals in the field. CCAS had three SOPs titled *Dog & Cat Impound*, *Stray Dogs*, and *Handling Animals* that addressed the handling of animals at the shelter and in the field. All three listed various types of equipment and emphasized skilled and gentle restraint techniques, but offered minimal detail. Officers were trained on how to use any new animal handling equipment in the Wednesday morning meetings.

The overall impression given by the ACOs was one of caring and compassion and a commitment to always handle animals as humanely and safely as possible. However, the team was concerned to observe a trap containing a cat in the back of one of the vehicles that had not been covered with a towel or blanket to minimize the cat's stress, as well as the other previously mentioned incidences of cats waiting in uncovered traps.

Recommendations

- ✓ Develop detailed, written SOPs for animal handling to clarify expectations.

- ✓ Require training for CCAS staff and volunteers. This should include, but not be limited to animal handling during intake, cleaning procedures, euthanasia, and animal transport.[51] Train staff to read animal body language and to recognize signs of stress with the goal of balancing staff safety and animal well-being when transporting and handling animals.

- ✓ The HSUS, National Animal Control Association (NACA)[52], American Humane Association (AHA)[53], and other national and local groups offer animal-handling and restraint seminars, textbooks, and videotapes. Of note, AHA offers a Shelter Operations School (SOS) and SOS for Managers, which cover the essential aspects of animal sheltering operations, including animal handling and sanitation and disease control.

- ✓ Management must continually observe and coach staff to optimize handling techniques.

Discussion

Some areas of animal handling and restraint training may seem elementary—especially for "seasoned" staff—but if staff has not been provided with adequate information and/or formal training relating to basic concepts, they will not recognize the underlying reasons for correct animal-handling techniques and procedures. Because of the staff's lack of awareness of basic principles, inappropriate techniques will be passed on from one employee generation to the next. The same might be said for many, if not all, aspects of a modern animal care and control program. Staff needs to know not only the right techniques but also the rationales behind them.

It is important to note that an animal handler's most important tool cannot be found in any catalog. By far, the greatest asset to animal-handling staff is knowledge. Personnel trained in animal behavior and humane handling can ensure that they are handling animals—and employing equipment—in the safest, most humane manner possible. To

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51 http://site.4act.com/
52 http://www.nacanet.org/
53 http://www.americanhumane.org/

make quick assessments, staff must be able to accurately interpret a situation (including an animal's behavior) and choose an appropriate response within minutes, often seconds. The more humane a staff member's restraint or capture technique, the more efficient and effective that staff member will be.

6.8   ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE REVIEW AND LICENSING

<u>Observations</u>

The City ordinance was comprehensive and included fundamentals such as:

- vaccinations & licensing for dogs and cats

- nuisance complaints

- cruelty violations

- sale and use of animals

It had been updated in 1994 and 2009 and the more recent revisions included a definition for vicious or dangerous dogs that was not breed-specific and citations for a first bite offense. It also addressed dog leash laws and the keeping of chickens. Finally, it included an amendment on bears, which was a cooperative effort among Carson City, Washoe County and Douglas County. In general, most staff appeared to have a working knowledge of the ordinance as it pertained to their job responsibilities.

Links to the municipal codes were located prominently on the web sites of both the City and CCAS.

When responding to calls, ACOs educated citizens about the ordinance and the SOPs contained notices that listed synopses of pertinent ordinance sections to be posted by officers when the citizen was not at home.

An animal licensing program was in place for dogs that included a differential for intact vs. sterilized dogs. At no time during the site visit when responding to the nuisance barking calls did an officer request to see current license information nor did officers canvas neighborhoods for compliance.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- ✓ Review ordinances yearly to gauge effectiveness of the animal control program and to ensure that the mission of creating safe neighborhoods for both people and pets are being met.

✓ Contact The HSUS for examples of progressive animal-related ordinances that have been implemented in other areas.

✓ Promote the agencies' web site as a source of information about animal control ordinances.

✓ Provide ACOs with educational information for distribution to the public. The HSUS can provide pamphlets describing how to live humanely with wildlife neighbors and alternatives to trapping; brochures about barking dogs, understanding why they are barking, and solving barking issues in a humane manner; information on low cost spaying and neutering, proper shelter, and humane restraining techniques. The ACOs should always hand out a synopsis of local animal control laws as well as pertinent state cruelty laws.

✓ Encourage the sterilization and licensing of pets during every public encounter.

✓ Include a provision that address chaining and tethering of dogs. [54] Review the New Mexico Department of Public Safety's, "The Public Safety and Humane Implications of Persistently Tethering Domestic Dogs" [55] published earlier this year for more detailed tethering laws and information on the effects of long-term tethering.

✓ Require mandatory microchipping for all animals reclaimed or adopted from CCAS. An additional fee should be charged.

Discussion

An effective licensing program serves several different functions. First, it is an invaluable tool in the return of lost or stolen dogs and cats. Secondly, it provides visual proof that an animal has been vaccinated against rabies. Third, it is a reasonable method of raising funds for the department. Government-operated animal care and control agencies, like CCAS, are funded by the taxpayers. Around 40% of those taxpayers do not have a dog or cat.[56] Therefore, it is certainly fair to have dog and cat caregivers provide a more proportionate share of the expense of an animal services program.

Mandatory animal registration (licensing) programs are commonly one of the most mismanaged programs of local governments across the United States. They are inherently set up to fail from the beginning because their purpose is often misunderstood and promotion is nonexistent or limited.

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54 http://www.humanesociety.org/chaining
55 http://www.apnm.org/campaigns/chaining/Final_DPS_Tethering_Study.pdf
56 American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) *U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook* (2007 Edition)

Mandatory registration serves eight functions:

- As a lost pet recovery service

- As a statistical tool

- Ensures rabies vaccinations

- As a revenue source

- As cat and dog control

- Promotes spaying and neutering

- Helps ensure compliance with city ordinances

- Lowers the burden for non cat/dog owning tax payers

There are many local governments that believe animal registration programs should be expected to generate a significant portion of the animal control agency's budget. However, that would be the equivalent of saying that revenue from police citations should underwrite the cost of the police department—a totally erroneous assumption. Actually, the biggest benefits of a well run registration program are that animals are identified and hopefully, with the right fee structure, the majority are sterilized. This can save an animal control agency and taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars in reduced response to citizen complaints, reduced numbers of animals impounded, and reduced sheltering costs. It also expedites the process of getting a lost animal with an identification tag on back to his owner, with a citation when necessary, instead of costly impoundment, transport and sheltering.[57, 58, 59]

An effective registration program encourages the public to comply because they get preferential service if their animal is found by animal control. Mandatory registration is often more successful when promoted as a pet protection service rather than a licensing tax. [60]Several communities will return a registered animal running at large to his home, free of charge for the first violation as a benefit of complying with pet registration laws. However, a registration program must be actively enforced or compliance will be low. Animal registration programs should be managed by the agencies that benefit from them. Programs operated by government tax collector offices, water departments, and police departments are not usually successful.

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57 *NACA News*, "Mo' Licenses Mo' Fees Mo Money!?," September–October 2003
58 *NACA News*, "Licensing: The Good, the Bad, the Money," September–October 2003
59 *NACA News*, "Licensing Makes Great Cents"
60
http://content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Animal+and+Bylaw+Services/Animal+Services/Licensing+Your+Pets/Licensing+Your+Pets.htm

6.9   WILDLIFE ISSUES

Observations

Staff occasionally attempted to educate people who called with nuisance wildlife complaints, but most often suggested they purchase humane traps at the local store or sometimes loaned traps to them with a deposit.

ACOs did not go into the field to trap animals, but they picked up animals who had already been trapped. They also demonstrated how to set a trap and gave general advice about checking it regularly and not leaving the animal in it for long periods, but supplied no written information. In some cases staff referred to a company that handled nuisance wildlife, but they had little knowledge of what methods the company used and stated they assumed those methods were lethal.

Wild animals reported to be handled in the field consisted of dead deer, injured birds, rabbits, and injured baby deer. Police officers were called to shoot injured adult deer and staff brought dead deer to the animal area at the landfill. They immediately transferred injured wildlife, such as birds, rabbits, or baby deer to a local rehabilitator.

Staff stated that most wildlife that was trapped and brought to the shelter was relocated; raccoons and skunks were euthanized.

Recommendations

- ✓ Expand the written SOPs to include all aspects of capturing, transporting, temporarily housing, and euthanizing native species of wildlife. Include:

    - ➢ Officer and animal safety
    - ➢ Wildlife handling and use of equipment
    - ➢ Criteria used for the determination of euthanasia vs. relocation (especially raccoons and bats)
    - ➢ Exclusion methods for nuisance wildlife
    - ➢ List of common wildlife, diseases that affect them and how to recognize their presence[61]

- ✓ Discontinue suggesting trapping and picking up a trapped animal who is not causing damage to property, is not sick or injured, is not confined to an area from which it cannot escape, and is not posing an immediate health or safety threat. Provide education on co-existing with, either via telephone, email or hard copy written materials.

- ✓ Immediately discontinue referring nuisance wildlife calls to companies that offer

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61 http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/a_closer_look_at_wildlife/

wildlife removal services until it can be confirmed that they use humane, non-lethal methods. [62]

✓ If a wild animal must be trapped and relocated, a trained professional should determine if the site and conditions are appropriate for release because relocating wild animals can be a death sentence for them. If CCAS continues to pick up trapped animals, then a fee should be charged for this service. [63]

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62 http://www.humanesociety.org/humanewildlifeservices
63 http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/wild_neighbors_book.html