

California Council of Companion Animal Advocates

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In 1991, the California Council of Companion Animal Advocates (CCCAA) was formed based on a recommendation of participants attending the Symposium of Pet Overpopulation held at the University of California at Davis in December of that year. During the council's short history it has examined and researched numerous approaches and studies relating to the reduction of dog and cat overpopulation, endorsed state legislation requiring outdoor cats to be sterilized, and staged Symposium II in December 1993.

Symposium II was divided into five discussion areas:

- (1) **Research Projects and Approaches:** Presentations were made on Marin Humane Society's adoption study, California Department of Public Health shelter survey, and an upcoming state study.
- (2) **Regulatory and Legislative Efforts:** Presentations were given on statewide cat licensing efforts, the Santa Rosa law requiring outdoor cats to be spayed/neutered (in which the pending California bill is modeled after), and federal legislation requiring rental units to allow seniors to have companion animals.
- (3) **Funding Sources:** Presentations were given on state, county, and city funding, cat licensing, and pet product company funding.
- (4) **Early-Age Spay and Neuter Programs.**
- (5) **Local Efforts:** Presentations were made by from 15 participants.

The symposium participants were divided into five (orange, yellow, green, red and blue) breakout groups with the responsibility to answer questions such as the following: Should limits on the number of dogs and cats per household be removed? Should cats be licensed? Should we have a standardized shelter data reporting system state-wide? Should we use pet product taxes and licensing surcharges to fund pursuits to end overpopulation?

Organizations, special councils and committees, and agencies interested in participating in Symposium III to be held in December 1995 please contact the CCCAA at the above address.

SUMMATION - POP II

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF COMPANION ANIMAL ADVOCATES

DECEMBER 4, 1993

John Hamil, DVM
Past President, CVMA

As you know the participation of organized veterinary medicine in efforts of this type has for many reasons been a long time coming. My presence here today is another in a series of events that evidences a dramatic change in the attitudes of the many groups which contribute to and are trying to solve the problems of irresponsible animal ownership which contribute to the massive euthanasia of companion animals in America.

Even the most superficial examination of euthanasia statistics shows that 50 years of conscientious, dedicated, well intentioned effort on the part of humane societies, animal rights groups, veterinarians, animal control agencies, purebred dog and cat fanciers, and the pet store industry has been unsuccessful in solving the multifaceted problem of companion animal overpopulation.

Although there have been reductions in the numbers of dogs impounded and euthanized, we all recognize the alarming increase in the number of homeless cats. The staggering number of unwanted animals is overwhelming to those individuals and agencies which deal with the daily reality of eliminating these reminders of society's irresponsible attitudes toward animals.

In the last two years the leadership of our Companion Animal Council has recognized the failure of our separate group efforts in resolving the dilemma. This realization has led to increased communication and cooperation among our previously alienated groups.

As an illustration of the gradual transition that has occurred for many of us, let me take the liberty of relating my personal odyssey. Twenty-five years ago as a naive young practitioner, I did not understand why veterinarians had such a poor relationship with animal shelters, humane societies, pet stores, and dog and cat breeders. It was quickly explained that puppies and kittens from the shelter were often sick and/or had behavioral problems, that all efforts to work with "humaniacs" were destined for acrimony and failure, that doing "pet assistance" work was unethical, that puppies and kittens from pet stores were only marginally better than those from the shelter, that working with pet stores was unprofessional, and that breeders all want to make the diagnosis, prescribe the treatment, set the amount of the fee, and rarely paid that. While these commonly held views were all proven to be false, I did receive a terrific internship in medicine, surgery, client relations, and the value of participation in organized veterinary medicine.

When I finally bought my own hospital, my interest in reproductive medicine and marriage to (can you believe it) a dog breeder! led to speaking engagements with dog clubs, working as a show veterinarian and a significant part of my practice devoted to show dogs. My colleagues thought I was crazy, but I knew that responsible breeders, and there are a lot of them, are truly interested in the improvement of their breeds and, therefore, make great clients.

Through these contacts we became involved in breed rescue of not only our breed, Bloodhounds, but many other breeds as well. Through our activity in breed rescue, we made contact with animal shelters and humane groups who, although initially suspicious of our motivation, were impressed with the responsible disposition of these animals. All dogs are examined for physical and temperament problems, vaccinated, and neutered before placement in rigorously screened homes. These contacts helped us understand the magnitude of the problem of surplus animals, as well as the attitudes of the people forced to deal with this travesty on a daily basis.

These contacts led to years of serving on the Orange County Animal Shelter Advisory Board where we learned that it was possible for veterinarians, breeders, and humane advocates to work with animal control to improve animal welfare.

Coincidentally, my years of working in organized veterinary medicine led to an invitation to speak to a national groomers' meeting about the positive and negative aspects of licensure. At this meeting I was introduced to a member of the Western World Pet Supply Association. This subsequently led to a reintroduction to the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council with whom the CVMA had struggled in a battle with humane advocates and RDOGS over pet store legislation for several years. Fortunately, these groups were finally able to sit down together and work out a compromise that has resulted in significant improvement in the laws that pertain to the welfare of pet shop puppies and kittens.

In these interactions with the leadership of each of the other pet industries and advocacy groups, we found that each group was willing to discuss their contributions to this problem. They also recognized their inability to solve the problem unilaterally and, most importantly, there was a genuine desire to work with other groups in educating each other about differing goals, perspectives and methods.

The candor of these discussions led CVMA leadership to recognize the existence of a spirit of concern and dedication that might allow these groups to set aside old enmities in an effort at negotiation and compromise in searching for a cooperative solution.

Two days ago the Council received facilitation training from Jan Elster. This helped each of us to understand the four stages of group development and how it applies to our coalition.

STAGE I: STORMING

Two years ago when we entered the meeting room for the first session of the first symposium on pet overpopulation (POP I), there was a mixture of curiosity, excitement and anxiety which led to palpable tension among the participants. Most of us entered the room cautiously, our eyes searching for a familiar face and a group with whom we felt comfortable. We were all concerned about questions about: intimacy, trust, friends, cliques, power, control and influence. Personally, I had a feeling of trepidation in anticipation of a meeting that could degenerate into an uncontrollable "free for all."

Instead, as many of you experienced, an amazing combination of candor and cooperation developed and we entered STAGE II: FORMING, where we learned to answer questions about: control, authority, inclusion, mutual respect, and even affection.

By the end of the meeting we passed through STAGE III: NORMING. Here we answered questions about interdependence, decision making, and purpose. We developed a feeling of camaraderie and a sense of shared experience and mutuality of interest which led to STAGE IV: PERFORMING. We decided we could actually accomplish something by working together and founded the California Council of Companion Animal Advocates!

It is important to recognize this as a historical event that will have little significance unless it leads to effective action. POP I and the formation of the Council was the gateway to a long and difficult journey. In order to be successful the Council needed to provide farsighted, open-minded, nurturing and brave leadership. Like any newborn the Council must continually grow and mature, change and adapt without losing sight of the goal.

I believe that is exactly what is happening. The Council has, in the last two years, also experienced the four stages of group development and as Dr. Stockner reported:

The Council has met frequently over the last two years and hopes to find funding for Dr. Philip Kass' shelter survey to identify the societal failures that lead to companion animal overpopulation.

This group has also stimulated support for early spay and neuter by CVMA, AVMA, AHA, AKC and, recently, HSUS.

They have stimulated communication among the microchip companies and informed them of our demand for the development of a universal reader.

They have supported the Mahoney Bill in Congress, to insure that seniors in federally assisted housing will be able to have a pet.

They helped carry legislation requiring animals adopted from the shelter to be neutered within sixty days, which passed both houses of the legislature only to be vetoed by the Governor. We have since drafted shelter animal sterilization legislation including an enforceable spay/neuter contract.

The Council is co-sponsor of AB 302, requiring free roaming cats to be neutered.

The Council also organized this symposium, POP II.

Imaginative ideas like these can make a difference when combined with cooperative effort to educate and mobilize the public. This can be successful with efforts of dedicated people like yourselves.

This symposium has rapidly passed through stages, I, II and most of III. But what is our purpose? How should it be defined?

I think most of us would agree that our purpose, our ultimate goal, is to end companion animal overpopulation, which can be defined as no longer killing healthy, personable, or even treatable or correctable, companion animals for the lack of a good home.

If we can accept that definition of purpose it is time for STAGE IV - PERFORMING.

We have all enjoyed meeting and sharing our mutual goals and concerns. We have experienced the glow of self-congratulation at accomplishing something unique and important in committing to working together in an effort to end companion animal overpopulation. But that is not an end, but rather a beginning...it is time for action!

We must continue to educate our constituents about the value of shared endeavor, but we must accept a lack of absolute consensus and move forward.

There are certain individuals and groups whose libertarian philosophy will lead them to both seek incentives for voluntary compliance and to resist attempts at group and governmental regulation. This is understandable and we should wish them well and learn from their experiences.

Unfortunately, there will be some individuals in each of our organizations who will always support the *status quo*. They are secure, comfortable and pleased to know who their "enemies" are, and they are confused and insecure when their carefully memorized definitions of other groups no longer seem to apply to an ever changing world.

There will be some veterinarians who will persist in the attitude that I faced 2 1/2 decades ago.

There will be some pet stores who only see their animals as livestock and product to be sold.

There will be some breeders who will persist in trying to build a better dog or cat and discard their pet quality animals along the way.

There will be some jurisdictions who fail to value animals and fail to support animal control adequately.

And there will be some local and national humane organizations who have successful fund raising strategies that are misleading and divisive. But they will not abandon them because they have a "greater vision" and they need more money.

Luckily, they will all be in the decided minority. We must identify and isolate them in the minds of the public and our lawmakers. We must not be distracted. We must have faith in each other. We must recognize our interdependence. We must keep our eyes on the goal. We must remember that, although we may not agree in every detail, we are all interested in animal welfare: humane advocates, animal rightists, veterinarians, pet owners, animal control officers, pet store owners, and purebred dog and cat fanciers alike. If we will listen to each other, try to understand our different perspectives, and make decisions based on what is best for the animals, I am convinced we can use the ideas brought forward here to find long-term solutions to this national disgrace.

Thank you.

CALIFORNIA SHELTERING AGENCIES SURVEY, 1991

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Materials and Methods

A standardized questionnaire was completed by 216 animal control agencies and humane societies actively involved in sheltering dogs and cats in California. Facilities were identified using mailing lists maintained by the State Humane Association and the California Association of Animal Control Directors.

Results

Agencies from 56 of 58 California counties completed the questionnaire. The responding agencies ranged in size from a small town police department serving a population of 362, to a large county animal control agency serving a population of over 2,900,000. The responding agencies reported annual budgets ranging from \$100 to \$11,800,000 with a mean of \$615,461.

The number of dogs impounded by the 216 agencies in 1991 ranged from 0 to over 46,000 (an average of 2,343 per agency). A total of 506,078 dogs were impounded by the responding agencies. 288,078 or 56.9% of all impounded dogs were euthanized. Local agencies reported euthanizing an average of 39% of dogs impounded in their facility. Overall, twenty percent (101,987) of the dogs impounded were adopted. Eighteen percent (92,345) of the impounded dogs were reclaimed by their owners.

A total of 484,173 cats were impounded by the 216 responding agencies in 1991. This number ranged from 0 to over 40,000 with an average of 2,242 cats impounded per agency. A total of 391,435 cats (80.8% of all impounded cats) were euthanized. Local agencies reported euthanizing an average of 52% of cats impounded in their facility. 65,770 (13.6% of total impounds) cats were adopted from the shelters in 1991. Only 8,165 (1.6%) of all impounded cats were redeemed by their owners.

Sixty-two agencies reported having a spay and neuter program through the shelter. Twenty-eight participating agencies reported doing 11,133 dog and 15,752 cat spay surgeries in 1991. However, these agencies reported doing a total of only 69 canine and 18 feline castrations for the same period.

**DOGS AND CATS IMPOUNDED AND DISPOSITIONS
216 SHELTERING AGENCIES, CALIFORNIA, 1991**

	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANIZED	REDEEMED	ADOPTED
DOG	506,000	288,000	92,000	102,000
CAT	484,000	391,000	8,000	66,000
TOTAL	990,000	679,000	100,000	168,000

* Impounds do not equal dispositions due to animals on hand on January 1, 1991 and animal inventory carryover into 1992. Local agency accounting errors are also possible.

ABSTRACT

Philip Kass

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In the last two years great strides have been made in the search for a deeper understanding of the pet overpopulation problem. Through the diligent efforts and generous contributions of a number of individuals, a workshop was held in Minneapolis in 1992 that brought together individuals with expertise in animal welfare, species and breed promotion, animal control, and studying problems in these populations. The recommendations of this workshop were considered valuable enough to bring together again almost all the same individuals in Chicago later that year. Out of this meeting originated a national council that would in part promote the study of the pet overpopulation issue, with the goal of identifying strategies that would help to control the problem of euthanasia of unwanted pets. In addition, a group of epidemiologists at this meeting began formulating a multi-faceted scientific study of the overpopulation problem that would involve the coordination of a number of study centers around the country. This study was further developed at a recent meeting held in 1993 in Colorado, and involves three parts. These three parts include surveying animal shelters across the country to develop an accurate understanding of the magnitude of the problem; surveying pet owners across the United States to examine the dynamics of pet acquisition and relinquishment over the course of one year; and studying characteristics of people relinquishing their pets to animal control facilities (as well as characteristics of the pets). Studying the latter part will involve the coordinated efforts of researchers at seven regional centers across the country, and each center has the option of developing additional studies that can interleaf with the national study. This brief talk will highlight some of the main points of the national study as well as at least one additional component we plan to accomplish in California in tandem with the national study.

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