

Too Many Animals



Statistics never tell the whole story. However, in this case they are important. While the numbers can vary, they serve to point out the problem of too many pets and not enough homes for them. Just look at a few facts:

- Every day there are more than 10,000 people born in the United States. During that same 24-hour period, there are more 50,000 puppies and kittens born.
- One female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in just seven years.
- One female dog and her offspring can produce 67,000 dogs in six years.
- An estimated 65 million cats roaming the United States without homes.
- Though estimates vary, it's felt that as many as 10 million pets, maybe more, are euthanized in the United States each year. This does not take into account the numbers that are abandoned and die alone, are victims of disease, starvation, or are hit by cars.

These are frightening numbers because they describe a problem that seems to have no solution. If there are 10,000 people born in the country each day, yet 50,000 dogs and cats born during that same 24-hour period, how can there possibly be homes for all of them? If you have a dog or cat and give it a healthy, happy home, think about how lucky that animal is. Your pet has a family to love it, good food to eat, a warm place to sleep, and will be treated by a veterinarian if it gets sick.

Unwanted animals do not have this kind of life. Some are struggling to survive on the streets or in the woods. Others are living in cages at shelters, hoping someone will adopt them. When some shelters or pounds begin to overflow, some animals have to go. That's when they must be euthanized. It's a sad but true fact.

There are also, however, no-kill shelters. They do not euthanize dogs or cats. These shelters are committed to keeping each animal alive until a good home is found. However, no kill shelters have limits. If there is no more room, they must refuse to take more animals in. Many of those animals are then taken to kill shelters. It's a circle that sometimes seems unbreakable.

The Necessity of Spaying and Neutering

Spaying and neutering are surgical procedures that prevent males from siring litters and females from becoming pregnant. For some reason, however, many pet owners are reluctant to have their animals spayed and neutered. Men sometimes think it's cruel to neuter a male dog. Others think females should have

the joy of raising one litter or kittens or pups. Some people feel their children should see the miracle of birth through their pets, while others feel they can make a money by continually breeding their female dogs and selling the pups.

People are reluctant to spay and neuter for still other reasons. Many of these are myths, untruths that have been passed down for years. For example, some think a dog won't be a good watchdog if it is spayed or neutered. This is simply not true. A good watchdog will always be a good watchdog. Another claim is that a dog will become fat and lazy after being spayed or neutered. While some animals do tend to put on some weight, increased exercise and less food will keep them in fine condition.

Still other reasons are offered for not spaying and neutering. None of the arguments hold up. The only reason not to spay or neuter a pet is if you and your family intend to become reputable breeders who will maintain the best standards of the breed with intelligent mating. Otherwise, there is no other reason for anyone owning a family pet or pets not to have each one spayed and neutered. Just that one act alone would greatly reduce the numbers of unwanted animals living in shelters or being euthanized each year.

