

These are discussion items – food for thought - as a follow-up to the July meetings of the pet overpopulation study. It appears that our principal goals are going to be:

- population control by birth control rather than death control
- responsible ownership
- responsible breeding
- better use of taxpayer money
- consensus-building

The following is a massive outline to winnow down to the best and most urgent.

But to do so, let's be thorough. The devil is in the details.

Share your thoughts (with Don and Lillian, or we will broadcast them to the entire group if you prefer or permit).

If you object to the ideas, tell us why.

If you see them as ways to implement pet overpopulation controls efficaciously, say so.

If you have a different or modified approach, let us know what it is.

If we omitted something, tell us.

You and your ideas are needed.

See what you can contribute in terms of ideas and effort/time, preferably both.

The topics are:

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1. form/focus of organization

coalition?

there may well be far more here than this coalition can manage, or there may not; what do you think?

focus on a single big idea?
prefer a multi-faceted program?
complete overhaul?

what form do you want the organization to take?

it is likely that this could be a coalition without being a 501c3

what is the advantage either way?

if this becomes a coalition, or even if not, it needs to be state-wide and needs to have people responsible for various parts of the state; would you be able to lead a region?

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2. legislation – existing

enforce legislation which requires every dog/cat adopted (from public pound or from any other animal welfare group) to be sterile within 30 days of adoption

- A. charge for s/n at time of adoption and provide certificate for getting s/n done by own vet?
- B. follow up by letter 2 weeks after adoption with reminder (if notice of s/n has not been returned to adoption group within 2 weeks)?
- C. if no verification at 30 days that pet now sterile, registered letter indicating must comply or face penalties?
- D. at 45 days, ACO or Sheriff follows up in person; impound? issue summons? s/n?

NOTE: penalties for failure to s/n increased substantially; see p. 13

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3. legislation – potential initiatives

A. s/n

- (1) low cost available, using means test; if can't afford, free?
- (2) each county must have mobile clinic out on regular schedule?
- (3) vets get property tax credit or business license credit in exchange for pro-bono work?
- (4) counties without vets contract with closest county with vet?
- (5) vets can subcontract pro bono s/n work to rescue groups or volunteers
- (6) rent emergency clinics so they are open during business day to do s/n?

staffed by volunteer vets and staff, or some staff of the emergency clinic?

emergency clinics get property tax credit or business license credit in exchange if they undertake themselves?

or get a portion of s/n fees?
- (7) address birth control by requiring that some percentage of a jurisdiction's budget for animal control be dedicated to s/n in 2005, with increases thereafter until population balance is achieved?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.);

B. cats – domestic/owned and ferals

- (1) income tax refund check-off specifically for cats?
- (2) require jurisdictions to provide for cats, but in a place separate from the facility for dogs?
- (3) cats to be s/n when adopted (no distinction between dogs and cats in this regard?)
- (4) cats to be licensed? cost?
- (5) make cat-declawing illegal?
- (6) expand TNR programs to cover the state?
- (7) mobile s/n clinics

3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.);

C. pounds and shelters

(1) inspections

- (a) provide express statutory requirement to inspect?
- (b) public or private, to be inspected twice annually?
- (c) administrative regulations and protocols for inspection?
- (d) civil enforcement authority to State Vet?
- (e) mandatory pass/fail-fine
- (f) inspection report certified by inspector under penalty of perjury?
- (g) establish pound/shelter compliance, then make self-policing with surprise follow-up inspections; also
civilian inspections?
after hours/pre-opening inspections by state or by volunteers?
- (h) inspection audits: random inspection of pound day after report filed report to see whether report matches conditions
- (i) if inspection unsatisfactory upon re-inspection or surprise follow-up, operation of public pound must be passed to turnaround group paid by deficient pound; deficient pound's political jurisdiction must allocate remediation funds immediately
- (j) those performing euthanasia to be certified and maintain current certification or will not be allowed to perform

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

C. pounds/shelters (cont.):

(2) reporting

(a) new standards

all use same form; form redesigned?

all done on line?

all done monthly and immediately available to public?

(b) identify source/reason for every dog/cat entering the system

mandatory chipping for strays?

mandatory s/n for dog/cat picked up as stray?

if owner give-up, get source of pet and reasons for give-up?

all identified by breed to establish purebred population?

photo of pet within 4 hours of receipt; photo to be put on Petfinders within 24 hours?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

C. pounds/shelters (cont.):

(3) recast the pounds

(a) animal control facilities see themselves as “pounds” for unwanted companion animals which are earmarked for death?

(b) change labels to “previously owned”, “re-conditioned”?
give warranty?

(c) compete with pet stores?

(d) market the pets?

socialization volunteers?

grooming volunteers?

adoption days on site, at schools/churches?

adoption rooms/special of the week? free license or s/n?

corporate sponsorship?

commission to pet stores selling shelter/pound animals?

community service from courts; outreach to schools?

(e) charge for owner give-ups?

(f) refuse to do owner-requested euthanasia? if owner agrees,
impound animal, send it to vet for euth., and bill owner?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

D. eliminate gas chambers

- (1) alternatives? is lethal injection the only alternative?
- (2) could euthanasia be contracted?
- (3) vet schools to send trainees around the state to euth. or to train?
- (4) vet schools cover counties that have no vets
- (5) pro-bono for local vets
- (6) mobile euth. vans?
- (7) if jurisdiction resists, require elected official of that jurisdiction witness a gas chamber euthanasia?

3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

E. BYB (back yard breeders)

- (1) need business and breeder license?
- (2) amnesty for past years?
- (3) record keeping requirements?
- (4) breeder premises inspections?
- (5) s/n prior to adoption unless breeder license or other exemption?
- (6) home inspection 30 days after animal adopted?
- (7) dogs/cats chipped or tattooed; must be identifiable prior to leaving breeder site?
- (8) advertising (papers, TV/radio, internet) requires that breeder-business license number be displayed?
- (9) tax to be collected on sales made by VA breeders in or out of state?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

F. pet shops – retail establishments

- (1) for all companion animals or only dogs and cats?
- (2) record keeping requirements
 - (a) buyer identified with name, address, photo, serial # of pet?
 - (b) no sale possible without rabies and license?
 - (c) home inspection follow-up within 30 days? by?
 - (d) pet must be sterilized prior to sale unless breeder license or other recognized exemption?
- (3) penalties for failure to keep records or for reporting falsely?
- (4) pet warranty?

3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

G. public functions/people

(1) ACO training/career path

(a) what is or should be ACO certification?

(b) ACO compensation adequate?

(c) # of ACOs in Virginia sufficient?

(d) move out of animal control into first available deputy position after 3 years as ACO?

or option to stay as ACO and gain grade or time in grade?

(2) sheriff's deputies

to check licenses (animal and business), rabies tags and kennels if at premises for other reasons anyway?

(3) humane investigators

(a) worthwhile? why?

(b) what are the qualifications?

(c) how is one certified?

(d) what legislation needs to be repealed/enacted to reinstate and/or expand the program?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

H. enforcement

- (1) current level of penalties inadequate?
- (2) license fees inadequate?
- (3) eliminate “kennel” licenses? charge more per animal as goes beyond 5?
- (4) reward/bounty for reporting unlicensed
 - (a) breeder
 - (b) animal
 - (c) non-compliant shelter or pound including animal cruelty
 - (d) dog-, cock-, or other unauthorized fighting
- (5) confiscation of property for those engaged in dog fighting, etc.

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

I. whistle blowers

- (1) worthwhile? why?
- (2) how to protect job?
- (3) how to ensure prompt investigation?
- (4) establish a whistle-blower fund?
- (5) civil penalties paid in part to whistle-blower?
- (6) undercover agents sent by the State Vet?

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3. legislation – potential initiatives (cont.):

J. state database

(1) develop system similar to DMV licensing system on statewide basis?

(2) mandatory to be recorded and part of database:

pet sales?

adoptions?

BYB licenses?

dog/cat licenses?

micro-chipping, tattooing, and other ID?

owner give-ups?

matches strays/abandons/deceased?

each rabies shot reported online and suspended to ensure licensing follows;
if no licensing, system generates follow-up?

3. legislation – potential initiative (cont.):

K. citizen review board (or “civilian” review board) - CRB

- (1) a volunteer, Civilian Review Board (CRB) organized to monitor the compliance of various reporting agencies involved with animal welfare?
- (2) CRB members also assume some activities now being carried out at taxpayer expense?
 - (a) certifying that euthanasia is done properly?
 - (b) inspection of public pounds and private humane society/SPCA/rescue groups with custodial responsibilities for dogs and/or cats?
- (3) state certify voluntary shelter inspectors (part of the CRB) who are also certified by the court?
- (4) the State Vet’s office in conjunction with members of CRB develops a protocol for pound/shelter inspection?
- (5) volunteer docent program, a subset of the CRB, established to attend euthanasias, be empowered to halt euthanasias if conducted in non-compliant method?

L. do what regarding exotics?

4. dealing with elected officials

A. legislator contact

- (1) in each jurisdiction, need as many people/groups as possible to be in contact with the county Board of Supervisors (or similar), members of the General Assembly who represent that geography, sheriff or law enforcement, party chairperson of both parties?
- (2) who to do this?
- (3) need to recruit people to help in counties with limited representation in our coalition to date; how can those in adjoining areas help get people involved?
- (4) how to recruit extra help where needed?
- (5) how to contact your elected officials?
- (6) what do you say?
what message do you want to deliver?
- (7) must be a resident of the jurisdiction?
- (8) must be done statewide?

4. dealing with elected officials (cont.):

B. legislative lobbying

- (1) which members of the General Assembly should be targeted for contact prior to the convening of the General Assembly in Richmond in January, 2005?
- (2) need people to go to Richmond when General Assembly in session 1/2005?
 - (a) recontact significant members of General Assembly then?
 - (b) go to support hearings and testify?
 - (c) do hall exhibits – handouts, pictures, posters, etc. for those in General Assembly to see?
- (3) help and encourage/expand Animal Welfare Coalition of Hampton Roads animal lobbying and training program?

5. media

A. local

- (1) newspaper editor/reporters

goal: someone on local paper to take an interest in the story and act as an ongoing advocate

- (2) story ideas to feed them?

B. regional/national

- (1) engage Washington, Richmond, Norfolk and major metropolitan papers and TV/radio outlets

- (2) accept pro bono ads

- (3) do euthanasia series annually?

televise an actual euthanasia – by gas, by injection; show what happens to the bodies; show where the facility is in relation to the landfill?

- (4) promote s/n, promote adoptions, spotlight serious infractions; ask breeders if licensed before accept new ads?

- (5) encourage a major publisher to establish/publish responsible breeder registry; publish list of all owner give-up?

- (6) encourage “bring your pet to work” days?

- (7) businesses, groups, or families to sponsor adoptions and pounds?

C. films/movies/books

- (1) engage someone at documentary level to be actively engaged (or commissioned if necessary) similar Upton Sinclair?

- (2) publish the full Pet Overpopulation study and legislative initiatives saga as a wake up call to Virginia?

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5. media (cont.):

D. engage high profile endorsers

- (1) political, financial, entertainment, religious, sports, intellectual, business leaders
- (2) who do you know? where do you have access?

E. billboards

- (1) galvanizing photos? had enough? (picture of dogs in pound)
- (2) messages/visuals that stick?

6. financial/funding

A. possible uses of funding

- (1) s/n surgeries
- (2) coalition/group activities
- (3) lobbying initiatives

B. what sources of funding could be secured from the state?

C. what sources of private funding and individual contributors to support?

D. other funding sources

- (1) corporate sponsorships?
- (2) fines/penalties?
- (3) law suits?
- (4) grants?

7. legal

- A. buy pet from pet shop and sue under consumer protection laws – not what it was represented to be?
- B. BYB – sue based on implied or express warranty?
- C. AKC vs. local breed group certification
require that a local breed group, not AKC, certify that pets are
 - (1) bred responsibly/purebred?
 - (2) provide oversight if pet abandoned or less than promised?
- D. writs of mandamus to enforce existing laws?
- E. assignment of right to sue re property?
ex: is dog in pound taxpayer property?
- F. find one lawyer/firm in each jurisdiction for pro-bono work?

8. opposition groups

- A. understand the basis of opposition?
- B. undertake effort at compromise and persuasion?
- C. undertake effort to undermine opposition if all else fails?
 - (1) go to membership directly?
 - (2) describe conflict through
 - (a) media outlets (press release with offer of interview)?
 - (b) advertising?
 - (c) church groups?
 - (d) fraternal organizations?
 - (e) web site?

9. allies

A. anticipated groups

- (1) SPCAs, humane rescue, foster homes, and other animal welfare groups?
 - (a) list all and attempt to reach all?
 - (b) attempt to include all as voters, letter writers, story tellers in support?
- (2) national organizations such as IDA, HSUS, ASPCA?
- (3) vet schools?
- (4) veterinarians?
 - (a) want all vets to know all and endorse/contribute?
 - (b) see both VVMA and AVAR?
- (5) ACOs?
 - (a) want to know all ACOs; from VACA?
 - (b) not all ACOs are VACA members; identify how?
- (6) sheriff/police department?
- (7) Board of Supervisors and other local elected officials?
- (8) association of county governments/
- (9) bar association?
also financial assistance?
- (10) Commonwealth attorneys?
- (11) VDACS? (Office of State Vet. here)

9. allies (cont.):

A. anticipated groups (cont.):

(12) economic development agencies?

explain downside of animal indifference to the image of their jurisdiction?

(13) travel industry?

boycotts of areas with horrible conditions?

(14) churches?

(15) public schools?

(16) corporations? also financial assistance?

(17) media?

(18) high profile endorsers?

(19) sporting groups such as NASCAR, professional sports teams/leagues

(a) pets to be adopted shown on scoreboards?

(b) collect money for pets at events?

B. how to reach out?

C. what message to send?

D. allies to endorse programs?

provide input about them?

provide enforcement assistance?