

## Attachment 4

### Task Force Recommendations to Reduce Pet Overpopulation

In addition to working on elements of an ordinance for the County, the Task Force compiled a list of recommendations for the Board of Supervisors. The Task Force prioritized methods to reduce the number of unwanted animals and considered the following for each alternative method:

- Feasibility
- Economic impact to the County
- Effectiveness in reducing unwanted animals (scale of 1 – 4, 4 being most effective)
- Example of how this idea might be implemented

Methods that were identified as likely to be most effective in reducing the number of unwanted animals were:

- Support individuals and groups that help animal adoptions and educate the community
- Provide weekend spay/neuter clinics
- Offer rewards for owners who bring in their own animals for spay/neuter (e.g. gift bags)
- Develop regulations for pet stores to encourage spaying/neutering

#### **1. Support individuals and groups that help animal adoptions and educate the community.**

Non-profit organizations and individuals facilitate animal adoptions, help find permanent homes and reduce the number of unwanted animals in our community. Santa Barbara County is fortunate to have a number of these groups, (DAWG, ASAP, K9 PALS, BUNS, CAPA, Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation, Catalyst for Cats, ResQCats, three humane societies and numerous breed rescue groups and individuals). The Task Force recommends supporting the existing non-profit organizations to increase the adoptions of animals in need of homes. This is maximizing the use of community based organizations as an alternative to County services. Support may be financial or in-kind assistance.

#### **2. Provide weekend spay/neuter clinics.**

Spaying and neutering is an effective method of decreasing the number of unwanted animals. By offering weekend clinics, responsible pet owners may avail themselves of the opportunity to complete the surgeries. To promote weekend spay/neuter clinics, the Task Force recommends use of the County Santa Maria Animal Center clinic facility, which is not currently used on weekends. Veterinarians, staff and supplies would be required in addition to the facility. This option is dependent upon funding providers or offering incentives to providers.

#### **3. Offer incentives for owners who bring in their own animals for spaying and neutering.**

Offering incentives to owners of animals can promote spaying and neutering. This strategy would require resources for coordination from the community or the County.

#### **4. Develop regulations for pet stores to encourage spaying/neutering.**

Regulations or an ordinance could be written that any dog or cat over a specific age sold in a pet store must be spayed or neutered. An incentive could be provided to pet stores that spay or neuter their animals before selling them. A discounted price could be offered to buyers who spay or neuter their animals within a specific time frame of purchasing the animals from the pet store. Incentives or compensation would need to be provided to the pet stores. For example, a business license fee could be reduced.

**Additional Recommendations of the Task Force were:**

**Educating Pet Owners on Regulations**

Many pet owners are currently unaware of the Animal Services Regulations in Chapter 7 of County Code. Task Force members recommend that the County develop an easy to read brochure that provides basic information on regulations with references to the full chapter on the Animal Services website. These brochures could be provided at the time of animal purchase or adoption. General recommendations and education related to animal care are desirable and could be included in the brochure.

**Differential Fees**

Imposing different fees on altered versus unaltered animals can serve as an incentive to support spaying and neutering of animals. Three such options are recommended by the Task Force:

- Increase the penalty fee when redeeming non-spayed/neutered animals from shelters and waive the fees if an animal is spayed/neutered
- Increase the cost differential for dog licenses for animals spayed/neutered versus unaltered dogs
- Add a \$10 surcharge to the unaltered license fee with the additional income going to support a low cost spay/neuter program

**Supporting the Responsible Owner Pilot Program**

Animal Services and the Director Jan Glick, propose a three year pilot program incorporating components of the Calgary, Canada model to promote responsible pet ownership by increasing:

- Outreach and education on responsible pet ownership and licensing
- The number of licensed pets within our County
- The numbers of pets that are returned to owner
- Fiscal viability of the Animal Services program

The key pilot program elements are:

- Obtain high dog license compliance
- Establish a system where penalties go back to Animal Services (versus the General Fund)
- Increase staffing to support the three year pilot program
- Education and outreach component development
- Voluntary cat licensing compliance