

NETWORK NEWS

Linking Members Of North Shore Animal League, Inc.,
The Pet Savers Foundation, Inc. And The SPAY/USA Networks

The Statewide Program

As more groups and individuals discover the effectiveness of good spay/neuter programs in reducing euthanasia at shelters, we are beginning to see more statewide programs. Some of them are private, such as Spay/Neuter Arkansas, featured in this issue of our newsletter. Some of these private programs have been started by two or three people and come to encompass an entire state. Such referral programs exist in a couple of states.

Another kind of statewide program comes into existence when state companion animal control programs are established as has happened in New Jersey, New Hampshire and Connecticut. In these cases, a funding agency is established and people are hired to run the program.

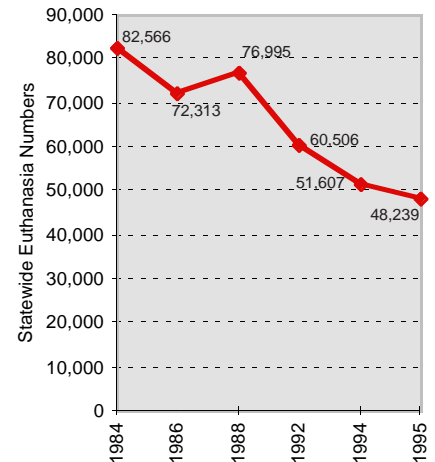
New Jersey was the first of these statewide programs. Started in 1984, it is run by a division of the Department of Health and Senior Services. About 215 veterinary hospitals in New Jersey's 21 counties participate in the program and about 102,000 surgeries have been performed. A Governor's Domestic Companion Animal Council works with the department.

The program was originally funded solely by a \$3 license surcharge on non-neutered dogs and a \$10 or \$20 "pet owner" co-payment fee. Pet owners participating in public assistance programs pay \$10; others adopting dogs and cats from New Jersey shelters, pounds and animal adoption agencies pay a \$20 co-payment

for surgery. Three years ago an Animal Friendly license plate was designed and developed to increase the funding. In the period from 4/15/94 to 5/31/97 the plates brought in over a million dollars dedicated strictly for the reimbursement of surgeries.

A significant decline has been evident in state euthanasia figures since the inception of the program as shown by the graph to the right.

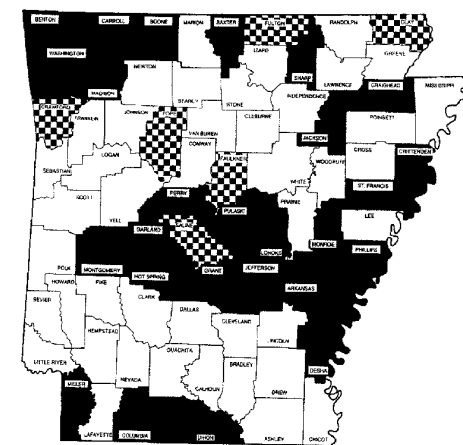
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Spay/Neuter Arkansas Program

By Marion Bogard, Director of Spay Neuter Arkansas

As we are all too much aware, pet overpopulation is one of the greatest problems facing companion animals in our country. To combat this, innovative programs offering free and low-cost sterilization services have popped up around the country, generally in the more progressive states first, with other states following. However, the poorer, more rural states have faced the problem of pet overpopulation with even more scattered humane and financial resources, a less educated populace, and below the snowbelt in the south, a larger, more "successful" breeding population of homeless and abandoned animals unconstrained by cold weather.



 Participating Veterinarians
 Case-By-Case & Special Events

Using the example of SPAY/USA, but in a scaled down version, Arkansas for Animals, Inc. (AFA) and Arkansas Animal Birth Control Association (AABCA) formed Spay Neuter Arkansas (SNA), a low-cost sterilization referral service for the entire state. Started in late 1993 with a triumvirate of part time volunteers, Francis Thomas (AABCA), and Rita Cavanaugh (AFA), and Joyce Hillard (AFA), invaluable advice from SPAY/USA, a determined veterinarian and some

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The Statewide Program continued

People wishing to learn more can contact Robert Monyer at (609) 588-3121 — c/o New Jersey Department of Health, PO Box 360, Trenton, NJ 08625-0360.

The Connecticut program started in the spring of 1995. This program obtained its revenues from a \$6 surcharge on unsterilized dogs plus a \$10 co-payment from adopters (\$45 deposit minus a \$35 refund given back after the surgery). In 1997 legislation was passed establishing an "animal friendly" license plate to add more monies to the fund.

New Hampshire has two state-run s/n programs:

(1) The Shelter Adoption Program, available to all state residents who adopt a cat/dog from a local shelter. The \$25 fee covers the adopter's share of the s/n program - the state program pays the balance.

(2) The Low-Income Program is available to all cat/dog guardians who are eligible for public assis-

tance. These people pay only \$10 for the s/n services. The program pays the balance plus up to \$15 toward pre-surgical immunizations.

There has been a high participation rate in both programs, and in the three years since the programs started, there has been a 38% decrease in euthanasia rates in the state.

The efforts have been coordinated by the Legislative Committee of the N.H. Federation of Humane Organizations and Solution to Overpopulation of Pets, Inc. STOP organizes campaigns, works with the media, and assists groups and individuals as needed. In this way, a private group has developed and promoted a public program.

For further information on how STOP was started, call Peter Marsh at (603) 224-1877 or write him at 24 Montgomery St., Concord, NH 03301.

Spay/Neuter Arkansas Program continued

pocket change, SNA spoke to the Arkansas Veterinarians Association and bombarded every small animal practitioner in the state with letters requesting their assistance. The result: nearly 20% of all practitioners around the state agreed to participate in a low-cost program initially for senior and disabled pet owners on low incomes.

As with most grass roots organizations, SNA raised funds for subsidies through T-shirt, garage and bake sales. In the winter of 1995 with the assistance of grants, SNA expanded to include all low income pet owners and feral cats, tripling the number of sterilizations from the previous year. Frequent letters of appreciation to the veterinarians helped to ensure their continuous participation and encouraged their questions and suggestions about their program. We also used the resources of local animal control and humane agencies who often provided local coverage of the program in print and radio and acted as local referral

sources for pet owners and veterinarians.

By 1996, with roughly 600 low-cost and subsidized surgeries provided, 22% of all small animal veterinarians agreed to participate in the expanded program including all low income pet owners, resulting in 713 low-cost and free surgeries for the year. While this is still a small number for a state with 2.5 million, the program continues to double its goal yearly as funds allow. (In the three and a half years of SNA's existence, over 1,300 surgeries, 20,000 pamphlets, 19 feral cat colonies, and 14 "Spay events" co-sponsored with other agencies have cost just over \$26,000.)

The greatest keys to the success of a state-wide referral program are networking and access - both with and for the public, and for the other individuals and humane and animal control agencies.

Advertising the program and offering a toll-free number allows both pet owners and veterinarians

a minimum of fuss and expense for using the service. Local humane and animal control agencies are an important resource for support, local promotion and contacts. This is often hard as conflicting philosophies and egos can confuse the issue. However, it also provides a great opportunity to educate our colleagues about overpopulation issues, such as feral colony management, and utilize all of our potential to make the greatest difference with the least money.

If you would like more information about state-wide referral programs, call or write Joyce at (870) 942-3465 or 800-956-7289, or write to:

*Spay/Neuter Arkansas
6674 Grant 9,
Sheridan AR 72150
e mail: rhillard@ipa..*

