



NETWORK NEWS

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VETERINARIANS WITHOUT BORDERS



Eastern European veterinarian team outside their clinic.

SPAY/USA Organizes Study Tour For Eastern European Vets

At the International Conference for Companion Animal Welfare in Sofia, Bulgaria, in October 1999, SPAY/USA Director Esther Mechler was made aware of the heroic efforts being made by a small number of vets to stem the tide of homeless dogs in several nations in Eastern Europe. The number of dogs on the streets in Sofia alone was approximately 50,000.

Nearby, in Bucharest, Romania, the number of dogs was closer to 200,000. Each year in that city, some 28,000 people are bitten by dogs, and more than 5,000

dog-car crashes occur.

The problem in Bucharest has its origins in the brutal regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. Because of the economic hardships at the time, many people could not afford to feed their dogs and threw them out on the streets. There they multiplied quickly and became a problem for the authorities. A catch and kill policy was implemented. The number did not decrease. Though thousands were killed, even more were born.

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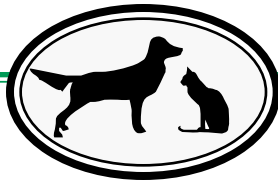
Dr. Young Goes To India

By Chinny Krishna

The Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme initiated by the Blue Cross of India in 1964 and currently being implemented in all the major metro areas of India, with the help of the Animal Welfare Board of India and special funding from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, took a major step forward with the introduction in India by the Blue Cross of Early-Age Neutering (EAN) - also known as pre-pubertal spaying - which has been in vogue in the USA for over a decade.

Thanks to the assistance of SPAY/USA, which coordinated a visit to India by Dr. Jeffrey D. Young of Planned Pethood Plus in Denver, Colorado, the Blue Cross was able to conduct a workshop and training programme in Chennai, from the 18th to 25th of April, 2000. Twenty-one veterinarians from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamilnadu should now be able to not only safely carry out the EAN procedure but also train other vets in this technique.

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Dr. Young Goes To India cont.

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EAN can be safely carried out on healthy puppies and kittens just six weeks old. At this age, the recovery is remarkably swift and the operation is far easier to perform than on a post-puberty animal. Most important, there is hardly any trauma to the animal, since kittens and puppies can be caught without any difficulty. The cost incurred per animal is also only a fraction of that required for a fully-grown one.

All organizations which adopt out kittens and puppies know that 90% of these animals are brought back for spaying only after at least one litter. This is in spite of signing an understanding that these animals will be brought back when they are about six months old and will not be allowed to breed. It is here that EAN will be invaluable since we can now sterilize the animal before handing it over to its new guardians. This will also give the prospective adopter a “cooling-off” period after his visit to the shelter before returning to take the pet to his home. This in turn will reduce the number of animals which are returned after adoption.

Dr. Jeff Young runs three low-cost spay/neuter clinics in Denver, Colorado, USA, under the banner - Planned Pethood Plus Inc. He has performed over 100,000 spay-neuters and over 20,000 EANs.

We are especially thankful to him for so readily agreeing to come down to Chennai at our request.

Seeing the enormous potential of EAN, the Blue Cross requested Dr. Young to go to Delhi to train veterinarians from the Northern States and this was readily agreed to by the Youngs. The five-day programme has been held at the Sanjay Gandhi Animal Hospital at Delhi.

The Blue Cross has been very fortunate in having been able to conduct this programme, which has been made possible by SPAY/USA and financially supported by the Animal Welfare Board of India and the Rukmini Devi Arundale Trust (RDAT). It is but fitting that the work of the Blue Cross is greatly aided by the RDAT, since Rukmini

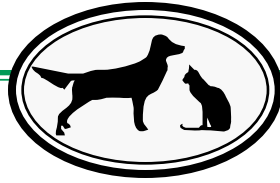


Dr. Jeff Young performing surgery on a pup. Photo M. Moorthy

Devi Arundale was the architect of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960 and the Founder Chair Person of the Animal Welfare Board of India. She held this position from the inception of the Board until her death in 1986, with only a two-year break in the late seventies.

Our Chief Veterinarian, Dr. T.P.Sekar, has conducted over 25,000 operations. During the closing valedictory function of the EAN programme which was presided over by Mr. Justice Guman Mal Lodha, Chairman of the AWBI, Dr. Young paid Dr. Sekar the ultimate compliment when he stated that not only was Dr. Sekar an exceptional surgeon, but that he had been able to teach Dr. Young many things during the week they worked together.

Any organization wishing to send their vets for training in ABC or EAN may contact the Blue Cross of India at No.1, Eldams Road, Chennai-600 018, Fax: 044 - 2349801 and E-Mail: aspick @ kmr.net



SPAY/USA Organizes Study Tour cont.

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In response to these problems, Vier Pforten (Four Paws), a nonprofit group, was founded by Dr. Amir Khalil in 1994 to expand spay/neuter(s/n) services in the region. This small group of veterinarians and volunteers set up a clinic in a former swimming pool at the university in Sofia, Bulgaria, and brought in dogs each week for spaying/neutering. The vets also traveled regularly to Romania, to Kosovo and Bosnia.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., new techniques were enabling veterinarians to spay or neuter 50 animals a day, and kittens/pups as young as 7 weeks. Throughout the country, a number of high-volume, low-cost spay clinics have sprung up, many using the encouragement, information and advice of SPAY/USA personnel.

It made sense to organize a special U.S. tour for several of these successful clinics to visit so that the vets headquartered in Bulgaria could study the operating and effi-

ciency techniques directly — as well as the organization, scheduling and general management of selected American clinics.

On February 1, a team of four veterinarians from Vier Pforten, along with the secretary of the International Committee for Stray Dogs (headquartered in Bucharest), arrived in Newark, NJ, for a visit at the People for Animals Clinic in Hillside, NJ, where a cat spay takes 10 minutes, a cat neuter 3 minutes, a dog spay 10 to 15 minutes and a dog neuter, 10 minutes. The clinic averages 40 to 50 surgeries per day. The European team absorbed the techniques, asked questions and found new ways to save time and money at their clinics.

A week later, the team went on to the Humane Alliance Clinic in Asheville, North Carolina, which sterilizes some 8,000 animals per year, bringing them in from 10 surrounding counties in a special van. And in mid-February the group proceeded to visit Planned Pethood

Plus in Colorado, where Dr. Jeff Young hosted them and shared his techniques of high-speed and juvenile spay/neuter over a two-week period. Dr. Young plans to open a clinic in Slovakia sometime next year.

Dr. Khalil reported that the trip resulted in knowledge of new techniques that will reduce the cost of their operations and increase the efficiency in several clinics in Romania and Bulgaria. And Bill McKelvy, president of the Humane Alliance in North Carolina, says his group has also gotten some good cost-saving ideas from the visitors.