Are We There Yet?
Medical Aspects of Animal Relocation Programs

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Our Destination Today:
• What is animal relocation?
• Why relocate animals?
• Benefits and Risks
Medical Aspects:
• What do we know?
• What are we still learning?
• 10 areas of focus for animal health

Do you CURRENTLY have an Animal Relocation Program?

Raise your hand if you....
What is Animal Relocation?

The transfer of animals FROM areas of oversupply TO areas where there are few, if any, similar pets available in shelters for adoption.

Relocation can be NEAR or FAR!

[Diagram showing the process of animal relocation with stages: Transport, Transfer, Rescue, Adopt]
Why Relocate Animals?

• 3 million dogs enter shelters each year
• 1.5 million dogs are euthanized

Using logistics, and proven theories of supply and demand, relocation can be key in ending the needless euthanasia of dogs for space.

Only 20% of people go to a shelter to adopt a pet.

People want… what they want. If they don’t find it at the shelter, most will go elsewhere.

Transferring-in adoptable animals will keep the community coming in!
Benefits

Source Shelters

- Less euthanasia
- More resources available for proactive efforts (spay/neuter)
- Relief and hope to staff

Destination Shelters

- No more Empty cages
- Maintain the market share by responding to the communities needs for animals.

Challenges

Disease issues

- The increased stress on transported animals may increase susceptibility to disease.
- If transported animals are NOT healthy….they can spread disease at the Destination shelter.

Root causes

- Relocation is only PART of a community’s solution. Spay/Neuter has to be part of the solution too!
There are more Source Shelters than Destinations!

Many Destination Shelters have groups LINED UP waiting for them to take their animals!

Medical Aspects of Relocation: What Do We Know?

• Lives are being saved
• Legal regulations must be followed
• Large/small agencies are involved
• Relocation is stressful for animals
• Potential for disease spread exists
• Well planned relocation can be successful!
• Current Guidelines largely agree – but not 100%
Does your organization primarily follow:

- ASV Relocation Guidelines
- AVMA Relocation Guidelines
- National Federation Relocation Guidelines
- No national guidelines followed

What Do We Need to Learn?

- Where should the medical focus be? At the source? At the destination? Both?
- What are the most efficient practices for health and welfare to be maintained?
- Can relocation help cats at risk?
- Other ideas?
Our Destination Today
10 areas of focus for animal health in relocation programs

1. Examinations
2. Preventive care
3. Records
4. Housing and stress reduction
5. Isolation/quarantine
6. Diagnostic testing
7. Sanitation
8. Biosecurity
9. Spay/Neuter
10. Risk management

Examinations
ASV and AVMA agree that animals should receive an exam:

1. At the source shelter on intake
2. At the source shelter by a veterinarian for a health certificate
3. At the source shelter within 24 hours of transport
4. At the destination shelter on intake
Why Examine?

• Check for signs of infectious disease
• Check for problems requiring immediate attention
• Exam should be documented in medical record
• Allows acquired problems to be distinguished from pre-existing conditions
• Legal regulations
• Opportunity to provide preventive care

Preventive Care

Animals should receive:
• Core vaccinations
  • Da2PP
  • IN Bordetella/parainfluenza/adeno-II
  • FVRCP
  • Rabies
• Heartworm testing and treatment
• External parasite treatment
• Internal parasite treatment
Vaccines

Who?
• ALL animals over 4 weeks of age
• Nursing
• Injured
• Mildly ill
• Pregnant
• Few exceptions
  • T>103 may fail

When?
• Vaccinate on or before entry
• Provide boosters (2-3 weeks later)

Vaccines
Youngsters 4-20 weeks
• Ideally house out of a shelter population
• Vaccinate frequently to catch the window of susceptibility
• FVRCP and DA2PP
  • Administer one dose on admission
  • Repeat every 2-3 weeks until 18-20 weeks
• IN trivalent kennel cough (dog)
  • Administer one dose on admission
• Rabies
  • One dose at legal age, usually on exit, sometimes stay.
Parasite Control

At a minimum:
- Hookworm and roundworm
- External parasites such as fleas and ticks
- Heartworm
- Other parasites common in your region and/or facility

Heartworm Test and Treatment

- Test dogs > 6 months of age
  - If negative start macrocyclic lactone prior to transport
  - If positive start macrocyclic lactone and doxycycline prior to transport; continue treatment at destination

- Begin macrocyclic lactone in < 6 months of age prior to transport
**Poll**

Are the dogs involved in your relocation program being tested for heartworm?

Yes/No

If a dog tests positive, is the dog:

a) Treated at Source

b) Treated at Destination

c) We are unable to treat for HW

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**Medical Records**

- Medical records/shelter record
- Rabies certificate
- Health certificate (CVI)
  - Must be written by accredited vet in state of origin
  - Requirements vary by state
  - Animals must usually be free of communicable disease to enter
  - Valid for ~10-30 days
Housing and Stress Reduction

• What do they smell?
• What do they see?
• What do they hear?
• What do they feel?

Remember, their senses are more acute than humans.

Lack of control over one’s environment represents one of the most profound stressors for animals.

Housing and Stress Reduction

Three places where health will be impacted:

Source Shelter → During Transport → Destination Shelter

• Stress responses are very individual
• First few days are the most stressful
• Coping may occur (normal behaviors appear)
• Long term stays = chronic stress
• Depression, activity withdrawal, aggression (to humans, to other animals), “kennel crazy”, learned helplessness, desocialization
Housing and Stress Reduction

- Isolation
- Healthy Hold
- Quarantine
- Adoption

Minimally, a shelter should have these housing areas for cats and for dogs.

Quarantine

- Animals who are considered dangerous, and may have recent exposure to infectious disease

- Even when they do not yet show clinical signs of disease, the animals may be capable of infecting others
Diagnostic Testing

When?
Outbreaks can be prolonged & costly
• Early recognition can prevent spread, serious illness, euthanasia
• Must assume “worst case” until proven otherwise
• Critical for developing a control plan ASAP!

Who?
• Sample more than 1 animal!!
• Variable clinical signs
• Sick animals and in-contact “healthy” animals
• Variable intake dates

Isolation

• Animals who are clinically ill (symptomatic) and infected with a communicable disease
• Ideally multiple isolations can exist (so that different diseases are not spread within a room)
Juveniles

• Young animals in the shelter are at high risk of illness.
• Minimize stress and disease transmission by designating separate housing areas for:
  • Juveniles (5 months and younger)
  • Mothers and their babies

Foster Care is an excellent alternative for:
  • Mothers and nursing litters
  • Animals too young to be adopted
  • Animals prior to or arriving from relocation

Poll

Pick the answer that best describes where animals are quarantined in your relocation work:

a) Source
b) Destination
c) Neither – we do not quarantine

Do you have active foster homes?
Yes/No
Housing and Stress Reduction

Containment
- Species (cats separate)
- Absorbent bedding
- Cohousing
- Secure/Safe

Environmental Conditions
- Climate Control (60-85)
- Ventilation

Animal Needs
- Food and water?
- Medical
- Signs of stress
- On-board Handler

Infectious Disease
- Disinfection
- Container placement
- High risk animals housed separately

Transit Time
- Less is more
- Supervision
- Walks
- Sanitation

Transporting Ill Animals

“Transportation of animals with illness can be justified when life-saving resources such as medical care and placement opportunities are available at the destination and when measures can be taken during transport to provide for their comfort, health, and safety.”

ASV Guidelines

“Sick animals are not eligible for transport.” NFedHS
Biosecurity & Sanitation

Three places where biosecurity and sanitation impact health:

- **Source Shelter**
- **During Transport**
- **Destination Shelter**

Order of animal handling and care:
Start with the most susceptible to disease and end with those most likely to transmit infectious disease:

1) Healthy puppies and kittens and healthy nursing bitches and queens
2) Healthy adult animals
3) Unhealthy animals

Biosecurity

- **Hand washing is the most important way of preventing disease spread.**

- Wear gloves
- Change gloves 😊
- Wash frequently
- Alcohol based 70% sanitizer
- Antibacterial soaps
Common Sources of Disease Transmission

- Hands and clothing
- Cleaning utensils
- Mops, rags, sponges
- Food and water dishes
- Toys
- Ropes and leads
- Restraint equipment

- Pens, pencils, record holders
- Temporary holding cages
- Litter trays
- Medical equipment

Biosecurity

Create an environment that is easy to sanitize

- Disposables
- Stainless steel
- Sealed concrete
- Non-porous plastic
- Dedicated cleaning supplies
- Protective scrubs/smocks

- Pebble gravel
- Carpet
- Grass
- Soil
Sanitation

Proper sanitation involves cleaning and disinfecting – they are not the same thing

• **Cleaning** – manual removal of all dirt and organic debris from all surfaces (bars, walls and tops of cages) in addition to washing with water and soap

• **Disinfecting** – inactivation of the pathogen

Sanitation

Proper disinfecting requires:

• Organic debris removal
• Correct disinfectant choice for pathogen
• Proper storage, dilution and application
• Not mixing agents
• Contact time (usually 10 minutes)
• Rinsing when required
• Drying before animals contact surfaces
• Following label directions

Create and post a written protocol!!
Train and review with staff!!
Disease Response

• Whenever there is a disease “outbreak”, one of the first control steps should be a thorough, first-hand review of sanitation procedures.

Spay/Neuter

• S/N is key to population reduction in source community
• Some guidelines recommend prior to transport with recovery time (48 hrs)
• S/N prior to transport allows faster adoption at destination
• **BUT** - S/N resources may not yet exist or be efficient in source
Spay/Neuter

Throughout the process, effort should be made to enhance Source shelter standards. In particular the Receiving and Source shelters should work together to create a plan for addressing the overpopulation issue in the community of origin.

NFHS

Poll

1. Would you rather animals received a Spay/Neuter at source or destination?
   - Source
   - Destination

2. Why?
Risk Management

• Abide by local, state and federal laws
• Provide humane care per guidelines
• Maintain clear and direct communication
• Designate contacts
• Create and follow written guidelines
• Continually assess risk:benefit in your own program…

Related ASPCApro Webinar Recordings

ASPCApro.org/webinars

Shelter Vaccination Protocols
www.aspcapro.org/webinar/shelter-vaccination-protocols

ASV Shelter Guidelines Series
www.ASPCApro.org/ASV
What are your Questions???

RIDE

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