

Animal Welfare Position Statements



**EDMONTON HUMANE
SOCIETY**

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Devocalization of dogs

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the "devocalization" of companion animals unless it is the only alternative to euthanasia and all other treatment and management methods have failed.

Rationale:

- Devocalization may result in infections, laryngeal paralysis, and airway stenosis.
- Dogs bark for many different reasons and although it can be normal behavior, excessive barking can also be a manifestation of behavioral illnesses such as generalized anxiety, compulsive disorder or separation anxiety. In such cases, the underlying cause, anxiety, should be treated.
- Alternatives, such as behavior modification techniques, citronella bark collars and various medications should be pursued before devocalization is considered. These treatments should only be applied only under the supervision of a qualified professional.

References:

1. Wells DL. The effectiveness of a citronella spray collar in reducing certain forms of barking in dogs. *Applied Animal Behavior Science* 2001;73:299-309.

Dog Breed Restrictions

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the branding of a particular breed of dog as “aggressive,” “vicious” or “dangerous.” Instead, each animal within a breed grouping must be regarded individually.

Rationale:

- Dog bite statistics are incomplete and misleading. All dog bite statistics are reliant on the victim’s or owner’s willingness to make a report to local authorities. In 2001, 200 dog bites were reported to the City of Edmonton Animal Control Department. However, 600 people were treated for dog bites at Edmonton hospitals. (City of Edmonton Animal Control Department statistics, according to Partners for Animal and Community Safety, 2002).
- Often, dog breed restrictions are considered in municipal government directly following a well-publicized dog bite or attack. 600 people were treated for dog bites in Edmonton hospitals in 2001, however, the media only reported a small percentage of these cases. Most media representatives are not animal trainers or behaviorists, and therefore, their choice of stories will generally be based upon the highest potential for reader interest rather than a complete understanding of factors involved in the attacks and a desire to portray an accurate cross-section of the risks of every breed.
- Larger, stronger breeds of dogs have the potential and the body features to cause a great deal of damage, if an attack occurs. The incidents that involve a great deal of damage to the victim are generally the most publicized; therefore, the larger, stronger breeds are generally the target of media stories about dog bites.
- Simply possessing the strength and body features to cause damage does not cause a dog to develop aggression or to bite. An individual dog’s temperament is determined by numerous factors, including breeding (genetics), amount and method of training and socialization, and treatment by its owner or guardian. The influence of humans to acts of canine aggression is frequently downplayed or ignored.

References:

Partners for Animal and Community Safety. (2002). Partners Launch Animal-Bite Prevention Program [On-line]. Unpublished news release.

http://www.atcogas.com/About_Us/News_Releases/2002/Partners_in_Dog_bite_Prevention.asp

Humane Training Methods for Dogs

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the use of humane training methods that do not cause pain, fear, and/or undue stress.

Rationale:

- Recent years have seen a shift towards reward-based methods, such as clicker training and the use of food, toys, and praise as motivators. Historically, training methods for dogs focused almost exclusively on the use of force and coercion to obtain the desired behavior. Dogs trained using such methods often perform out of fear and anxiety.
- Abusive training methods are unacceptable as they can increase the intensity of aggression. Examples of abusive training methods include:
 - Hanging a dog by the choke collar and leash
 - Spinning the animal off the ground (“helicopter technique”) at the end of a choke collar and leash
 - Beating a dog into submission
 - Alpha rolls (forcibly flipping the dog on its back, applying pressure to its throat until the dog submits)
- The Edmonton Humane Society supports the use of humane training methods that are built on current scientific knowledge of learning theory. The Society uses current training techniques such as desensitizing and counter conditioning.
- The Edmonton Humane Society encourages the use of Haltis, gentle leaders, body harnesses (non pain-inducing), and flat collars when training dogs. The Society chooses not to use choke (slip), pinch (prong), and shock collars due their potential to cause undue stress, pain, and fear.

References:

1. American Humane Association. Guide To Humane Dog Training. American Humane Association. Englewood, Colorado, USA. 2001.
2. Dodman, Nickolas. Dogs Behaving Badly: An A to Z Guide to Understanding & Curing Behavioral Problems in Dogs. Bantam trade paperback edition, 2000.
3. Landsberg, Gary and Horwitz, Debra. Behavior of Dogs & Cats. A lifelearn Publication, 2003.
4. Miller, P. The Power of Positive Dog Training. Hungry Minds, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. 2001.
5. Overall K. Clinical behavioural medicine for small animals. Mosby-Year Book Inc. Missouri, USA 1997.
6. Tucker MT, ed. Professional Standards for Dog Trainers: Effective, Humane Principles. Delta Society. Renton, Washington, USA. 2001.

Note: Neither the Canadian Government nor any Provincial jurisdiction regulates the conduct or skill of Animal trainers or behaviorists. The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) only recognizes Animal Behaviorists who are veterinarians and who have been certified by the American College of Veterinary Behavior (AVCB) as Animal Behaviorists.

Tethering of Dogs

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support continuous tethering of dogs.

Rationale:

- Tethering or chaining of dogs refers to the practice of fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake, as a means of keeping the animal under control. These terms do not refer to the periods when an animal is walked on a leash.
- A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury.
- Dogs need companionship, care, exercise, and attention. Tethering, chaining or otherwise leaving a dog outside for an extended period of time without supervision not only deprives him or her of these things, but can also lead to behavior problems (including aggression).
- The Edmonton Humane Society strongly recommends alternatives to tethering, such as keeping pets indoors or in an enclosed area (such as a fenced yard). We do not discourage pet owners from letting their dogs spend time outside, as long as their dogs are supervised and under control at all times.

References:

Edmonton Humane Society policy on Improper Psychological Environment as A Form of Animal Abuse; October 2004.

Pet Cruelty and Other Issues - What you can do about a dog that's being left outside all the time. HSUS programs, Companion Animals 2/17/01.

Docket No. 95-078-1: The proposed tethering and temperature requirements for dogs and cats; USDA Federal Register, July 2, 1996.

Cat Trapping

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the use of humane live cat traps only as a last resort to remove an unwanted cat from a piece of property, and only if all appropriate actions are taken to ensure the health and safety of the trapped cat.

Rationale:

- The Society recommends trying other humane methods to deter a cat from entering property [such as speaking to the cat's owner (if known), placing a motion-sensor water sprayer on the property, or erecting a physical barrier] before resorting to the use of a cat trap.
- Humane live cat traps do not harm the animal; instead, they simply restrict the animal's freedom. Removing an animal from property using a humane trap is a preferable alternative to the intentionally harmful actions that frustrated property owners sometimes take.
- It is a trapper's responsibility to ensure that:
 - a trapped animal is not left in a trap for an extended period of time;
 - the animal's physical needs (food, water, and shelter from the elements) are attended to while in the possession of the trapper;
 - the animal is not intentionally harmed; and
 - the animal is:
 - a) returned to its owner;
 - b) released at the edge of the trapper's property; or
 - c) taken to the appropriate agency (e.g. City of Edmonton Animal Services Department)
- Animals trapped in a live trap are protected from harm under current animal protection legislation.

Note:

Cat traps are available from numerous businesses and organizations such as exterminators and the City of Edmonton Animal Services Department. However, the City of Edmonton only supplies a trap after the intended user signs an agreement to properly care for a trapped animal. Private exterminators do not necessarily require this, and therefore, the Edmonton Humane Society encourages Edmonton residents interested in obtaining a cat trap to do so through the City of Edmonton.

Feral Cat Colonies

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the random maintenance of feral cat colonies. Instead, the Society recommends that local Animal Control agencies and community members develop a management plan best suited for their community. An example of effective management would be a “trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate and release program.”

Definition:

“Feral cats” are defined as: “unsocialized cats who may be one or more generations removed from a home environment and who may subsist in a colony of similar cats living on the fringes of human existence.” (The Humane Society of the United States, 2004, ¶ 5)
“Management” is defined as: action taken to control a feral cat colony, based on research regarding the effectiveness of the action. “The goal of feral cat management programs should be to gradually eliminate feral cat colonies by a process of ‘aging out’ their members. In this scenario, colonies would be maintained in a healthy state and prevented from reproducing, leading to the eventual attrition of members.” (Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, 2004.)

Rationale:

- Feral cats are not only in danger of dying early deaths due to numerous outdoor hazards, they are also a threat to humans and other animals as they can carry diseases, destroy property, or attack.
- Unsterilized feral cats contribute to the pet overpopulation problem as cats reproduce quickly.
- Removing feral cats from a colony does not ultimately reduce the colony size, as other cats move in to take the place of the former members.
- New members do not join a feral cat colony with a stable number of neutered cats.

References:

1. Bekoff, Marc, & Meaney, Carron A. (Eds.). (1998). *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (2004). *Position Statements*.
3. The Humane Society of the United States. (2004). *HSUS Statement on Free-Roaming Cats*. Retrieved September 8, 2004, from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11857>.
4. Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre. (n.d.) *Feral Cats*. Retrieved September 8, 2004, from University of Prince Edward Island, Atlantic Veterinary College Website: <http://www.upei.ca/awc/feral%20for%20web.pdf> .
5. For more information, please see the Canadian Federation of Humane Society’s “Feral Cat Factsheet” at <http://www.cfhs.ca/Programs/HumaneEducation/GeneralPublic/feralcat.pdf>

Free-Roaming Cats

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the practice of allowing cats to roam outdoors without supervision. The Society recommends that domestic felines be kept indoors, or allowed outdoors only when in an enclosed area or on a leash/tie-out with appropriate supervision.

Rationale:

- According to a recent Humane Society of the United States' study, outdoor cats live an estimated average of less than 3 years. Indoor-only cats live an average of 15 to 18 years.
- Free-roaming cats can encounter numerous dangers, including:
 - **DISEASE:** Unvaccinated cats are at high risk of contracting diseases. Vaccinated cats may be still be susceptible to particular diseases or may act as disease carriers.
 - **PARASITES:** A cat can act as a host for parasites such as fleas, ticks, worms, and/or ear mites.
 - **POISONING:** A cat may encounter antifreeze, yard chemicals, contaminated garbage, or poisoned animals. Also, some people may intentionally leave out poisoned food for cats.
 - **OTHER ANIMALS:** Some animals prey on cats.
 - **HUMAN DANGERS:** Some people view free-roaming cats as a nuisance and may deal with them inhumanely.
 - **TRAFFIC:** Cats are not always adept at avoiding moving vehicles. In addition, drivers may not be able to stop quickly.
 - **DISORIENTATION:** Cats can become disoriented when outside and are sometimes unable to find their way home.
- Unsterilized, free-roaming cats often contribute to the pet overpopulation problem. One un-neutered male and one un-spayed female cat can have approximately two litters of an average of 2.8 kittens per year. Over the course of ten years, all those cats and the resulting offspring would add up to 80,399,780 cats.

References:

1. The Humane Society of the United States (2004). *Keep Your Cat Safe at Home: HSUS's Safe Cats Campaign*. Retrieved August 12, 2004, from www.hsus.org/ace/13960 .
2. Miller, L., & Zawistowski, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Shelter medicine for veterinarians and staff*. Ames, Iowa: Blackwell Publishing.
3. The Saskatoon SPCA. (n.d.) *Indoor cats are happy cats* [brochure].
4. Toronto Humane Society (n.d.). *1 Cat = 80 Million Kittens*. Retrieved August 12, 2004, from www.torontohumanesociety.com/caringforPet/catx.html.

Onychectomy (Declawing) of Domestic Felines

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support onychectomy (declawing) of domestic cats as a routine procedure and discourages veterinarians from performing this type of surgery unless it is the only alternative to euthanasia. The EHS encourages veterinarians to teach clients about alternatives, and to address potential owner concerns about destruction or aggression.

Rationale:

- Scratching is a normal feline behavior used for olfactory and visual communication, as well as claw maintenance.
- In some European countries onychectomy is considered unethical (United Kingdom) or even banned (Switzerland).
- Complications of declawing are uncommon, but can include excessive bleeding, infection, exposure of the remaining bone of the toe or distorted claw re-growth, and the risks associated with general anesthesia. Some cats may develop an aversion to using the litter or to having their feet handled, possibly due to phantom pain.
- Alternatives, such as regular nail trimming and providing and encouraging the use of scratching posts or boxes should be pursued before declawing is considered. If aggression is feared, the underlying causes of aggression should be treated before considering onychectomy.
- Declawing provides an additional concern for a cat which is outdoors, in that its defenses have been diminished.

References:

1. Frank D. Management problems in cats. In: Horwitz DF, Mills DS, Heath S, eds. British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Manual of Canine and Feline Behavioural Medicine, Blackwell Publishing, Ames, Iowa, USA, 2002.
2. Overall K. Clinical behavioural medicine for small animals. Mosby-Year Book Inc. Missouri, USA 1997.

Note:

The EHS advises that cats should not be permitted to go outdoors unless they are directly supervised or safely confined in an outdoor enclosure. For more information, see the Animal Welfare Position Statement about Outdoor Cats.

Breeding of Domesticated Animals

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the irresponsible breeding of domesticated animals.

Definition:

Responsible Breeder: A breeder is “responsible” when he/she is concerned about the welfare of each animal and ensures that they all have homes to go to. Responsible breeders:

- breed for the purpose of betterment of the breed, and therefore breed animals with positive temperaments (i.e. safe around humans), a good health history, and with proper consideration of genetic tendencies in the animal’s family pedigree.
- register their animals with the appropriate organization.
- will find responsible homes for each animal. Some responsible breeders will not allow their animals to breed until they have a waiting list for the offspring. If a home cannot be found for an animal, the breeder will keep the animal and be responsible for its care.
- will interview each potential client, as he/she wants to know about the person that is purchasing his/her animals.
- will be able to provide information about the animal’s pedigree. Clients should also be able to meet at least one of the parents.
- will be willing to show you the location and facilities in which the animals are being raised.
- will be able to show you health certificates and records of veterinary visits.
- will offer to take the animal back if there is a medical or behavioural problem, or if the client is no longer able to care for the animal.
- will encourage spaying/neutering of any animal that will not be needed to continue the genetic line through future breeding.

Irresponsible Breeder:

- **Backyard Breeder:** A backyard breeder is a person that breeds an animal for personal gain (e.g. to make money, to show their children the “miracle of birth”, etc.), with little or no thought regarding the consequences for or the well-being of the animals, and not for the purpose of betterment of the breed. Backyard breeders usually breed animals without proper regard for pedigree, proper planning for

future homes, spay/neuter planning for offspring, and/or little knowledge of proper rearing techniques.

- **Puppy Mill:** “A puppy mill is a breeding operation in which dogs are repeatedly bred for financial gain and are kept in substandard conditions.” (Ontario SPCA, as cited in No Puppy Mills Canada, 2001.)

- **Accidental Breeder:** An accidental breeder is someone that has not had his/her animal spayed/neutered and an unplanned breeding has occurred as a result.

- **Other:** A breeder that registers his/her animals may be considered “irresponsible” if he/she does not follow the guidelines set out above.

Rationale:

- Irresponsible breeders are largely responsible for the pet overpopulation problem in many communities.
- Irresponsible breeders often breed animals even though they are too young, too old, or not in suitable health for breeding.
- Documented problems of puppy mills include overbreeding, inbreeding, minimal veterinary care, poor quality of food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and the killing of unwanted animals.
- Some puppies that come from puppy mills have genetic diseases or health problems that will not show up until years later, that are a result of poor breeding practices.
- Responsible breeders are concerned with genetics and health of their breeding animals. This increases the likelihood that animals with poor temperaments or in poor health or will not be conceived and, therefore, improves the breed.
- Responsible breeders choose their clients carefully and will take animals back if the client can no longer care for the animals. Theoretically, none of these animals should ever be left homeless or without care.

References:

1. Canadian Kennel Club. (n.d.). *Buying a Puppy/ Making the Right Choice/ The Golden Rules: Finding a reputable breeder*. Retrieved October 12, 2003. from <http://www.ckc.ca/default-refresh.asp>.
2. The Humane Society of the United States. (2004). *Buying a Puppy*. Retrieved October 12, 2004, from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11757>.
3. The Humane Society of the United States. (2004). *Get the facts on puppy mills*. Retrieved October 12, 2004, from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11797>.
4. No Puppy Mills Canada. (2001). *The Back Yard Breeder*. Retrieved October 13, 2004, from http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca/back_yard_breeders.htm.
5. No Puppy Mills Canada. (2001). *What is a Puppy Mill?* Retrieved October 13, 2004, http://www.nopupmillsCanada.ca/what_is_a_puppy_mill.htm

Notes:

- According to the *Animal Pedigree Act*, an animal cannot legally be considered a “purebred” unless it has registration papers. These should be included, free of charge, with the adoption or purchase.
- Although registration papers show the animal’s lineage, there are no guarantees as to accuracy of the statements.

Classroom Pets

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports classrooms caring for a resident pet only if that pet is owned by a responsible adult and taken home when school is not in session. The students must also be taught how to care for, respect and handle that animal visiting the classroom.

Rationale:

- Students that assist with caring for a pet learn about the animals' needs and behaviours. They also will learn about the responsibilities of caring for animals and empathy.
- Teachers must ultimately be responsible for the care of the classroom pet, as the students will look to their teacher as a model of responsible pet ownership. The best way to do this is to adopt the animal as his or her own. This shows the teacher's willingness to assume full responsibility of the classroom pet and that caring for a pet is an important full-time responsibility.
- The responsibilities and requirements for owning a pet must be thoroughly researched. This includes the appropriate type of pet; the needs for specific species and breeds; the cost of feeding, housing and veterinary care; liability; handling the animal; health concerns for students including allergies; and stress that the animal may experience in the classroom setting.

References:

1. National Association for Humane and Environmental Ethics. (1998). Is a classroom pet for you? Problems and promises of pets in the K-6 classroom [Brochure].
2. For guidelines on Classroom Pets, please see the websites listed below: **American SPCA** - <http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=petsinclass>
3. **BC SPCA** - <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/Educators/clsrmanimals.asp>

Note:

The parents, the school's principal and custodial staff should be informed of the arrival of a classroom pet before it enters the classroom.

Pets as Gifts

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the giving of pets as gifts to unknowing recipients. We will not knowingly adopt an animal to a third party if the future owner is unaware or unwilling to agree to the adoption.

Rationale:

- When purchasing or adopting a new pet, owners should research and become familiar with the breed and the care required for that type of animal. In addition, each animal has an individual personality. Future owners and other members of the household should meet and spend time with an animal before adopting or purchasing to ensure that they are comfortable with their decision.
- If an animal is given during a high-activity time in a household (for example, Christmas morning), the animal may be frightened by the loud and excited environment. In addition, the animal may be neglected amidst the activity.
- Responsible pet ownership is a significant commitment and often makes changes to an individual's lifestyle.
- Someone that has not made the conscious commitment to caring for a particular pet may be unaware of the needs of that animal, or may be unwilling to make appropriate lifestyle changes.
- The Edmonton Humane Society occasionally admits animals that have been given to unwilling recipients. Being surrendered by a family can be a traumatic experience for a pet and this should be avoided if possible.

Safe Transport of Companion Animals

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the transport of loose companion animals in vehicles, regardless of the speed of the vehicle. This applies to the inside of the passenger compartment, as well as an open area such as a truck box.

Pet owners should consider leaving their pets at home, or if this is not possible, animals should be transported in one of two ways:

1. Confined to a comfortable, well-ventilated crate that is secured to the vehicle;
or
2. Restricted from movement within the vehicle by an animal seatbelt (available at many pet stores).

Rationale:

- There are many risks to an animal's health and safety if transported without proper confinement or restriction from movement within the vehicle. Risks include:
 - falling out of or being thrown from the vehicle during sudden stops;
 - jumping from the vehicle into traffic;
 - suffering injuries from wind, insects and flying debris; and
 - strangulation or dragging behind the vehicle if tethered in an open vehicle, if it falls or jumps out of the vehicle.
- Animals that are able to move around within a moving vehicle may distract the driver, which could result in an accident.
- Animals left in unattended vehicles may be easily taunted, stolen, or harmed by extreme environmental conditions.
- Additional dangers/suggestions in warm weather:
 - On a warm day, a vehicle acts like an oven, trapping the heat inside. The inside temperature can soar to 39 C (100 F) in as little as ten minutes, and to 49 C (120 F) within thirty minutes. This can happen even if the windows are slightly rolled down or if the vehicle is parked in the shade.
 - Animals do not sweat in the same way as humans. With nothing but overheated air to breathe, a dog can only last a short time before suffering severe brain damage or even death.
 - If it is necessary to travel with an animal, travel with a passenger so you do not need to leave your pet in the car with the windows rolled up.

- Signs of heat exhaustion include heavy panting, unsteadiness, vomiting, glazed eyes, or a tongue that has change in colour to deep red or purple. If a pet is suffering from heat exhaustion, the owner should apply cool (not cold) water to its entire body, not including its head. The owner can also offer cool water to drink or ice cubes to lick, in addition to applying ice packs or cold towels to its head, neck, and chest. The owner should take his/her pet to the nearest veterinarian as soon as possible.
- Additional dangers in cold weather:
 - A vehicle can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold, and the companion animal can freeze to death.
 - If the car is left running, a pet could die from breathing in carbon monoxide.

Sale of Animals in Pet Stores

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. The Edmonton Humane Society also does not encourage the sale of other species of animals in pet stores.

Rationale:

- As long as there are animals waiting for a home in animal shelters or with rescue groups, we encourage the public to first consider adoption of a homeless animal through one of these agencies or a pet store acting on their behalf.
- As a pet store acts as an agent motivated financially to “sell” animals, the breeder is not able to meet, interview, or choose the animals’ future homes. A pet store that is selling animals for a breeder is ultimately encouraging irresponsible breeding.
- A breeder that sells his/her animals to a pet store cannot be considered “responsible.” A responsible breeder is concerned about the welfare of each animal and ensures that they all have homes to go to. Responsible breeders will interview each potential client, as they want to know about the person that is purchasing their animals. *(Please see the “Breeding of Domesticated Animals” Position Statement for further information about Responsible Breeders.)*
- Many pet stores do not ask sufficient questions or attempt to educate the client about an animal’s lifespan, the responsibility, and the commitment required. Pet stores will often sell animals without consideration for the quality of home the animal will have.
- A further problem which arises specifically in relation to the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores is that these animals are more likely to be allowed to roam, or are more likely to escape than caged pets. Selling unsterilized animals can contribute to the pet overpopulation problem, not only by supporting “backyard breeders” as suppliers of the animals, but also by failing to educate the buyer about the profound effect of allowing his/her animal to produce offspring.

Surgical Alteration of Companion Animals for Cosmetic Reasons

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the surgical alteration of companion animals for cosmetic purposes. Examples of cosmetic procedures include tail docking and ear cropping. Surgical alterations in cases of injury or for reasons of health are not considered cosmetic.

Rationale:

- Cosmetic surgery may cause unnecessary pain and suffering.
- Cosmetic surgery may lead to life threatening complications such as infection and hemorrhage.
- Cosmetic surgery poses no benefit to companion animals, and is sometimes ineffective in achieving the desired result.
- Several countries in Europe have banned tail docking.

References:

1. World Small Animal Veterinary Association. (2001). In WSAVA Tail Docking Position Statement [On-line]. Available: <http://www.wsava.org/Taildock.htm>

Note:

The EHS recommends that breed associations change their breed standards so that cosmetic procedures are not required.

Wild and Exotic Animals as Pets

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the keeping of wild and/or exotic animals as pets.

Definition:

A wild or exotic animal is any animal that has not been subjected to domestication through many generations of selective and controlled breeding and thereby adapted to living in close association with humans.

Rationale:

- Wild and exotic animals are often exposed to suffering and/or death in capture and transportation.
- Often the nutritional requirements for such pets are not understood; therefore, they can become sick and die.
- Wild and exotic animals may become unwanted pets in a very short period of time due to lack of owner knowledge about care requirements and the animal's behavior.
- Wild and exotic animals still retain their natural hunting and territorial defense mechanisms which can result in injury to the owner.
- Wild and exotic animals can carry a number of diseases that are transmissible to humans and native animals.
- Wild and exotic animals may escape or be abandoned by their owners. This can result in the displacement of native animals.
- Wild and exotic animals may be endangered in their natural environment. The extensive trapping or capture of such animals may lead to species extinction.

Note:

The Edmonton Humane Society acknowledges that some wild and exotic animals are currently permitted as pets within the City of Edmonton and as such, require responsible owners.

References:

1. Humane Society of the United States:
http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/issues_facing_wildlife/captive_exotics_and_wild_animals_as_pets/
2. American Humane Policy Statement:
http://www.americanhumane.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wh_where_stand_ap_sps_exotic_pets
3. Alberta SPCA Policies and Position Statements:
<http://www.albertaspca.org/policies.htm#Position%20Statements>
4. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies Policy Statements:
<http://www.cfhs.ca/GeneralInfo/AboutCFHS/Philosophy/policies.pdf>

Animals used in Blood Spectacles

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of animals in blood spectacles such as dog fighting, bullfighting, cockfighting and similar activities.

Rationale:

- Animals used in these spectacles often fight until one animal is no longer willing or able to continue.
- Most injuries inflicted in blood spectacles are severe and often fatal.
- Animals often die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, exhaustion or infection hours and sometimes days after fighting.
- Dogs used in blood spectacles often pose a threat to public safety if they are allowed to roam free.
- Young children are sometimes present at these events which can promote insensitivity to animal suffering, enthusiasm for violence and a lack of respect for the law.

References:

Humane Society of the United States:

<https://community.hsus.org/campaign/endanimalfighting/explanation>

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/animal_fighting_the_final_round/dogfighting_fact_sheet/

Domesticated Animals in Recreation or Competition

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the participation of domesticated animals in shows for public entertainment, recreation, or competition only if:

- all aspects of the animals' care are properly addressed;
- all activities are designed with the animals' health and safety as a first priority;
- training techniques that cause pain, fear and/or undue stress are not used;
- the owners' competitive drive does not cause the animals to feel pain, fear and/or undue stress, nor does it increase the intensity of an animal's behavior problems;
- the owners monitor their animals at all times to ensure the activities are not causing the animals pain or undue stress; and
- live bait is not used.

Definition:

A "domesticated animal" is one that has been subject to domestication through many generations of selective and controlled breeding and is thereby adapted to living in close association with humans (e.g. dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, etc.)

Recreation and competition for domesticated animals can be defined as dog agility, "Superdogs", cat and dog shows, herding competitions, horse jumping, etc.

Rationale:

- In the case of traveling shows that use domesticated animals (e.g. "Superdogs"):
 - Animal owners are usually able to find comfortable indoor accommodation for the animal (e.g. a boarding facility) to allow a significant amount of time outside of the traveling compartment (such as a kennel, stable, or field).
 - Appropriate veterinary care is available in most major centres for most domesticated breeds of animals.
- Domesticated animal shows usually exhibit the participant's natural behaviors such as running, jumping, and chasing, and as such, do not usually cause a great deal of stress for the animals.
- "In all areas of endeavor, animals must be portrayed and utilized with respect and dignity. Activities that portray or force animals to perform in ways not characteristic of their species should be discouraged, so as not to harm the animal or mislead the public as to the true nature of the animal." (CVMA, 2000)

References:

1. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. *Use of Animals in Entertainment and Recreation*. Revised November 2000. From the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association website: <http://canadianveterinarians.net/ShowText.aspx?ResourceID=23>

Note:

Performing domesticated animals must be properly trained and socialized in order to minimize safety risks. (*Please see "Humane Training Methods for Dogs" Position Statement for more information*)

Horse Racing

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of animals for any form of entertainment in which they are placed at risk of experiencing stress, pain, injury or death. The Society recognizes that horse racing and other related forms of entertainment involving the use of animals do take place. It is in the best interest of the animals involved that the Society monitors those who use the animals to ensure the potential suffering is minimized.

Rationale:

- Using animals in horse racing puts unnecessary stress on animals and endangers their health and safety, as well as their very lives.
- The Edmonton Humane Society advocates that the welfare of animals takes precedence over personal financial gain.
- The Edmonton Humane Society advises that all rules and regulations for the humane treatment of animals should be strictly and consistently enforced by organizations that are organizing and sponsoring the competitive exhibition of animals.

References:

1. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies:

<http://www.cfhs.ca/GeneralInfo/AboutCFHS/Philosophy/policies.pdf>

2. Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights:

http://avar.org/avar_position_statements.html#horseracing

3. The National Humane Education Society:

http://www.nhes.org/articles.asp?article_id=222§ion_id=60

Marine Mammals in Captivity

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the capture of marine mammals for the purpose of public entertainment.

For those aquariums with animals already in their possession, the Edmonton Humane Society encourages these facilities to seek accreditation with the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) and to participate in the Species Survival Plan (SSP).

The individual well being of the individual animal must be considered.

Rationale:

- The capture and transport of wild and non-domesticated animals has been known to cause stress, injury and in some cases, even death, to the animal. Capture may also disrupt the balance of family units formed in the wild.
- Traditional marine mammal exhibits center on animals such as sea lions, dolphins, or whales performing tricks that are exaggerated variations of their natural behaviours. In these traditional shows, almost nothing is taught about natural behaviours, ecology, demographics, or population distribution.
- Most marine mammal species migrate (such as most pinnipeds) or travel long distances (such as cetaceans) in the wild. Captive environments for these mammals are unable to simulate this activity.
- Unlike that of some terrestrial mammals, the habitat of marine mammals is difficult to recreate or simulate.
- Captive facilities, with their logistical constraints, commercial considerations, and space limitations, cannot provide conditions that allow natural social structures to form. Social groups are artificial in captivity.
- All species of marine mammals in captivity (except manatees and dugongs) are predators. In captivity, they are unable to exercise the part of their behaviour that is related to hunting and foraging. Stereotyped behaviours (pacing, swaying, and self-mutilation), severe aggression, and other behavioural problems frequently arise in predators denied their natural foraging behaviour.

References:

1. Hancocks, David. (2001). Is there a place in the world for zoos? In Salem, Deborah J. and Rowan, Andrew N. (Ed.), *The State of the Animals 2001* (pp.137-144). Washington D.C.: Humane Society Press.
2. Rose, Naomi A. *et al.* (1995). *The case against marine mammals in captivity*. Prepared for the Humane Society of the United States.
3. Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) webpage. (2004). *CAZA Accreditation Program*. Retrieved September 9, 2004 from <http://www.caza.ca/members/accprogram.htm>

Non-Domesticated Animals in Circuses and Traveling Shows

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of non-domesticated animals in circuses and traveling shows for the purposes of public entertainment.

Rationale:

- Animals become “domesticated” only after hundreds or thousands of generations of breeding for particular characteristics that allow human handling and contact. Wild animals are never entirely predictable and never completely under control.
- Animals in circuses and traveling shows are typically kept in small cages while on the road and are barely able to turn around. Circus animals are often shipped in trucks and railway cars without heat or air conditioning.
- Animals that spend time on the road often have limited access to a veterinarian experienced in the care and medical needs of the types of animals in circuses and traveling shows.
- Trainers sometimes use brutal methods to maintain a position of dominance over the animal. These methods include withholding food and beating the animals with clubs and other objects.
- Circuses often show animals performing unnatural behaviours, which holds no educational value for the audience and is of no benefit to the animals.

References:

1. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. (2000, November). The Use of Animals in Entertainment, Recreation. In Animal Welfare Position Statements [On-line].
2. Available:<http://www.cvma-acmv.org/welfare1.asp?subcat=Priorities&num=5>
3. Humane Society of the United States. (2004). *Circus Myths*. Retrieved September 9, 2004 from <http://www.hsus.org/ace/12072>
4. Robinson, Kim. (2003). *Public Safety and the Ineffectiveness of Circus Recapture Plans*. Retrieved September 16, 2004 from: <http://www.zoocheck.com/programs/entertain/safetydoc.pdf>

Rodeo and Chuckwagon Racing

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of animals for any form of entertainment in which they are placed at risk of experiencing stress, pain, injury or death. The Society recognizes that rodeo, chuckwagon racing and other related forms of entertainment involving the use of animals do take place. It is in the best interest of the animals involved that the Society monitors those who use the animals to ensure the potential suffering is minimized.

Rationale:

- Using animals in rodeo events puts unnecessary stress on animals and endangers their health and safety, as well as their very lives. Numerous accidents that have occurred in rodeo events, leading to the death of animals or injuries that have led to euthanization, have been documented.
- The Edmonton Humane Society advocates that the welfare of animals takes precedence over financial considerations of personal gain in humans' stewardship of those animals.
- The Edmonton Humane Society advises that all rules and regulations for the humane treatment of animals should be strictly and consistently enforced by organizations that are organizing and sponsoring the competitive exhibition of animals.
- Chuckwagon races are especially dangerous. When a chuckwagon horse trips or falls, other wagon horses (from the same wagon, and sometimes from other wagons) are always affected. In addition, it often takes a length of time to stop the wagon, which increases the probability that more horses will be injured.

References:

1. The Calgary Humane Society for Prevention of Cruelty of Animals Position Paper on Chuckwagon Races, as approved by their Board of Directors on May 28, 2003.
2. Alberta Society for Prevention of Cruelty of Animals Position Paper on Animals Used for Entertainment and Exhibition,
<http://www.albertaspca.org/policies.htm>.

Zoos and Wildlife Parks

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the capture of wildlife and non-domesticated animals for the purpose of confinement and public display.

For those zoos and wildlife parks with animals already in their possession, the Edmonton Humane Society encourages these facilities to seek accreditation with the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) and to participate in the Species Survival Plan (SSP).

The individual well being of the individual animal must be considered.

Rationale:

- The capture and transport of wild and non-domesticated animals has been known to cause stress, injury and in some cases, even death, to the animal. Capture may also disrupt the balance of family units formed in the wild.
- Zoo and wildlife park enclosures limit the animal's movement to a great extent and are likely to cause distress or suffering.
- Zoo and wildlife park animals display signs of boredom at times that include abnormal behaviours such as over grooming or repetitive pacing. Steps should be taken to provide animals with enrichment programs to provide stimulation and challenges that are not life-threatening but give the animal some control over its activities.
- The presence of visitors in front of zoo and wildlife park exhibits can disrupt the behaviour of social animals such as primates. Unpredictable or loud noises may also have negative effects on the health and behaviour of animals.
- CAZA's Accreditation Program is responsible for ensuring that the institutional members adhere to the Code of Ethics, provide a safe environment for the public, staff and collection and provide adequate care and housing for the animal collection.
- Accredited zoos and wildlife parks display animals in simulated natural habitats; use modern veterinary medicine; provide the animals with fresh wholesome food because the animals' diet has been carefully researched and evaluated; zoo education programs reach millions of students each year; and keepers are highly trained, knowledgeable, and dedicated.
- The Edmonton Humane Society realizes that because many species of animals are threatened with extinction due to human activities, some zoos have become major centers for conservation and public education.

Note: accreditation involves an application, questionnaire and an announced on-site inspection by a team of three CAZA members, one of which must be a zoo veterinarian.

References:

1. Laidlaw, Rob. (January 2002). Commentary on the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) Accreditation Process. Retrieved September 9, 2004 from <http://www.zoocheck.com/programs/marine/mland/accre.pdf>
2. Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) webpage. (2004). *CAZA Accreditation Program*. Retrieved September 9, 2004 from <http://www.caza.ca/members/accprogram.htm>
3. Hancocks, David. (2001). Is there a place in the world for zoos? In Salem, Deborah J. and Rowan, Andrew N. (Ed.), *The State of the Animals 2001* (pp.137-144). Washington D.C.: Humane Society Press.
4. Bekoff, Mark *et al* (Ed.). (1998). *Encyclopedia of animal rights and animal welfare* (1st ed.). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Euthanasia

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society will exercise every reasonable effort to prevent medically and behaviorally sound animals from being euthanized.

Rationale:

- The Edmonton Humane Society does not have time limitations placed on an animal's stay in the shelter. Animals will remain available for adoption as long as they are physically and mentally healthy.
- The Edmonton Humane Society is an open admission shelter and will accept all companion animals; including those that are ill, injured, feral, and behaviorally unsound.
- Each animal is considered for adoption on an individual basis. The role of the Edmonton Humane Society is to act in the best interest of the animal's well-being, while considering the availability of resources.
- Animals are offered every reasonable option to support the possibility of a successful placement in the community. These options include, but are not limited to: foster care, placement partners, surgical procedures, extra socializing, and enrichment programs.
- A team of experienced staff members including a certified veterinarian, senior manager and behaviorist (when appropriate) will review the condition of each animal and this team will explore reasonable alternatives before a decision on euthanasia is finalized. Exceptions to this practice may occur when an animal is in obvious pain or distress, is unsafe to handle, or has a documented history of aggression.

Note:

Euthanasia is a difficult and sensitive topic. The Edmonton Humane Society provides alternatives wherever possible, but it will perform services to end the unnecessary suffering of companion animals when no other viable options exist.

To reduce the need for euthanasia, the Edmonton Humane Society provides training classes, free behavior advice, and educates the public on the benefits of spay & neuter and responsible pet ownership.

Farming

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the raising and marketing of livestock for food and resulting by-products, where there is a standard of care that ensures the welfare of the animals.

Rationale:

- The Edmonton Humane Society understands humans' traditional dependence on livestock as a source of food and other products.
- The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that the welfare of animals must take precedence over financial considerations in humans' stewardship of those animals.
- The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that producers follow or exceed the standards set out in the **Codes of Practice & Fact Sheets for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals by the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council.**

Reference:

Alberta SPCA Position Statements:

<http://www.albertasPCA.org/policies.htm#Position%20Statements>

Canadian Agri-Food Research Council: Codes of practice & fact sheets for the care and handling of farm animals http://www.carc-crac.ca/english/codes_of_practice

Improper Psychological Environment as a Form of Animal Abuse

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports animals being raised and kept in an environment that promotes and maintains the emotional and psychological needs of the animal, in addition to the physical needs.

Definition:

- 'Psychological' well-being is a state in which an animal is free from distress most of the time, is in good physical health, exhibits a substantial range of the species-typical behaviours, and is able to deal effectively with environmental stimuli.

Rationale:

- Animals need companionship (human and/or animal, depending on the species), care, exercise, and attention. Animals can only be in a state of “psychological well-being” if their emotional and psychological needs are being met.
- Animals that are not having their psychological needs met can exhibit signs of distress (e.g. behavioral issues, depression, etc.)
- Although current Animal Protection Laws do not allow the Edmonton Humane Society to charge owners for psychological abuse, the EHS still considers this a form of abuse.

References:

1. Suzanne Hetts, J. Derrell Clark, Janet P. Calpin, Cheryl E. Arnold, and Jill M. Mateo. Influence of housing conditions on beagle behaviour. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, Vol. 34 (1992) 137-155.

Vertebrate Pest Management

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support methods of vertebrate pest management that cause undue suffering, pain or distress of an animal. While the EHS acknowledges that under certain circumstances, pest control and/or extermination may be required, the EHS only supports the use of humane methods.

Rationale:

- Regardless of the problems pest animals cause, they require the same level of consideration for their welfare as animals in other contexts.
- The EHS encourages a review of control or deterrent measures be taken prior to coming to the conclusion that extermination is required. Methods such as motion detectors, alarms and sensor lights can often be sufficient to rectify certain pest problems.
- In the event that extermination is required, the EHS recommends methods that result in a more humane death (i.e. without pain, suffering or distress). These humane, safe and cost-effective methods include catch and release and traditional quick death traps.
- Conventional methods, such as trapping (e.g. steel jawed leg hold traps), poisons and baiting strategies (e.g. cyanide) and/or inhumane burrow clearing and fumigation techniques cause an animal to experience extreme pain and suffering.
- Conventional methods of extermination often involve methods such as poisonous chemicals, which have effects on other non-target species, including humans. Other animals, children or adults can be harmed by an animal, which has been poisoned.

References:

1. Proceedings of the 2003 RSPCA Australia Scientific Seminar, “Solutions for Achieving Humane Vertebrate Pest Control”; White Paper.
2. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA); “Associated Policies on Pest Management”.
3. Alberta Fish & Wildlife Edmonton District Office– phone conversation with Fish & Wildlife Officer Dennis Prodan Thursday, October 7, 2:30pm.

Notes:

- Vertebrate pests include (but are not limited to): coyotes, raccoons, skunks, rabbits, cats, squirrels, prairie dogs, gophers, rats, moles and mice.
- The EHS recommends adopting solutions to control pest issues before they begin/escalate as well as subsequent to humane control measures being implemented. Preventative measures including filling cracks in buildings, erecting fences, keeping potential ‘pest infestation sites’ clean, sanitary and free from food products help negate the need for any extermination issues.

Wolf/Dog Hybrids

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society opposes keeping wolves and wolf hybrids as pets.

Rationale:

- While wolf/dog hybrids share some characteristics with dogs, these animals are not domesticated, and behaviors that are natural for them in the wild pose dangers to people and other companion animals in the home. In addition, their needs cannot be met in a home setting.

References:

1. Animal Welfare Information Center Newsletter, Winter 1994/1995, Vol. 5 No. 4

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/newsletters/v5n4/5n4wille.htm>