Alberta Animal Welfare Conference

October 4, 5, 2012
Edmonton, Alberta

Dr. Duane Landals
Registrar, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
Vice President, World Veterinary Association

www.abvma.ca
www.worldvet.org
Best Management Practices for Animal Shelters and Rescue
What is Animal Shelter and Rescue?

• “a place that provides stray, abandoned or abused animals a sanctuary or where permanent or temporary adoptive homes are sought for animals”

Newfoundland and Labrador- Animal Protection Regulations
Why do Shelters and Rescues Exist?

• Societal responsibility to insure ownerless animals receive adequate care
• Inability of domestic animals to fend for themselves without human intervention
• Companion animals do not face the same end of life situations as food producing animals
• Need by humans to nurture
• Opportunity
• Guilt
What is the Role of Shelters and Rescues?

What is the Role of Shelters and Rescues?

Provide ownerless animals with:

• Temporary housing
• Relief of distress (adequate food, warmth etc)
• Emergency medical care
• Return to original owners
• Establishment of permanent home through adoption
What is the Role of Shelters and Rescues?

Provide the public with:

- Knowledge and information regarding responsible companion animal ownership
- Relief of undesirable effects of ownerless animals
- Control of ownerless animal populations (sterilization, identification, animal tracking etc)
What is the Role of Shelters and Rescues?

Provide society with:

• Enforcement of local animal welfare legislation and bylaws
• An appropriate disposition of animals taken into custody under law
• An outlet for animals no longer wanted by owners
• Long term care for animals less desirable as pets
• Humane euthanasia for animals that cannot be maintained in an appropriate state of welfare
Who is Impacted by the Actions of Shelters and Rescues?

- Operators/owners
- Volunteers
- Workers
- Contributors
- Enforcement personnel
- Animal owners
- Veterinarians and animal health technologists
- General public
- Animals, including dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, pet pigs, llamas and so on

*No Shelter or Rescue Operates in Isolation*
Shelters and Rescues are a Business!

- Require operating funds $$
- Must follow business and tax rules
- Must follow work place safety standards for workers (paid or unpaid)
- Must follow animal protection legislation
- Need to maintain public trust and approval
Didn’t We Forget Something?

Oh Yes!

Let's not forget the animals.

Obligation for care goes beyond the minimum required by law.
Five Freedoms

• Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
• Freedom from discomfort
• Freedom from pain, injury or disease
• Freedom to express normal behavior
• Freedom from fear and distress
Best Management Practices for Animal Shelter and Rescue in Alberta

- Published by the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
- Foundation for the establishment of best management practices
- Voluntary
- Are not minimum standards
- Vision to develop system of accountability and credibility for such operations
- Current regulatory process is challenged
Alberta Wildlife Rehabilitators’ Association

- Published minimum standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Similar goals- provide care for animals that cannot care for themselves
- Different outcomes:
  - Wildlife is to be rehabilitated to be returned to the wild from human custody
  - Companion animals are to be rehabilitated and returned to responsible human custody from ownerless/wild state

The principals are the same
Best Practices-Operational

- Facility and animal receiving area
- Record keeping and documentation
- Staff training, orientation and protection
Best Practices - Animal Acquisition

- Legal and ethical
- Peace officer
- Owner surrender
- Shelter transfers
- Stray animals under Municipal Bylaw
- International sources

**Animals should not be acquired from any source simply for the purpose of resale**
Best Practices - Record Keeping

- Complete, accurate and permanent
- Presenter information
- Animal information, identification (also what was not found)
- Presenting history and situation
- Health, behavioral or other issues
- Treatments, alterations or identifications received during period of sheltering
- Animal inventory reports
- Annual reports and summaries
Best Practices-Transportation

- Crates, trailers, vehicles designed to restrict movement
- Floor covering to prevent slipping
- Proper ventilation
- Removal of all loose items, including food and water containers
- Designed for easy cleaning and sanitization
Best Practices-Feeding

- Diet appropriate for age, species, physiological condition
- Clean fresh water available at all times
- Food prepared and stored under sanitary conditions, refrigeration
Best Practices - Medical Care

- One or more veterinarians designated as facility veterinarian
- Documented and legitimate veterinary-client relationship in existence
- All veterinary activity in accordance with provincial and federal legislation
- Adequate supply of disinfectants and cleaning agents
- Proper administration of medications and handling of prescription drugs
- Access to pathology services, surgery, radiology, diagnostics etc
Best Practices-Biosecurity

- Documented protocols to prevent disease transmission
  - Animal to human,
  - Human to animal,
  - Animal to animal
- Processes to protect public health
Best Practices-Housing

- Includes cages, pens, stalls, runs etc
- Appropriate size and nature
- Strong, easily cleaned and disinfected
- Kept in good repair
- Predator proof
- Escape proof
- Provide adequate shelter from elements
- Considerations must be made for indoors vs. outdoors
Best Practices-Fostering or Adopting

- Written protocol followed to assess suitability of animal for adoption (health and behavior)
- Permanent identification applied before leaving
- Spayed or neutered before release
- Dependable commitment for non reproduction in non sterilized animals where surgery is not appropriate (e.g. mares)
- Appropriate vaccinations administered and arrangements for boosters made
- Owner – animal compatibility
- Assessment of new owner
Ethical Considerations

• Any animal posing a threat to the public or other animals should not be released to the general population!

• Releasing a domestic animal of any species into the wild or into an unattended environment is unacceptable!
Best Practices - Euthanasia

• Euthanasia “a good death”
• May be required when no other suitable option exists to prevent animal suffering
• Consideration to age, injury, temperament, living situation
• Must be reliable, irreversible, safe and rapid
• Only upon the advice of the facility veterinarian and in accordance with documented and appropriate protocols
• Only by universally accepted means, generally lethal injection

_Euthanasia practices must respect the animal, the person performing the procedure, onlookers and society in general_
This Presentation is Only an Outline

- Refer to the entire manual available at www.abvma.ca
- Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations www.canadianveterinarians.net
- Code of Practice for Canadian Cattery Operations www.canadianveterinarians.net
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters www.sheltervet.org
Questions?
Thank you!

Dr. Duane Landals, BScAg, DVM
Registrar, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
Vice President, World Veterinary Association
Contact: duane.landals@abvma.ca