



Information Series

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The Animal Shelter

Dogs, cats and other animals arrive at the animal shelter for many different reasons. **More than 4 out of 10** are brought in by their owners, usually because the owner doesn't want to care for their pet anymore, their pet's behavior is not acceptable, or they are moving. Others are brought in because they were running loose in someone's neighborhood or abandoned on their property. Still more are picked up by animal control officers because they are wandering, harming people or other animals, are injured or unfortunately, dead from being hit by a car.

In Thurston County in 2002, the animal shelter handled 7,963 animals, mostly dogs and cats. **This means that approximately 153 animals every week come to the shelter!** In an average week:

- 82 strays are brought in by the public or by animal control officers;
- 58 pets are brought to the shelter by their owners;
- 4 animals are picked up dead on the road by our officers;
- 51 pets are adopted back into the community; and
- 20 pets are returned to their owner.

With this many unwanted animals, several decisions have to be made about each animal:

- Is the pet's owner going to come and pick up his or her pet?
- Is the animal a good pet to adopt if the owner doesn't come get it?
- How old is the animal, and is it healthy?
- Is there enough room at the shelter to keep the animal?

We find homes for many of the animals, but what do we do if there's no room or the animal isn't a good candidate for adoption?

Sadly, in 2002, the animal shelter had to euthanize 58 animals each week. Most of these animals were not good candidates for adoption--they were too sick, injured or unfriendly--but some were healthy, young animals that no one adopted.

In the United States, **8-12 million animals enter shelters every year**, and approximately half are euthanized. You might be asking yourself, "Why are there so many animals to begin with?"

Many people do not spay or neuter their pets. This is the most common reason that animals cannot find homes and end up being euthanized--**there are simply too many**. Even one litter contributes to this problem.

Spaying or neutering your pet and encouraging others to do the same will help eliminate pet overpopulation, and euthanasia of healthy animals can become a thing of the past!