

THE KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ

The Knowledge Café provided a unique opportunity to help ACC&D collect the perspectives of each profession represented at the symposium to inform the Sunday interactive session. Participants broke up into rounds as ACC&D board members hosted discussion tables to learn what the various professions need in order to help achieve the ACC&D mission.

Participants self-selected into groups based on their profession or primary area of interest (veterinarians, animal welfare, pharmaceutical, funders, academic research, and miscellaneous). During round-table discussions, participants answered the questions, “What does your profession need in order to help achieve the ACC&D mission?” and “What do you see as the key challenges for your profession’s role in achieving this mission?” Responses were recorded on flip charts and are included below.

Please refer to “Personal Action Plans and Collaborations” to learn how the Knowledge Café outcomes were used to develop the interactive Sunday morning session and ultimately develop commitments and collaborations from attendees.

Stakeholders: Academic Research

- ☛ One-time intervention/permanent sterilization (cheap).
- ☛ EPA regulatory approval (not USDA or FDA).
- ☛ Recognize zoonotic connection to raise priority of eliminating animal reservoirs through contraception.
- ☛ Convince government: dog overpopulation is a social and human health problem.
- ☛ Humane education (getting pet owners to take responsibility for animals).
- ☛ More behavior data so we can better inform and educate pet owners.
- ☛ Provide funding (broadly defined). Paying attention to concerns about overhead – the best and brightest researchers must be able to attain tenure and promotions and the level of overhead is important.
- ☛ Facilitate connections/collaborations. Something as simple as a website resource of researchers and their areas of interest and list of publications.
- ☛ Continue symposia.
- ☛ Sources of other funding sources for contraceptive research. Again, maybe a list of foundations, sections at NIH funding contraception where dog or cat could serve as a model for human contraception or basic contraceptive research could be funded.
- ☛ Provide ideas/PR support or other support for humane groups that would like to partner with contraceptive researchers and not be accused of doing research/experimentation on their own shelter animals.

Stakeholders: Animal Welfare

- 👉 Information for vets who don't believe in ACC&D and that they will not lose income
- 👉 Ready for something new
- 👉 Congressional aide says: harmonizing regs and requirements; need info
- 👉 From ACC&D: inexpensive
- 👉 Let us be a study site (Cleveland) – penetration is there
- 👉 Oral or one shot
- 👉 Vet is sick of spay/neuter
- 👉 Promotional material/education – in lay terms
- 👉 What would it take to get from bench to product?
- 👉 What would it take to stimulate funding?
- 👉 Break out of “same old, same old”
- 👉 Why do we keep doing the same thing?
- 👉 Communication with vets; hold vet forum at a conference on population medicine (NA, Western, AVMA, AAHA)
- 👉 Template for presentation to local vet associations – distribute
- 👉 Can ACC&D be proactive legislatively?
- 👉 Vet application only?
- 👉 Certify to kill – what about save?
- 👉 Partners with human public health interest
- 👉 Doctors without borders
- 👉 Socioeconomic model – prevention is cheaper than treatment
- 👉 Shelter data – cost analysis
- 👉 Marketing – sterilization is sexy
- 👉 Target general public – to generate interest and demand
- 👉 Show that non-surgical does not have side effects of neutering – UTI, behavior
- 👉 How can affinity for nature of animal be overcome to allow “changing it”?
- 👉 Neutersol was accepted by people who would not neuter
- 👉 Conflict between practice vets who use procedures to continue services to clients vs. one-time procedure

Stakeholders: Pharmaceutical

- 👉 There needs to be some political influence or lobbying to help move regulators to be more realistic in regulating animal contraceptives. We need to pick a couple of promising technologies and get a “Bob Barker” type spokesperson to highlight need and put pressure on the regulators: “Work in the political space.”
- 👉 The magnitude of the money currently being spent is as much as drug development costs. ACCD talks about needing \$10 million – that is what Houston, Texas, alone

spends on shelters, and it costs \$20 million to construct new shelters. How can we put some of that money into non-surgical alternatives?

- ☛ There is money to build shelters, pay for drugs to kill animals and animal disposal. Can we get some of that money for drug development?
- ☛ Could we conceive of the “pull” model where we offer \$X million as a prize for a company or organization that develops a non-surgical contraceptive? What would determine how much that X needs to be? We would need to set specific criteria for what the proposed product would need to be to “win” that \$X million by developing a product.
- ☛ We need a political lobby to help regulators lower the barriers for new non-surgical contraceptives. USDA/EPA/FDA confusion is a barrier for investors – the less the regulatory risk, the less that prize money number would need to be, because the less risk a company would take in developing a product.
- ☛ Could there be a government guaranteed market – that is, could that “prize” be supplied by the government, who might say, for example, we are spending \$50 million per year over the entire U.S. on animal shelters. If you get a good non-surgical, which could decrease this cost by 50%, we will give you the difference.
- ☛ Why is it that two years ago (ACCD, 2004), we were saying products were three years away, and here we are, three years later, and still nothing is approved?

Stakeholders: Miscellaneous

About Scientific and Product Development

1. Options galore
2. Efficacy/support
3. Articulate exactly what product ACC&D wants
4. Focused product definition
5. Risk of failure
6. Realistic expectations (time and money; this takes a long time, with risk of failure, trial and error on the way; need patience)
7. Trials (\$\$\$)
8. Infrastructure support (Central? Common?)

The people making funding decisions are very conservative. This is anti-innovation!

Awareness and Education

Need increased awareness about the possibilities of contraceptive alternatives.

Need education to translate the opportunity ... in language for a lay audience!

- ☛ National campaign: “We will put a man on the moon” ... “Race for the Cure”
- ☛ How do we introduce the limitations of spay/neuter without derailing our efforts?
- ☛ Nobel Peace Prize for Contraception
- ☛ Social marketing: What’s in it for me? What do people want and what will they respond to? Suggestion that people will be embarrassed by their dog displaying heat behavior in public. Is that a motivation?

- 👉 News that there could be options that are good for a range of needs: for feral cats, for breeders. That is not known.

Data Needs

- 👉 Do studies to better assess the true cost of sterilization, in private practice and in shelters, to clarify the benchmarks of spay/neuter. Shelters underestimate the cost of this.
 - How long do they live?
 - Do long-lived feral cats cause the same environmental damage (to birds) as short-lived?
 - Do you increase populations by neutering and creating longer lives?
 - Cost/benefit analysis
 - For feral
- 👉 Need to understand population dynamics of feral cat colonies that are neutered.
- 👉 For stray dog colonies, need to understand where to use sterilization wisely, and cost-effectively. Are there some populations that aren't sustainable and sterilization is wasted (puppies, if born, don't survive)?

In order to move this forward more quickly, we need more collaborations:

- 👉 To test emerging technologies
- 👉 Outside the limitations of people loyal to or limited by their patent affiliations
- 👉 For the common good, without constraints of competition

Don't get distracted with wildlife – very complicated, ethical issues. Where does the feral cat/dog overlap fit, then? Sort out ethics (of owned vs. feral).

Seems like there is lots of progress since the last conference and ACC&D isn't acknowledging that!

Late-breaking idea: Could a nonprofit startup be used for drug development to limit total costs and to increase speed-to-market?

Additional concern: What will be the after-effects of non-surgical sterilization and improved health care (vaccines, etc.) for feral animals on other populations/species? What types of long-term impacts might be forecast?

What Stakeholders Might Need ... and Where ACC&D Might Help

(Ideas generated by ACC&D prior to the symposium.)

Charitable Funders (Foundation, Organization and Individual Donors)

- ▶ Analysts to guide donors/investors
- ▶ Interpret grant applications, update reports and results
- ▶ Models for joint nonprofit/for-profit funding of research
- ▶ Ways to measure return on investment for scientific research
- ▶ Navigate issues of animal research

Researchers

- ▶ Funding support – to move research forward more quickly and allow focus on the work, rather than on fundraising
- ▶ Consulting help to assess commercial applicability and address issues early on
- ▶ Working with the humane community on solutions for animal subjects that are ethically acceptable to donors and animal welfare
- ▶ Information clearinghouse to access the best emerging data

Pharmaceutical Companies

- ▶ Confidence in marketplace and demand; building a demand through advocacy
- ▶ Confidence in science under development
- ▶ Early stage funders to lower risk of investment
- ▶ Better connect research and development sooner to streamline the “bench to bedside” pathway
- ▶ Help researchers integrate entrepreneurial business best practices

Veterinarians

- ▶ Data to inspire confidence in products’ safety and efficacy
- ▶ Adequate education about this new product category
- ▶ Incentive to use the products for purposes key to dog and cat population control
- ▶ Methods to identify animals receiving the treatment
- ▶ Pricing to allow competitive pricing for clients along with adequate profit margins

Animal Welfare

- ▶ Data to inspire confidence in products’ safety and efficacy
- ▶ Adequate education about this new product category
- ▶ Incentive to use the products for purposes key to dog and cat population control
- ▶ Methods to identify animals receiving the treatment
- ▶ Pricing and possible nonprofit or government subsidy funds to be able to provide for homeless pets and low-income owners