Animal Balance

"*Protecting all Species*"

Our mission is to create community based sterilization programs on islands where escalating cat and dog population are a threat to bio diversity, or the local people cannot afford to sterilize their animals.

Chemical Sterilization: Understanding opportunities and challenges

Summary of the use of Neutersol and Esterilsol by Animal Balance

- Galapagos Islands: May 2004 Animal Balance administered Neutersol on 103 male dogs on Isabela Island.
- American and Independent Samoa: February 2010 Animal Balance administered Esterilsol on 18 male dogs.



Benefits of using Neutersol & Esterilsol on Galapagos Islands, 2004 & Samoan Islands, 2010

1. Easier to carry into a remote location. No need for oxygen tanks, anesthetic machines or huge amounts of supplies. Therefore less expensive, logistically appealing and safer.
2. Non invasive so kinder for the dogs. We should always use the kindest choice that we have available to us.
3. Ability to inject large numbers of dogs quickly. For Example: threat to native species on Galapagos by dogs so urgent need for effective and immediate action.
4. No need for recovery area and monitoring. Most of the places where we work, the people are very poor and do not have a space to keep the dog in recovery, or even allow them into the home.
5. In some cultures the men prefer that the dogs keep their testicles in tact and large as a sign of strength (for him & the dog!)
6. In some instances the dogs health was too poor for anesthesia so Esterilsol was the best choice.
7. Often the dogs are working dogs and the owners just want their dogs to be sterile, without other changes.

Isabela Island, Galapagos, May 2004, using tin roof on the ground.

Isabela Island, Galapagos, in a village using the tail gate of the pick up

In Mexico City, January 2010, Dr. Byron Maas was trained in the use of Esterilsol

American Samoa, February 2010, at the Dept. Of Agriculture (DoA) 'clinic

Apia, Independent Samoa, 2010, Animal Balance clinic in a Fale

Independent Samoa, 2010, Recovery area at the Animal Balance clinic in a Fale

In Samoa we Faced Some Challenges

No humane dog box traps, only tranquilizer (acepromazine) in bait. Needed to track baited dogs until they were sedate enough to catch with net or leash.

The heat (90-100 degrees each day)

Dr. Mark Johnson of Global Wildlife Resources advised us regarding our capture strategy. His help was invaluable as the stray dogs were not socialize to humans.

Dog's Health:

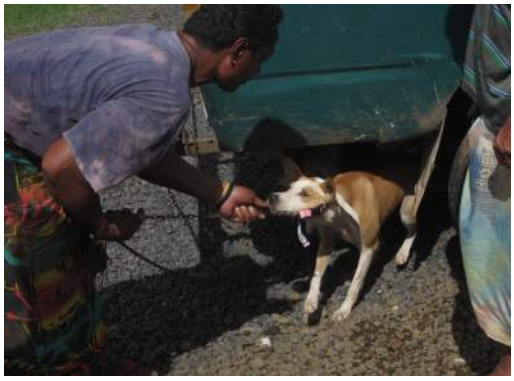
Transmissible Venereal Tumor (TVT) in large number of dogs (70%) many were dehydrated, malnourished, many broken legs that had healed on own, no vet care for entire lives, no vaccines or health checks.

Dogs live in packs. Could only catch weaker and younger or very old dogs.

We had to reject many dogs for the Esterilsol injections.

Testicle adheased to the scrotum, due to a dog fight

Approx 90% of the stray dogs had mange



Even 'owned' dogs were not used to being handled by people, or wearing leashes

Identification: They were identified with a tattoo, collar and paint spot on their backs.

The paint spot lasted about a month for our immediate use and the tattoo for life. We would like to find another method that would be visible from a distance and last for life.

On Galapagos in 2004 we had micro chipped and taken 'doggie mug shots' of the dogs, but it is very expensive. On Samoa our partners do not have the capacity to recapture the dogs.

Human aspect:

My team became concerned by the sight of swollen testicles, even though we proved there was no pain or discomfort (dogs were sitting fine and not showing any outward signs of pain, etc). They did not want to release dogs with swollen testicles. We decided to keep them longer until the swelling had gone down, which was about 2 days. The added benefit to this was that we could give them further fluids and care. However, it meant that we injected less dogs. The capture team did become resistant to catching male dogs out of concern.

This dog was in poor condition, he had an injury to his penis and a fish hook in his mouth. He was too sick to go under anesthesia so we injected him with Esterilsol. This helped the team understand how the product can be used and that there are choices beyond neutering.

Monitoring:

Difficult on both islands. We lived 20 minutes from the dog housing area. We had to go 2 times in night, normally around 2 pm and 5 am, catching taxis or borrowing a van. We were exhausted. It was difficult to take temperature or handle stray dogs in recovery.

This dog was rejected for Esterilsol injections as the pack had attacked him and bitten his testicles.

Approx 70% of the stray dogs had TVT's

Summary of what we have learned

- How to utilize the correct capture mechanisms and strategies. It must be less stressful for the dog, for the capture team and more efficient. i.e. An increase in stress changes the effectiveness of the sedation drugs.
- How to work with team members who are resistant to the concept and overcoming those issues are paramount to our success in the future.
- Understanding the cultural biases allows for more effective strategic planning.
- Each island, each dog population, each situation where we work is very different. One strategy does not work for all. We are learning to use which tool where. Having a variety of methods of sterilizing the animals only increases our capacity to be kinder, cost effective and more efficient.

Animal Balance would like to thank the ACC&D and Ark Animal Sciences for supporting our efforts to take this technology to the field and improve our knowledge on implementing a multifaceted strategy to combat the over population of dogs on islands worldwide.