

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED AND PRODUCTS THAT COULD MEET THAT NEED

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Cat and dog ownership practices vary widely throughout the world in relation to factors including poverty, climate, culture, accessibility of support services and community-specific attitudes. When communities face problems arising from dog and cat populations, whether real or perceived, these concerns are often described as “overpopulation”. But this term is an oversimplification of the complex issues facing dogs, cats, and communities, and defines the problem such that sterilization is always the right answer.

The root cause of most problems that arise for communities in relation to dogs and cats is from the basic guardianship needs of those animals going unmet. When animals seek to fulfill their basic needs, such as for food, water, physical activity and social interaction, these may be experienced by people as a nuisance or threat, while a lack of prevention of zoonotic disease poses human health risks. At IFAW, we begin with a community-level assessment that examines factors such as availability and quality of food and water, access to veterinary care, human and animal safety concerns, social and behavior needs, and expectations of the community in which the animals live. With this in mind, we can specifically target how and why sterilization is critical to an intervention, and how it may effectively function in accordance with other intervention tools.

This talk will paint a portrait of three diverse global situations in which cat and dog populations may benefit from the development of an effective injectable sterilant, along with the community-specific concerns that must be addressed in the development of such a tool.