

IMPLICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS OF DIFFERENT PROFILE PRODUCTS

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In the United States, tremendous progress has been made to bring down euthanasia rates in shelters over the last several decades. Thanks to wide-spread acceptance of spaying and neutering, we've seen a drop from upwards of 20 million cats and dogs euthanized in the 1970s, to approximately 3.4 million today.

On average, about 80% of all owned pets are spayed and neutered. However, we find the opposite is true in under-served communities. Without access to affordable care, many people don't spay or neuter their pets. We also have found that the vast majority of pets in those communities have never been to a veterinarian, and almost 90% of our clients have never contacted their local animal shelter or animal control agency. Additionally, it is estimated that nationally less than 3% of free-roaming cats are sterilized. Clearly, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Our field has become incredibly efficient and effective in running high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinics. But, this approach still has limitations:

- Not all pets are good candidates for surgery due to age, pre-existing conditions, and other factors.
- Surgery can be stressful for an animal. Also, many people are hesitant to put their pet through surgery.
- Some veterinarians still hesitate to spay or neuter before 5 or 6 months of age.
- Adding facilities and proper staffing to provide high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter requires a significant capital investment.

Having nonsurgical sterilization or contraception options would add incredibly valuable tools to the toolbox to expedite the reduction of euthanasia in shelters and ensure quality lives for pets, wherever they live. Specifically, such tools could:

- Provide an option for sterilizing pets who aren't candidates for surgery due to age, illness or other factors. Also has the potential to reduce surgical complications.
- Provide pet owners with a choice—allowing for those who do not want surgery to still prevent reproduction in their pets.
- Be portable and more easily deployed in the field. For example, at Pets for Life events, we could neuter dogs on the spot, saving the time it takes to schedule surgery, provide vouchers, conduct all the follow up to ensure compliance, instruct the owner, transport the pet to the clinic, etc.
- Provide a faster field option for sterilizing free-roaming/feral animals, saving time and resources in terms of not having to transport to a clinic and a much shorter recovery time.
- Offer shelters options for reducing operating costs, and expediting flow of the animals in the shelter, allowing for more animals to be adopted out more quickly.

- Reduce capital expenses in new shelter facilities – nonsurgical options require fewer staff per procedure, and greatly reduce recovery time and space.
- In hoarding or cruelty cases, animals could be altered before transfer to adoption partners more quickly, and perhaps even at the temporary holding site.
- Even with a temporary contraceptive, it could buy time for permanent option. For example, in long-term cruelty holds where permanent sterilization isn't permitted, perhaps a contraceptive could be used on an interim basis. Or, in a case where an agency is working proactively with a hoarder to relinquish a few pets at a time, a contraceptive could help get the situation under control while interventions are being deployed.