## Toronto Humane Society Megestrol Acetate (MA) Pilot Program

Administration of MA microdose to community cats (1mg/cat/week)



Prepared March 2022 by Toronto Humane Society for ACC&D Linda Jacobson DVM, Kyrsten Jade Janke, Rachael Nagelberg

## Set-up

- Program dates: 02/02/21 08/16/21
- Stakeholder engagement:
  - Toronto Feral Cat Coalition
  - College of Veterinarians of Ontario (regulatory body)
  - THS management, Board, staff
  - Community cat caregiver survey through TFCC
- Detailed information about possible risks in the survey, no attempt to convince
- Developed protocols, consent, monitoring systems

# Recruitment through e-mail linked to electronic survey

Number responded

93

Interest

44 (47%) – yes 12 (13%) – maybe

**Excluded** 

22/56, leaving 34



#### **Exclusion reasons**

- Outside Toronto: 6
- Duplicate submissions: 2
- Colony TNRd: 5
- Low stated commitment: 6
- No count: 1
- Assisting multiple colonies: 2

## **Recruited 6 small groups**

- Goal: Small number of dedicated caregivers for a pilot program
- Higher participation would have been likely if: More active recruitment, less deliberate focus on possible side effects, less monitoring required

Unable to contact

14/34

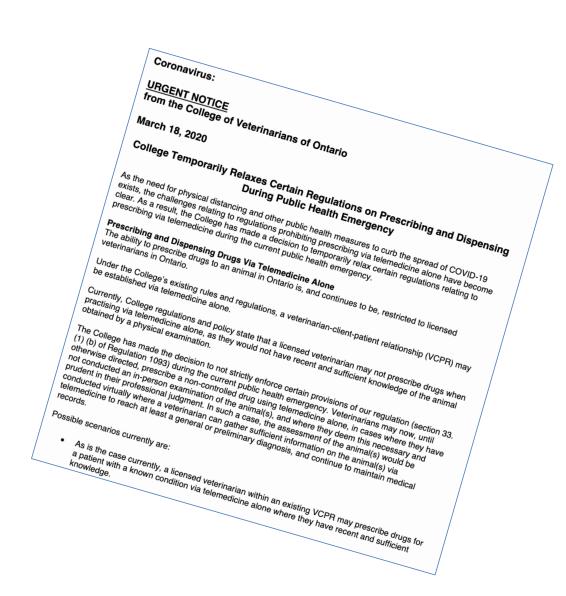
Declined 14/34

#### Reasons for declining

Too busy/unable to monitor 6
TNR appointment completed/booked 5
Anxious about risks 1
Males only 1
No longer interested 1

## **Prescribing MA**

- Microdose (1mg/cat/week)
  - Cost: CA\$0.13/cat/week
- At beginning of pandemic, regulator relaxed requirement of an in-person "herd" visit
- Established VCPR through:
  - Individual photos of cats
  - Photos of site
  - DVM telemedicine consult



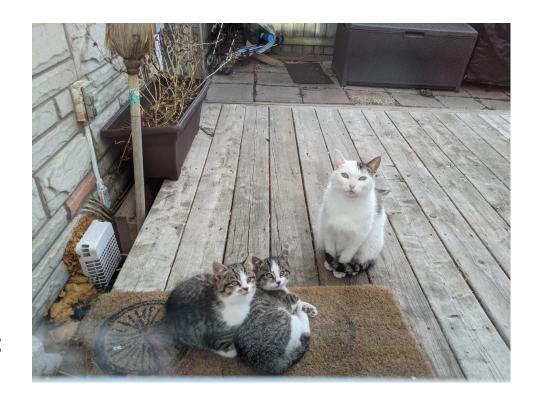
## **Data collection**

- Weekly follow-up calls:
  - List of questions about clinical issues, asked if any other concerns
  - Clinical issues
    - Lethargy
    - Teat enlargement
    - Pregnancy
    - Heat/mating behavior
    - Appetite
    - Hair coat
- DVM exam at TNR
- Stored uterus and ovaries for possible future analysis



## Results

- Six small groups 11 female cats
- Pregnancies 4 cats in 2 groups
  - 3 pre-MA, 1 during MA
  - 1 stillbirth 3 kittens; not TNRd yet
  - 2 cats gave birth, normal kittens; 1
     not TNRd yet; 1 normal at TNR
  - 1 pregnant at TNR normal at TNR
- Non-pregnant spays 5
  - Normal at TNR
- Remaining 4 not yet TNRd 1 caregiver unwilling during COVID;
   1 unable to trap remaining cats



## **Assessment**

- November start (as initially planned) would have been preferable – late start contributed to pregnancies.
- Program administration was easy
- Check-ins were time-consuming only needed for the pilot
- Minor caregiver challenges
  - Initial problems drawing up the small dose (1)
  - Some preferred dry food but still ate the wet
  - Minor monitoring issues when cats did not arrive at expected times



## **Conclusions**

- Pilot too small for definitive conclusions, but increased our confidence in MA and decreased our safety concerns
- Measured dosing was feasible for caregivers
- MA is a useful adjunct to TNR
- A larger program is feasible
- Further roll-out dependent on demand and TNR availability vs. need



### Resources

Visit acc-d.org/products/megestrol-acetate for:

- Materials used in this pilot (protocol, spay data collection form, weekly caregiver interview tracking spreadsheet, and information packet for caregivers)
- Additional downloadable forms prepared by ACC&D and others
- More info about low-dose MA for use in female cats

Contact info@acc-d.org , ljacobson@torontohumanesociety.com