



This is a summary of comments from the group discussions at the Meet & Greet, regarding overpopulation of pit bulls and cats. Pit bull discussion followed the presentation of information from the Humane Society of Huron Valley, MI. This community passed an ordinance mandating the spaying/neutering of all pit bulls in 2010 and it is currently still enforced. The group discussed the pros and cons of this approach and was undecided on whether or not this would work in Wisconsin.

Pit Bulls – Mandatory Spay/Neuter

PROS

- 🐕 More dogs would be S/N
- 🐕 Increase awareness and support in the community
- 🐕 May make it easier to obtain funding for larger grants
- 🐕 S/N message has value
- 🐕 Could reclassify BSL as Breed “Saving” Legislation
- 🐕 Would provide resources to ACOs
- 🐕 Reduce population
- 🐕 Increase access to S/N
- 🐕 Simplify enforcement, by making Dog at Large pick-ups mandatory
- 🐕 Adoption programs/changing perceptions could get people to consider adopting this breed

CONS

- 🐕 Enforcement might stretch resources thin
- 🐕 Labeling a dog a “pit bull” – is that a bad thing?
- 🐕 Could stir up interest in banning breed entirely; could lead to influx of owners surrendering instead of S/N
- 🐕 Impact to vet care; owners avoiding the vet
- 🐕 Resistance from the community
- 🐕 Rally opposition from Dog Federation of WI – slippery slope?
- 🐕 Would all parts of state support?
- 🐕 Could lead to breed legislation
- 🐕 Who will pay the expense to get it instigated and who will provide follow-up
- 🐕 Difficulty in having to pass legislation
- 🐕 Difficult to pass state-wide; maybe community-wide?
- 🐕 Hard to implement if shelter doesn’t have a vet on site
- 🐕 If unable to secure funding for free S/N, could make it challenging
- 🐕 Rural areas may not need as urgently and could have difficulty with enforcement
- 🐕 “Lawbreakers” might not follow
- 🐕 Potential for “hiding” dogs, which would lead to more neglect
- 🐕 Puts the onus on the breed, not the owner; assumes bad behavior
- 🐕 Discriminatory to the dog and the owner; doesn’t create trust



Cat Challenges

SHELTER ISSUES

- 🐾 Stray holding period (too long?)
- 🐾 Townships/Counties not providing services for stray cats
- 🐾 Split in vet community about FIV/FIP cats being adoptable
- 🐾 Shelters with limited intake for strays
- 🐾 Staff burn-out
- 🐾 Cat Intake – too many
- 🐾 Finding better ways for showcasing cats for adoption
- 🐾 Volunteer management in relation to socializing/interacting with cats
- 🐾 Managing shelter population / stress in shelter environment
- 🐾 Disease transmission issues in shelter environment
- 🐾 Neonatal kittens, foster homes – constant need
- 🐾 Grant funding for cat specific programs
- 🐾 Internal safety procedures (workers' comp)
- 🐾 Funding – Impacts from reducing/waiving fees

OWNER ISSUES

- 🐾 Treated as disposable
- 🐾 Not as valued as dogs
- 🐾 Adopting to declaw homes vs. death
- 🐾 Low redemption rates for cats
- 🐾 Reuniting cats w/ owners (descriptions?)
- 🐾 Owner responsibility
- 🐾 Low cost SN options

OUTDOOR CAT ISSUES

- 🐾 TNR/Wildlife impacts / placement of cats – “R” should stand for “return” not “relocate”
- 🐾 Community Cats – outdoor fed and social
- 🐾 Songbird cat trappers – Increase
- 🐾 Rehoming barn/working cat sites
- 🐾 Leash laws

Most Important Cat Challenges (as defined by the group)

STRAY HOLD PERIOD

1. Stray hold of 7 days is too long. Redemption rate very low after 72 hours. Unnecessary for kittens and cruel to ferals. Allows for full incubation of URI, etc...
2. Too long stresses cats and jeopardizes their health
3. Increases costs – drains resources

OWNER PERCEPTIONS AND REDEMPTION

1. Low redemption rates. Difficult to identify lost cats. Lost and found database. Lack of ID (tags or chips) Owner confusion. Society attitude - cats are disposable.
2. Value perception – their OWN value – *not a dog*
3. SN and Microchip – educate and fund

OUTDOOR CATS

1. Free Roaming – public education, funding, resources
2. Feral cats, community cats, barn cats. TNR return NOT relocate! Wildlife concerns, survivability concerns, exposure to existing pets (when relocated)

SHELTERS / HOUSING PRIOR TO ADOPTION

1. Expenses vs. income (adoption fees do not cover cost of care)
2. Cat housing; small space and enrichment
3. SN – access and awareness
4. Improving adoption rates, finding homes quickly, showcasing cats, decrease stray hold period.
5. Limited intake shelters – cats turned away “here” will just go “there”. Confusing to the public. Creates tension between shelters.

Suggested Solutions to Cat Challenges

1. Reduce holding period to 3 days; too many sick cats; fast track, reduce stray hold period
2. Low cost or free SNR for outdoor cats – get more municipalities to embrace
3. Common marketing materials for changing perceptions of cats as pets