



Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies, Inc. Position Statements

WFHS Vision Statement:

"We are a cohesive network working to improve the quality of life for all animals, enhance the human/animal connection and end animal cruelty."

WFHS Mission Statement:

"Providing resources and opportunities, dedicated to promoting and advancing the humane care of all animals"

Organizational Goals:

Promote leadership development opportunities
Enhance shelter management skills
Expand prevention of cruelty to animals' initiatives
Increase the WFHS's organizational capacity

Code of Conduct:

Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies is an organization that promotes teamwork and fraternity between all animal welfare advocates. Since we are partners in our compassionate work for animals, we treat each other respectfully, even in the face of inter-organizational differences. We do not tolerate intentional defamation or attacks upon our fellow members or other animal welfare advocates.

WFHS Board of Directors has adopted the following Position Statements to promote and guide humane organizations and individuals in Wisconsin to further the Societies mission by striving for the best possible treatment of animals. The Board encourages comment and suggestions to improve and update these Position Statements:

- Animals as Entertainment
- Animal Fighting/Blood Events
- Animals in the Classroom
- Cat Protection Laws
- Commercial Endorsements
- Companion Animal "Fence Free" Containment Systems
- Companion Animal Identification Programs

- Companion Animals in Rental Housing
- Cosmetic Surgery and De-clawing of Cats
- Dog Auctions
- Easter Chicks, Rabbits and Other Animals for Holiday Sale
- Euthanasia
- Feral Cats/Neuter and Return
- Ferret Adoptions
- Giveaways for Commercial Promotion
- Interstate Animal Transport
- Legislation Banning Specific Breeds
- Overpopulation of Companion Animals
- Pound Seizure and Purpose Breeding of Animals
- Pre-adoption Sterilization of Shelter Animals
- Prepubescent Neutering of Sheltered Kittens and Puppies
- Puppy Mills and Companion Animal Mass Breeding
- Rabies Vaccinations
- Rodeos
- Sale of Animals in Pet Stores
- Service Animals
- Show Dogs and Cats
- Spay/Neuter Clinics
- Tranquilizer Guns/Chemical Immobilization
- Wild Animals as Companion Animals/Exotic Companion Animals
- Wildlife Killing Contests
- Positive Reinforcement Training Methods
- Tethering

Animals as Entertainment

WFHS is opposed to any contest between animals or between humans and animals, as animals and humans are exposed to stress, pain, injury or death. WFHS believes that rodeos and circuses encourage insensitivity and acceptance of the brutal treatment of animals in the name of profit and entertainment.

Animal Fighting/Blood Events

WFHS is opposed to any contest, event or activities in which animals are exposed unnecessarily to stress, pain, injury or death. WFHS believes that blood sports encourage insensitivity and acceptance of the brutal treatment of animals for entertainment and profit. Further, WFHS supports legislation, which prohibits and penalizes blood events, including but not limited to the following activities: bullfighting, cockfighting, dog fighting, hounding on wildlife and canned hunting.

Animals in the Classroom

WFHS discourages the practice of live animals being purchased and kept full-time in the classroom for the purpose of the education without the guidance and support of a humane partner. Although valuable educational messages can be disseminated through classroom experiences with animals, the biological and social needs of resident animals may be neglected. Because classroom animals may be subject to

stress, discomfort or abuse, student contact with the animals must always be supervised and supported. Teachers are ultimately responsible for the care of animals in their classroom and maintaining them in a suitable environment. They must also insure suitable long-term arrangements at the end of the school year, school recesses or when the animals are no longer appropriate for the classroom.

Cat Protection Laws

WFHS encourages the passage of cat protection laws. WFHS encourages communities to pursue the following:

- licensing programs (with the exception of unowned community cats)
- proper identification
- rabies vaccinations on a designated schedule
- stray cats being held a minimum of 4 days unless it's a danger to itself or others
- owners who will be responsible for injury or damage caused by their cat
- promoting spay/neuter

Commercial Endorsements

WFHS is an impartial organization that does not endorse commercial products, services or facilities in any manner that could be construed as sanctioning or approving the product, service or facility for promotional purposes. WFHS lacks the resources for ongoing testing/monitoring that would be essential to a “stamp of approval.”

Companion Animal Fence Free Containment Systems

WFHS believes that systems of this type should be used with great caution, as they do not protect the pet from exterior threats. Containment systems for cats and dogs are designed to confine animals to specific areas. They operate by automatically delivering electrical stimulation as a deterrent to roaming outside of predetermined boundaries. They need to be evaluated to make sure that aggression, extreme fear and general behavior suppression and pain are not exhibited by the animal.

Companion Animal Identification Programs

WFHS promotes companion animal identification that enables owners to be reunited with their companion animals in the fastest and most efficient manner. An efficient identification system could shorten the time animals spend in holding facilities, thus enhancing public health and safety and minimizing cost to the community.

Licensing of dogs and cats is one such method. A significant difference in the license fee between altered and unaltered companion animals should be used to promote and encourage spay/neuter and in turn, diminish the animal population in shelters and animal control facilities.

WFHS supports micro-chipping, I.D. tags with multiple contact cell phone numbers, identification systems for all companion animals, which ultimately lead to reuniting lost animals with their owners. Standardization of the identification technology and cooperation among the animal services community is beneficial to animals and the community that will realize greater safety and efficient animal control.

Companion Animals in Rental Housing

WFHS is aware that a lack of housing or rental opportunities which allow pets may force people to give up their beloved companion animals. WFHS supports public practices and policies that encourage landlords to allow animals to reside in rental properties. By promoting responsible companion animal ownership and limiting restrictions on companion animals in housing to cases in which a valid nuisance or proven violations of ordinances or sanitation codes exist, arbitrary and unnecessary exclusions will be eliminated. WFHS does not support breed specific legislation/discrimination.

Cosmetic Surgery and Declawing of Cats

WFHS opposes cosmetic surgery that is performed solely for the purpose of owner convenience or alteration of the animal's appearance, with no benefit to the animal. Such procedures include tail docking, ear cropping and debarking in dogs, if performed for non-medical reasons. WFHS does not recommend that cats be declawed as a routine procedure, but only as a last resort when other methods of preserving animal or human safety have been tried and have failed.

Dog Auctions

WFHS believes dog auctions are the means by which puppy mills sell off old, non-producing and unwanted dogs. Often these auctions are used by the breeders to "cull" their stock to raise money to buy young dogs and start the cycle of misery all over again. Although animal rescue efforts to purchase dogs at auctions are beneficial for the individual dogs obtained, it perpetuates the problem and tends to create a seller's market. WFHS opposes purchasing dogs from auctions. It is the same principle as buying a dog at a pet store and it contributes to the demand for puppy mill dogs and perpetuating this industry of suffering.

Easter Chicks, Rabbits and Other Animals for Holiday Sale or Giveaway

WFHS believes the addition of a companion animal of any type should be a well thought out and informed process. Therefore, WFHS opposes the sale and giveaways of baby rabbits, chicks, ducklings, goslings and all other living animals that are sold as holiday novelties. In addition, it is cruel to promote many of these animals as appropriate companion animals. Many of them die as a result of neglect, ignorance, or mishandling or end up at animal shelters or abandoned. WFHS opposes this practice because it promotes insensitivity toward animals as it teaches children and adults to devalue them. Education, policies, practices and legislation that result in ending animal exploitation should all be actively pursued.

Euthanasia

WFHS recognizes that for a variety of complex conditions that exist in our society and for merciful and humane reasons, animal euthanasia is necessary. While humane societies make every effort to place suitable animals in quality adoptive homes, animal adoption may not always be a realistic option. For some animals, euthanasia may be the only humane alternative.

WFHS believes that only a veterinarian or certified euthanasia technician should perform euthanasia using prescribed and approved injectable drugs and techniques. WFHS supports legislation that requires the certification of persons administering euthanasia, and is committed to offering euthanasia by injection training.

Feral Cats/Neuter and Return

WFHS supports programs to humanely reduce the population of free-roaming cats. WFHS encourages humane treatment and responsible pet ownership of cats; encouraging compatible cats to be kept in the home as companion animals, and providing care and shelter to cats whose temperament is not suited to an indoor lifestyle. WFHS recognizes that many cats, owned and un-owned inhabit the outdoors. To help care for and reduce populations of outdoor cats, it is necessary for humane organizations and municipal animal control facilities to work with all cat populations.

Where WFHS encourages all cats to be kept as companion animals (defined as animals kept with an owner in a home and not allowed to roam without supervision), it recognizes that some cats have a temperament that makes this inappropriate. WFHS encourages all such cats to be sterilized, vaccinated, and provided food, water, and shelter as part of a managed outdoor colony.

WFHS will:

- Advocate for companion cats to be kept indoors, under the owner's supervision, whenever possible.
- Encourage permanent identification systems, microchips, tattoos, for all cats.
- Support programs requiring free roaming cats be spayed or neutered, identified and companion cats licensed according to municipal laws.
- Support programs to reduce cat populations using both trap and removal methods and non-lethal methods such as trap, neuter and return (TNR). WFHS encourages TNR to be done when a caregiver will accept the responsibility of the established outdoor cat population and will provide food, water, medical care and shelter as needed.

WFHS does not advocate that colonies be established and maintained on public lands. WFHS encourages the operation of affordable spay or neuter programs to encourage sterilization of all cats. WFHS encourages education of the public in responsible cat ownership.

Ferret Adoptions

WFHS recognizes the ferret as a domestic pet. However, owners should exhibit caution in exposing ferrets to other animals and children. Supervision and discretion around children and other animals is critical. WFHS also stresses the proper and humane treatment of ferrets when kept as pets and that they should never be released into the wild and should be properly vaccinated through routine vet care.

Giveaways for Commercial Promotion

WFHS opposes the practice of contests, raffles and other forms of animal giveaways or lotteries to promote sales by attracting chance or impulse acquisition of animals. Giveaways or prizes that result in animals being distributed with no knowledge or control of the persons who will receive them or how and where they will be cared for or treated is inappropriate.

Interstate Animal Transport

WFHS recognizes that when used wisely, animal transport can be a positive strategy to save lives. Transport also has the potential to improve outcomes for local animals in addition to those being transported. In many areas of our state, very few homeless dogs are puppies or small-breed dogs. When dogs in these categories are transported to a Wisconsin shelter, they can attract visitors to the shelter who would not otherwise visit, and those visitors often decide to adopt local

animals. Finally, because puppies and small-breed dogs generate comparatively higher adoption fees than the older, larger dogs who typically become homeless locally, transport has the potential support the financial strength of shelters to continue saving local animals both currently and in the future. WFHS recognizes that transport must be implemented according to best practices to support animals' health, and in accordance with current state and federal laws, is best used as a strategy to support strong outcomes for local animals as well as those being transported. We recognize that transporting animals helps to balance homeless animal populations to match them with new homes.

Legislation Banning Specific Breeds

WFHS opposes laws that ban individual breeds because they are both unfair and ineffective. Rather than breed specific laws or ordinances, animal control laws should be enforced that punish irresponsible owners - people who purposefully encourage or train an animal to be aggressive or through neglectful practices, allow a dog that is dangerous to harm people or property. WFHS believes dog owners must be held fully accountable for any harm or damage that their companion animals do to people, property and other animals.

Overpopulation of Companion Animals

WFHS is aware that the overpopulation of companion animals has created an imbalance between the numbers of homeless animals and responsible individuals willing to adopt them. This situation has resulted in the suffering and destruction of thousands of animals each year in Wisconsin.

WFHS believes that the sterilization of companion dogs, cats and rabbits, the development of humane community policies, effective animal control and enforcement and community education are all vital to ending the overpopulation of companion animals.

Pound Seizure and Purpose Breeding of Animals

Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies is opposed to pound seizure and the purpose breeding of animals for experimentation. Most scientific experiments using animals cause pain and suffering. These experiments destine animals to a stressful existence incompatible with our core mission of kindness and compassion to animals.

Wisconsin State Statutes state that an animal shelter "may" release companion animals through pound seizure for experimentation, however, WFHS members may not subject animals in their care to pound seizure.

Science has advanced and, in most cases, rendered animal experimentation unnecessary while providing unreliable results. Computer models, genetics and cellular research have been proven to be more accurate, therefore, Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies opposes the purpose breeding of animals for research.

Pre-adoption Sterilization of Shelter Animals

WFHS supports the practice of spaying or neutering all companion animals, including puppies, kittens, cats, dogs, rabbits and other small animals, prior to placement in adoptive homes, unless health considerations, as determined by a licensed veterinarian, dictate otherwise. If pre-adoption sterilization

is not possible, a commitment through policies and practices to insure that the surgery is performed at the soonest possible time should be vigorously pursued by humane organizations.

Prepubescent Altering of Sheltered Kittens and Puppies

WFHS endorses the use of prepubescent altering to end animal suffering. The urgency to sterilize all animals before they can contribute to our society's already overpopulated animal community has resulted in spay/neuter procedures, including prepubescent sterilization procedures.

Puppy Mills and Companion Animal Mass Breeding

WFHS opposes the mass breeding of companion animals for the commercial companion animal market because of the potential for animal suffering. These mass breeding operations add to the existing companion animal overpopulation problem in many communities. The excessive and indiscriminate breeding with no regard for genetics often causes health and temperament problems in many mass breeding establishments while the exposure to extreme weather conditions, lack of adequate veterinary care and filthy housing are common problems. In addition, isolation and lack of human contact often result in animals that are not properly socialized.

WFHS supports law enforcement, legislative and educational efforts to regulate mass breeding operations in the state of Wisconsin.

Rabies Vaccinations

WFHS endorses legislation mandating the pre-exposure rabies vaccination of all companion animals and maintains that such legislation is an essential component of operative animal control programs. Furthermore, WFHS believes preventive vaccinations to be a fundamental element of responsible companion animal ownership.

Sale of Animals in Pet Stores

WFHS is opposed to the sale of the following in pet stores: companion animals of any age purchased directly or via a wholesaler from mass breeding establishments, wild-caught birds, wild indigenous or exotic animals and pieces of reef that were collected live.

WFHS commends the efforts of pet stores who work with humane organizations and breed placement groups by featuring in-store advertising of adoptable animals, including satellite adoption programs, photo boards, videos, etc.

Service Animals

WFHS recognizes the value of companion animals in the assistance of special-needs individuals. In order to have a professional, human assistance program, the following criteria must be followed:

- A service animal is defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The animal's owner and/or another designated person must accept responsibility for insuring that the animal's medical, physical, behavioral, and psychological needs are met.

- Selection of assistance animals must be based on a sound knowledge of their specific physical, behavioral and psychological characteristics. The animal must be able to carry out desired tasks without invasive physical manipulation, such as teeth pulling, debarking, etc. Sterilization should be required.
- Programs that provide temporary housing and care for assistance animals must ensure that the needs of the animals are being properly met.
- Training of animals to perform tasks for their new owners must be based on positive reinforcement rather than on physical punishment such as striking, choking or electric shock.
- The program must take responsibility for placement of animals that fail the program or are retired.

Show Dogs and Cats

WFHS recognizes sanctioned cat and dog shows when staged under the authority of a cat or dog registry, kennel club, training school or humane organization. Events, including but not limited to , conformation, obedience, agility, fly ball, field trials, lure coursing, tracking and Frisbee competitions are legitimate sporting events.

However, WFHS supports only shows or trials where humane treatment is used in showing, training and transporting dogs or cats and it is recommended that veterinary care is available on all show grounds

WFHS does not support any activities that pit animals against each other in a combat mode or where conditions or treatment is inhumane.

Spay/Neuter Clinics

WFHS supports the efforts of animal welfare organizations and veterinarians that provide spay/neuter education and opportunities. We recommend that all altered animals be tattooed to identify prior spay or neuter surgery. The tragic overpopulation of companion animals has resulted in significant animal suffering, many healthy or treatable, sociable animals are unwanted by the society that has allowed them to be born. The single most effective tool to end the suffering caused by overpopulation is to spay or neuter companion animals.

Tranquilizer Guns/Chemical Immobilization

WFHS opposes the use of tranquilizer guns in routine animal control work as there are too many variables as to the animal's age, weight and physical conditions when estimating dosages. WFHS believes that in most cases, wild or stray animals may be captured with more conventional equipment that does not jeopardize the safety of the animal or the public, like live traps. However, WFHS recognizes that tranquilizer guns are suited to use by specially trained individuals and in circumstances that would otherwise result in great harm to humans or the animal.

Wild Animals as Companion Animals/Exotic Companion Animals

WFHS believes that no animal taken from the wild should be kept as a companion animal. Keeping indigenous wild animals as pets is illegal in Wisconsin. No animal that has not been genetically

controlled over a very long period of time, should be captured, confined or deliberately bred as a companion animal. Many such animals suffer during capture, transport or confinement. In addition to promoting animal suffering, these animals can be a burden to animal control agencies and society when they are no longer wanted; their special needs are not being met or when they have become a danger to their caregivers and/or the general public.

This policy does not pertain to wild animals under the care of a trained and licensed rehabilitator responding to animals that are ill, injured or orphaned.

Wildlife Killing Contests

WFHS opposes wildlife killing contests. Wildlife killing contests slaughter as many of a certain species as a “game” for prizes. Participants try to kill the largest, smallest or most animals for cash or other prizes. Unless protected, almost any animal species may be subject to this type of mass extermination. The animals harvested are not used for food but are left in piles to decompose at contest locations. They are cruel, unnecessary and represent an undesirable war on wildlife, treating these living wild animals as disposable game objects.

Positive Reinforcement Training Methods

WFHS does not support the use of aversive training methods that may result in pain, injury, fear and/or aggression, including, but not limited to shock collars and prong/pinch collars. WFHS supports the use of positive reinforcement techniques in animal training and behavior modification.

Tethering

Hundreds of thousands of dogs across the country live their entire lives at the end of a chain, often during extreme weather, and without access to shelter. When chronically chained outside, dogs become lonely, bored, and anxious, are more likely to become aggressive and bite, and are vulnerable to injury and death because of severe weather and other dangers.

WFHS supports state laws and local ordinances that protect dogs from extreme weather; require adequate food, water and shelter; and prohibit chronic and inhumane tethering. We recognize that many people who chain or tether their dogs are unaware of the harm it can cause, and for that reason we believe it is also important to work with and educate our community on the importance of unchaining and, when possible, bringing dogs indoors.