The Future of Animal Welfare

Celebrating the bond between people and pets

Roger Haston, PhD
PetSmart Charities

A Cattle Dog’s Dilemma

Realistic Optimism

THE GLASS IS HALF FULL!!

THE GLASS IS HALF EMPTY!!

UH…GUYS
A Brief History of Animal Welfare

Really brief but super relevant

The Five Freedoms

Hunger & Thirst
Discomfort
Pain, Injury & Disease
Normal Behavior
Fear & Distress

1869: Cruelty Abuse Suffering
The History of the Five Freedoms

1964
- Release of Ruth Harrison’s “Animal Machines” book which highlighted the abysmal conditions for agricultural animals in Britain

1965
- UK Government commissioned an investigation, led by Professor Roger Brambell, into the welfare of intensively farmed animals
- From this, the Five Freedoms were developed

The 1970s: Era of the Pound
The Humane Movement Grows

- First low cost spay and neuter clinics opened
  - 1969 in Los Angeles was the first
- Focus on euthanasia methodology
  - Elimination of cruel and painful methods begin
- Involvement of veterinary community
  - Importance of disease control and animal condition recognized
- Growth of adoptions from shelters
  - Humane organizations begin promoting the rescuing of animals from shelters

1990s: Focus on Outcomes

- First appearance of the "no kill" movement
- Large well-funded shelters developed
- Growth of low cost spay neuter begins to impact intake
- Public awareness around the value of adoption grows

2000s: A Common Framework

2004 in Asilomar

- A group was convened to
  - Build a bridge across varying philosophies
  - Develop relationships and create goals focused on significantly reducing the euthanasia of healthy and treatable companion animals
  - Develop some guiding principles and a common metric for success
  - A push for transparency
  - Birth of Live Release Rate
Animal Welfare vs. Animal Rights

**Consequentialism**
- Concerned with choosing the action that will bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of individuals.
- Prevention of unnecessary suffering
- Ensure a good quality of life and humane death.
- Example: Peter Singer

**Kantian Theories**
- Assumes all subjects of a life possess inherent value and must be treated as ends in themselves, never as a means to an end.
- A right may not be sacrificed even if the consequences of doing so are appealing or negative.
- Examples: Tom Regan, Gary Francione

Colliding Frameworks

2010s: Rising Conflict and Confusion
Have We Been Successful?

A quick review of metrics

Tremendous Progress

In 1970
23,000,000 Euthanizations

In 1986
4 States with Euthanasia Provisions

In 2017
All 50 States
1,500,000 Euthanizations

Breathe
The Winds of Change

We live in a moment of history where change is so sped up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.

~R. D. Laing

Current Trends to Consider

- Animal supply & demand
- Transfers and transport
- Small Rescues
- Where people adopt
- The underserved
- Economics of sheltering
- Attitude polarization

A Growing Inventory Problem

We are running out of dogs people want... but not everywhere.
Intake is Declining

Why The Decline?

- Years of Spay/Neuter
- More public awareness
- Different approach to cats
- Public fear of shelters
- Shelters are not reaching the need
- Shelters are limiting admission

Shelters Don’t Have What People Want
You ain’t from around here, are you?

Transport

Explosion of Transfers

778,385
**Transfer at A Large Scale**

Percent of Dogs Adopted in Colorado from Out of State

- 2008: 0%
- 2009: 10%
- 2010: 20%
- 2011: 30%
- 2012: 40%
- 2013: 50%
- 2014: 60%
- 2015: 70%
- 2016: 80%

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**Highly Adoptable Gets Transferred**

Number of Animals

- Healthy: 3000
- TR: 1000
- YM: 500
- AU: 500

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**Dog-O-Nomics**

- $25 to $50 at Source
- $300 to $450 at Destination
- 300,000 to 500,000 in 2016

($400 - $50) * 300,000 = $105,000,000 Potential Revenue

This amount of money can attract some bad actors and create problems in both the source and destination communities if not managed holistically.
They are big and unregulated. 

Animal Welfare Organizations

Estimated to be over 10,000

Rescue or Hoarder

Hoarding is on the rise
It's a competitive world!

How People Adopt is Changing

Changing Public Expectations

Then

Now

1,000,000 Retail Adoptions
Changing the Adoption Landscape
Rethinking the Use of Space

A Place
- The Southeast Project wants to be a public home for animal lovers
- Somewhere that people can meet, where class or culture is not an issue
- Where people will find top-level service and care without it being a "place of transaction"

A Community
- Visibly demonstrating good care of the animals to create positive habits in those that visit.
- Utilize the benefits offered by the adjacent dog park and encourage active engagement

A Leading Service
- Respond to new challenges and a large variety and type of guests
- All members of staff, irrespective of role, should have a close relationship to the animals under their care

Create a New Benchmark
- Building for the future of our industry
The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.

Helen Keller

**Blind Spots**

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**Pets-For-Life Data**

![Bar chart showing percentage of people with no vet experience or no shelter or AC contact.]

**Why Free is Too Expensive**

Free = $50 to $100 Or more
Challenging a Tradition View

Welcome
THE FUTURE IS NOW

Pop Up Community Centers
Co-locating Human and Animal Services

- Animal health services
  - Exams
  - Vaccinations
  - Deworming
  - Flea/Tick treatment
  - Pet food and supplies
  - Spay/Neuter
  - Pet education

- Human health services
  - Immunizations
  - Smoking reduction/cessation
  - Primary health care
  - Oral/Dental care
  - STI testing
  - Opioid reversal
  - Food & nutrition

Mobile Spay/Neuter Cooperates with Local Veterinarians

The issue: Rural community with a very high rate of poverty and significant animal overpopulation issues. Local veterinarians were resistant to mobile spay/neuter clinics coming into the area.

Veterinarian Fear: Loss of revenue and fear of post-operative complications.

AWOs Fear: Local veterinarians not able to execute on the volume of surgeries necessary for the community at a price they could afford.

The Solution: Local veterinarians served as the client check-in and initial health check. They were the face of the organization and who the community interacted with. The surgery team was able to focus on surgery.

Shelter Economics

The business model is not viable for most...
Skyrocketing Cost of Sheltering

The Cost of Doing More

Municipal Spending Disparity
Are We in An Echo Chamber?

Following a general trend in our society, pet welfare is polarizing and getting more extreme.
A Growing Disconnect?

Us

Them

Losing Sight of the Truth

A Loss Of Perspective

Memphis – Director Receives Death Threats
Bomb, death threats beset Lindon Animal Shelter
Clarksville crying dog video, petition spur death threats
Death threats against San Bernardino animal shelter workers
“When you start to threaten my family, you have gone too far
Death threats at animal shelter land man in jail
Augusta animal director receives death threats over euthanasia
Devastating Realities

Real People

Divergent Whys

We aren't all working toward the same thing

- Anti-Euthanasia
- Humane Treatment
- Promote Pet Ownership
- Eliminate Breeding
- Eliminate Suffering
- Reduce Population
- Public safety
Where can we look to understand the future?

The Extremes of Policies

- Education
- Licensing & Registration
- Early Interdiction
- Strict and Severe Enforcement
  - Up to $10,000 fine for aggressive dog attack
  - Potential court ordered euthanasia
Getting Under One Roof

British Columbia has built a large organization that has consolidated over 50 organizations.

Australia consolidated all the animal welfare groups under a single organization.

The Future of Animal Welfare

Pets, people, professionalization, preserving the bond, and a whole new set of metrics.

Forward to Our Roots

- Eliminating cruelty and suffering
- Being humane
- Building and maintaining the bond between people and pets
- Being socially responsible
A Purely Business Perspective

Current Trends in Animal Welfare

- Increasing Cost
- Inconsistent Supply Chain
- Hard to Access Customers
- Increasing Competition
- Confused Consumer Messaging
- Increased Public Scrutiny
- Flat to Declining Market
- Increasing Regulatory Pressure
- Low Barrier to Entry

Consolidate & Disaggregate

- **Consolidation is happening**
  - San Diego
  - Washington
  - Minneapolis
  - Milwaukee
  - …………..

- **Disaggregation**
  - The need is not located where the revenue is generated
  - Organizations need to functionally split and locate in the appropriate locale

Professionalization & Diversification

- Professional certifications and qualifications
- Human service training

We risk marginalizing ourselves in society

- Passion is not enough
- We serve people and pets, not just pets
Honest Risk Assessment

- No formal risk assessment methodology
- Community data on public safety issues is sparse and often flawed
- Discount the cost of a negative experience
- Need to be honest about the consequence of aggression
- Public safety and animal welfare are not mutually exclusive

Systemic Bias and a Lack of Diversity

Difficult Road Ahead

- Animals should only be adopted
- Adoptable
- Save them all
- No Kill
- Donate to save this poor sad creature locked away in a dirty, dank, stinky shelter where no one cares
- Public safety

Many of the messages and beliefs that have made us successful are starting to get in our way.
Words Matter

Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill

Buddha

Where We Can Be

Preserving and building the relationship between all pets and people

Eliminating cruelty, suffering and abuse

Maintaining public trust and safety

Community  Access  Health

The Bond

Between People & Pets
People and Pets

71%
Of pet owning women in domestic violence situations had pets abused or killed by their partner

48%
Of domestic violence victims delay leaving their abuser due to fear for their animal

What Keeps Me Going

“I don’t know how I would have lived through and left a quite abusive husband, even now if I cry or feel like I can’t go on… what is the point of existing… what is the point of existing… what is the point of existing?”

From Community Veterinary Outreach

A Cattle Dog’s Dilemma

"...she will walk up and make me smile... she gives me a reason to get up... to come home... to breathe"
The Not So Easy Road

You have to be brave
And your courage to do what’s right
Has to be greater than
your fear of getting hurt
So be Brave
Be Brave

Hasan Minhaj

Thank You for Listening