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**RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic  
Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court  
January 24, 2012**

**Clinic Summary**

**Profile**

The RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization located at 2257 Pecan Blvd in McAllen.

- Established in 2007
- Opened its doors to the public in November 2009

**Mission**

The RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic is dedicated to reducing the pet overpopulation by providing high volume, high quality and affordable sterilization services to all companion animals of the Rio Grande Valley. The objectives of the Clinic include, but are not limited to:

- Providing services to the public, regardless of income or residency
- Educating the general public about the benefits of spaying and neutering their pets
- Assisting qualified individuals by subsidizing costs through grant funding
- Reducing the number of companion animals entering local animal center
- Reducing the number of companion animals euthanized at local animal center

**Population**

According to statistics taken from the American Veterinary Medical Association and the 2010 US Census, **(See Hidalgo County Market Segmentation)** it is estimated that there are a total of 311,063 cats and dogs in Hidalgo County and a total of 160,967 pet owning households. 81,409 of total households in Hidalgo County are estimated to be living under the poverty level.

**Problem**

One intact female dog, her mate and all of their puppies can produce 67,000 dogs in just 6 years. **(See Dog Population Pyramid)**

One intact female cat, her mate and all of their kittens can produce 370,092 cats in just 7 years. **(See Cat Population Pyramid)**

According to intake records provided by Palm Valley Animal Center; as of December 27th, 38,720 dogs and cats had entered the center in 2011. (See **Intake Detail Report-All Jurisdictions**) With an average of 110 cats and dogs entering the center every day, it is estimated that over 39,000 would have entered the center by the end of 2011.

- 8,264 of these cats and dogs were taken in by Hidalgo County Animal Control or the public in Hidalgo County jurisdiction. (See **Intake Detail Report-Hidalgo County Jurisdiction**)
- 94% of cats were euthanized
- 86% of dogs were euthanized
- At a service fee of \$68/animal, \$561,952 tax dollars have been spent to date on the disposition of these animals.

Public health and safety are also very important issues to consider. Sterilizing animals helps by:

- Reducing numbers of strays on the city streets, which will in turn reduce the number of bite incidents and unwanted litters.
- Reducing aggressiveness of both homeless and companion animals. According to the Texas Department of Health, sterilized dogs and cats, especially males are 2.1 times less likely to be aggressive.

## **Solution**

The only humane solution to the pet overpopulation is targeted, high volume, high quality, and affordable sterilization services.

- The Clinic has performed almost 11,000 surgeries to date, effectively preventing the unwanted births of more than 100,000 puppies and kittens.
- The average cost of sterilization at \$63, is less than the cost of the fee paid to PVAC at \$68/animal, taken in dead or alive.
- **New Technology**
  - **EsterilSol-by Ark Sciences, FDA Approved**
    - **Non Surgical, sterilization for Male Dogs**
    - **Will not require anesthesia, making it less expensive than surgical sterilization**
    - **Minimally invasive, injection to both testicles**
    - **Will render dog sterile within one month**
    - **Attractive to owners who may not be comfortable with surgical sterilization and the thought of castration**
    - **Safer for dog breeds more susceptible to complications from anesthesia (e.g., brachycephalic breeds like Pugs, Pekingese, Bulldog, etc.) or for dogs compromised in any way and at higher risk of Anesthesia Death**

## **Accomplishments**

- 2008-Awarded PetSmart Charities Grant
- 2009-Awarded DJ&T Foundation Grant (Bob Barker) for Spay/Neuter Assistance Program
- 2010-Performed 5,000<sup>th</sup> Surgery
- 2011-Awarded Texas Animal Friendly Grant for Spay/Neuter Assistance Program
- 2011-Performed first MASH Clinic for Laredo Animal Protective Society
- 2011-Performed MASH Clinic for City of Edcouch
- 2011-Performed 10,000<sup>th</sup> Surgery (See **Clinic Surgery Count**)
- **2011-Veterinarian trained to perform non-surgical sterilization (Esterisol, FDA approved injectable sterilant for male dogs)  
Only Veterinarian trained in South Texas**

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**Proposal**

**MASH Clinic Initiative (Mobile Clinic)**

- Travel to and perform surgical or non-surgical sterilization procedures at designated location
- Examples of preferred facilities; community center, fire station, school
- Schedule clinics on a rotating basis; by precinct

**Advantages:**

- Ability to focus on low income areas of Hidalgo County
- Ability to focus on areas based on Palm Valley Animal Center intake numbers and County Animal Control records
- Ability to provide financial assistance to qualifying individuals with vouchers provided by Texas Animal Friendly Grant

**MASH Clinic Budget**

Veterinarian

- \$350/clinic

Veterinary Technician (2)

- \$200/clinic

Support Staff

- \$150/clinic

Surgical Cost (anesthesia, suture, gloves, etc)

- \$20/animal
- \$600/clinic for average of 30 animals/clinic

Waste Disposal Fee

- \$25/clinic

Miscellaneous Wear and Tear Cost

- \$25/clinic

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**Total Cost/Clinic**

- **\$1,350**

## **MASH Clinic Initiative, Continued**

### **Equipment Cost\***

#### **Table Top (Portable) Anesthesia Machine (2)**

- Portable equipment needed to prevent damage to stationary clinic equipment needed for daily operations.
  - \$2,500 each/\$5,000 total

#### **Wire Crates (Folding)**

- Necessary for pre and post-op confinement; for dogs only
    - Small (5) \$47.99 each/\$239.95 total
    - Medium (5) \$72.99 each/\$364.95 total
    - Large (10) \$94.99 each/\$949.90 total
    - X-Large (10) \$119.99 each/\$1199.90 total
- 

### **Total Equipment Cost**

- **\$5,254.70**

**\*Grant application through PetSmart Charities pending for above mentioned equipment.**

### **Marketing**

The promotion of each clinic is essential to the success of the total MASH Initiative. Promotional materials must attract and reach the target population in each precinct of the county.

- Imperative that Community Leaders and Community Organizers be educated about and on board with Initiative
- Door Hangers-Door to Door
- Flyers-Community Centers, Grocery Stores, Laundromats, etc.

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RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic  
Hidalgo County Market Segmentation

2010 POPULATION ESTIMATES	
Human Population*	774,769
Households (774,769/3.35)	231,274
Dog Population Estimates**	
Dog Population (231,274 x .632 )	146,165
Dog-Owning Households (231,274 x .372)	86,034
(Estimated average of 1.7 dogs per dog household)	
Cat Population Estimates**	
Cat Population (231,274 x .713)	164,898
Cat-Owning Households (231,274 x .324)	74,933
(Estimated average of 2.2 cats per cat household)	
Total Number of Dogs/Cats in Hidalgo County	311,063
Total Number of Pet Households	160,967

\* Human population statistics derived from US Census Bureau 2010 estimate.  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

\*\* Statistics based on 2007 U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook from the American Veterinary Medical Association ([www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org)).



**An unspayed female dog, her mate and all of their puppies and their puppies' puppies, if none are ever neutered or spayed, add up to:**

**1 year: 16**

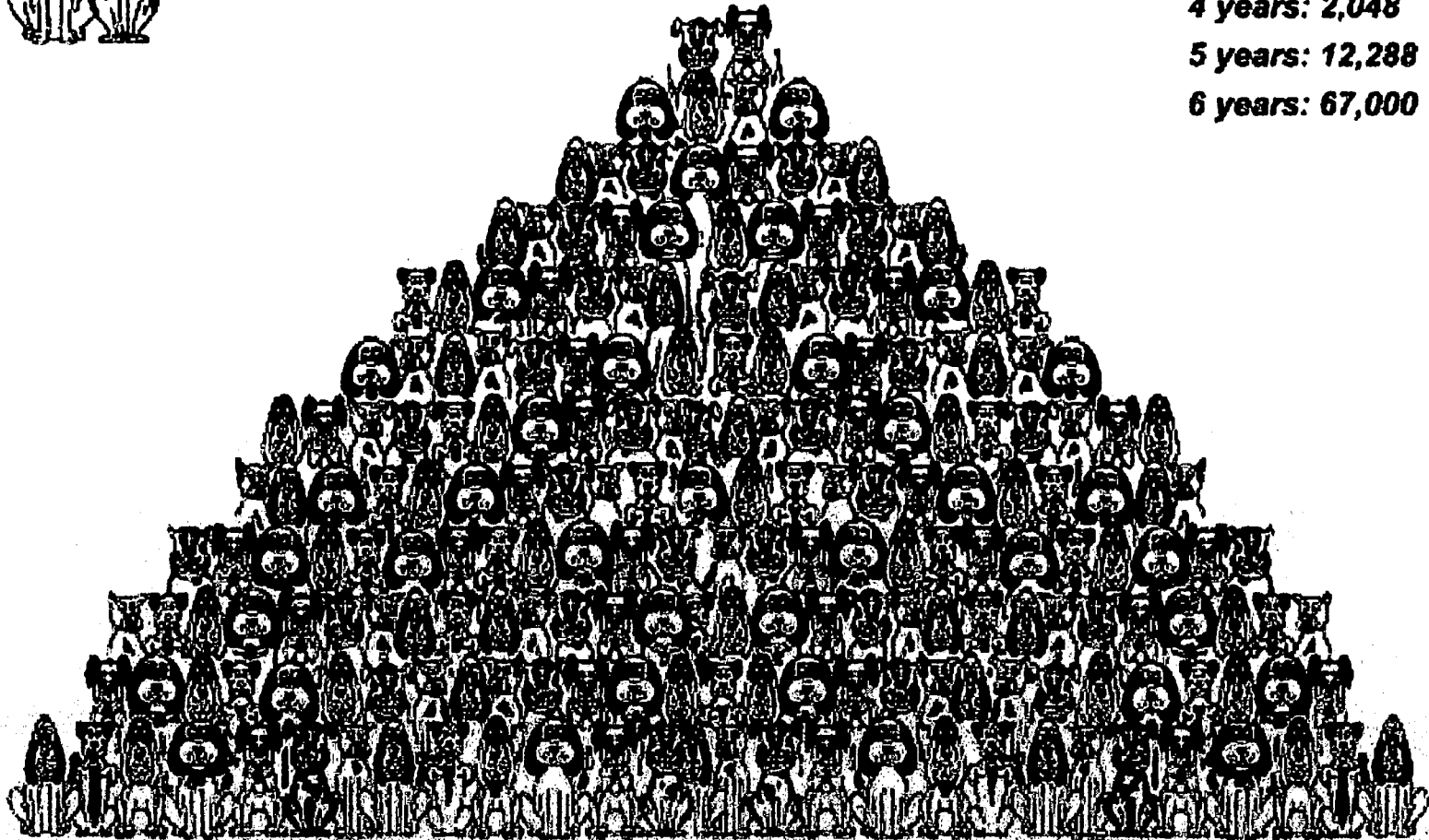
**2 years: 128**

**3 years: 512**

**4 years: 2,048**

**5 years: 12,288**

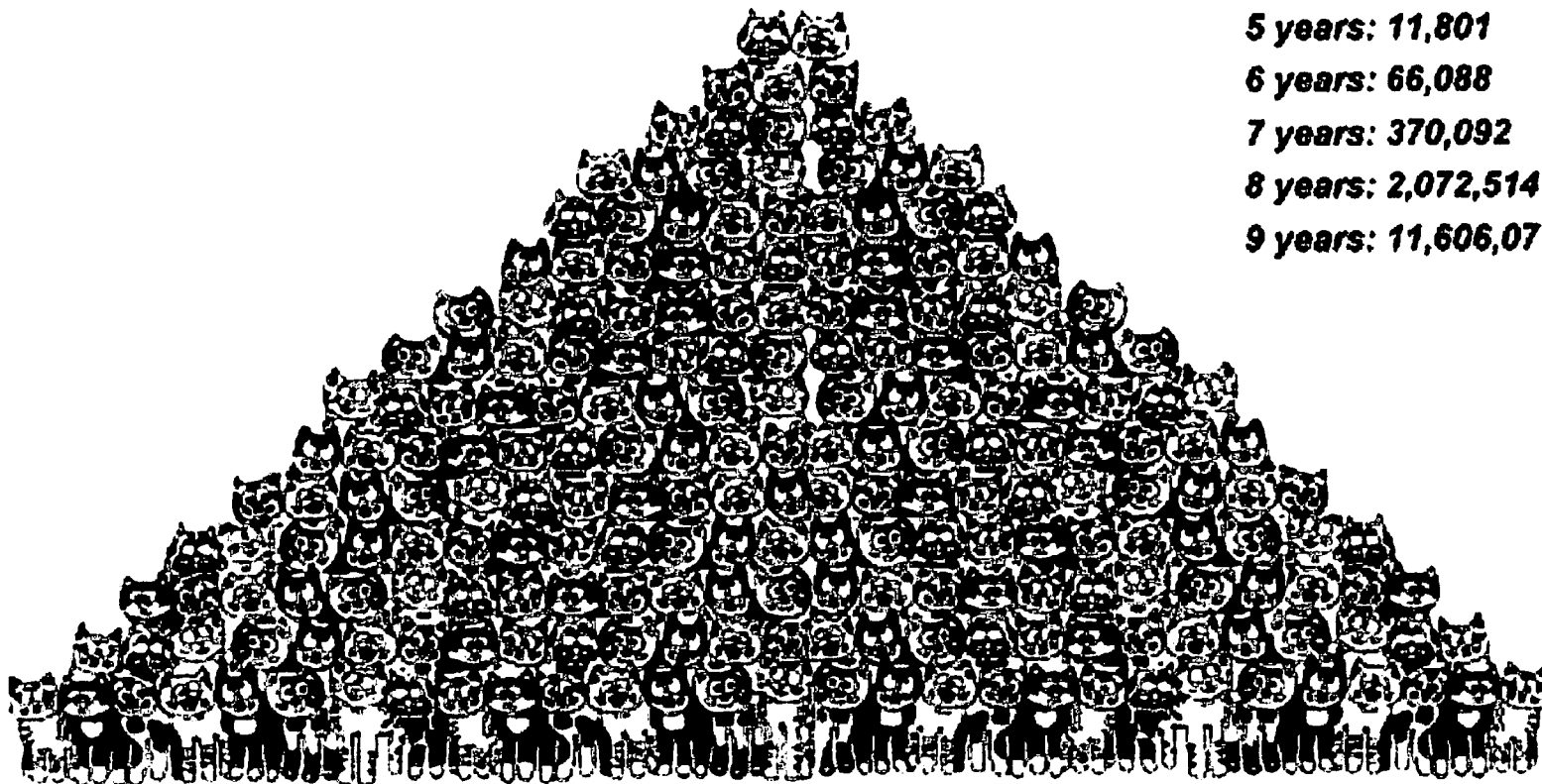
**6 years: 67,000**





**An unspayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:**

- 1 year: 12**
- 2 years: 67**
- 3 years: 376**
- 4 years: 2,107**
- 5 years: 11,801**
- 6 years: 66,088**
- 7 years: 370,092**
- 8 years: 2,072,514**
- 9 years: 11,606,077**



# Intake Detail Report

Print Date Tuesday, December 27, 2011

Intake StartDate	1/1/2011 12:00 AM	Jurisdiction	All
Intake EndDate	6/30/2011 11:59 PM	Injury Cause	All
Intake Type	All	PreAltered	All
Intake SubType	All	Site Name	All
Species	All	Age Group	All
DOA	All	Animal Tag Type	All

Animal#	Animal Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Color	PreAltered	IntakeDate	Intake Type	PetID
ARN	Tag type	Size	Location / Sublocation	Altered	Danger	Danger Reason	S/N	By	SupType	DOA
							<b>Total Intakes: 82</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 81</b>		
<b>BAT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 79</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 79</b>		
<b>BIRD</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 6842</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 6837</b>		
<b>Cat</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 8</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 8</b>		
<b>CHAMELEON</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 21</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 21</b>		
<b>CHICKEN</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3</b>		
<b>COYOTE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 12920</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 12902</b>		
<b>Dog</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 18</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 18</b>		
<b>DUCK</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 15</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 15</b>		
<b>GOAT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 19</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 19</b>		
<b>GUINEA PIG</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 28</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 28</b>		
<b>HAMSTER</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>HORSE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>IGUANA</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2322</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2322</b>		
<b>OPOSSUM</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 8</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 8</b>		
<b>OWL</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 44</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 44</b>		
<b>RABBIT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 21</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 21</b>		
<b>RACCOON</b>										

<u>Animal#</u>	<u>Animal Name</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Breed</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>PreAltered</u>	<u>IntakeDate</u>	<u>Intake Type</u>	<u>PetID</u>
<u>ARN</u>	<u>Tag type</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Location / Sublocation</u>	<u>Altered</u>	<u>Danger</u>	<u>Danger Reason</u>	<u>S/N</u>	<u>By</u>	<u>SupType</u>	<u>DOA</u>
							<b>Total Intakes: 16</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 16</b>		
<b>SHEEP</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>Skunk</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 8</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 8</b>		
<b>SNAKE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 4</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 4</b>		
<b>Squirrel</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 5</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 5</b>		

**Total Count: 22468**

# Intake Detail Report

Print Date Tuesday, December 27, 2011

Intake StartDate	7/1/2011 12:00 AM	Jurisdiction	All
Intake EndDate	12/26/2011 11:59 PM	Injury Cause	All
Intake Type	All	PreAltered	All
Intake SubType	All	Site Name	All
Species	All	Age Group	All
DOA	All	Animal Tag Type	All

Animal#	Animal Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Color	PreAltered	IntakeDate	Intake Type	PetID
ARN	Tag type	Size	Location / Sublocation	Altered	Danger	Danger Reason	S/N	By	SubType	ROA
									<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 45</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 45</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 62</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 62</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 3</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 6637</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 6631</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 20</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 20</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 33</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 33</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 6</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 6</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 12321</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 12298</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 23</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 23</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 10</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 10</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 18</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 18</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 12</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 12</b>
									<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>

Animal#	Animal Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Color	PreAltered	IntakeDate	Intake Type	PetID	
ARN	Tag type	Size	Location / Sublocation	Altered	Danger	Danger Reason	S/N	By	SupType	DOA	
							<b>Total Intakes: 5</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 5</b>			
<b>MUSKRAT</b>											
<b>OPOSSUM</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2161</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2161</b>			
<b>peacock</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>			
<b>PIG</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 4</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 4</b>			
<b>RABBIT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 24</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 24</b>			
<b>RACCOON</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 26</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 26</b>			
<b>Rat</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 20</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 20</b>			
<b>SHEEP</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>			
<b>Skunk</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>			
<b>SNAKE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 12</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 12</b>			
<b>Squirrel</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>			
<b>WOODPECKER</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>			

**Total Count: 2165**

# Intake Detail Report

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Intake StartDate	1/1/2011 12:00 AM	Jurisdiction	Hidalgo County
Intake EndDate	6/30/2011 11:59 PM	Injury Cause	All
Intake Type	All	PreAltered	All
Intake SubType	All	Site Name	All
Species	All	Age Group	All
DOA	All	Animal Tag Type	All

Animal#	Animal Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Color	PreAltered	IntakeDate	Intake Type	PetID
ARN	Tag type	Size	Location / Sublocation	Altered	Danger	Danger Reason	S/N	By	SupType	DOA
							<b>Total Intakes: 7</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 7</b>		
<b>BIRD</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>		
<b>Cat</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 492</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 492</b>		
<b>COYOTE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>Dog</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3865</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3865</b>		
<b>GUINEA PIG</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>		
<b>OPOSSUM</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 11</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 11</b>		
<b>RABBIT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>RACCOON</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 4</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 4</b>		
<b>Rat</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 9</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 9</b>		

**Total Count: 4394**

# Intake Detail Report

Print Date Tuesday, December 27, 2011

Intake StartDate	7/1/2011 12:00 AM	Jurisdiction	Hidalgo County
Intake EndDate	12/26/2011 11:59 PM	Injury Cause	All
Intake Type	All	PreAltered	All
Intake SubType	All	Site Name	All
Species	All	Age Group	All
DOA	All	Animal Tag Type	All

Animal#	Animal Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Color	PreAltered	IntakeDate	Intake Type	PetID
ARN	Tag type	Size	Location / Sublocation	Altered	Danger	Danger Reason	S/N	By	SubType	DOA
<b>Armadillo</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>BAT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3</b>		
<b>BIRD</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>		
<b>BOBCAT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>Cat</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 432</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 432</b>		
<b>COYOTE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>Dog</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3475</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3473</b>		
<b>MUSKRAT</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3</b>		
<b>OPOSSUM</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 13</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 13</b>		
<b>RACCOON</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 2</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 2</b>		
<b>SHEEP</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 1</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 1</b>		
<b>SNAKE</b>							<b>Total Intakes: 3</b>	<b>Total Unique Animals: 3</b>		

**Total Count: 3937**

## RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic Surgery Count

From 11/1/2009 to 12/31/2011

Year	Owner City	Count	Count % of Whole
2009	Alamo	10	0.1%
2009	Alton	1	0.0%
2009	Brownsville	1	0.0%
2009	Citrus City	1	0.0%
2009	College Station	1	0.0%
2009	Donna	8	0.1%
2009	Edcouch	2	0.0%
2009	Edinburg	50	0.5%
2009	Elsa	3	0.0%
2009	Harlingen	1	0.0%
2009	Hidalgo	3	0.0%
2009	La Feria	1	0.0%
2009	La Joya	3	0.0%
2009	McAllen	116	1.1%
2009	Mission	57	0.5%
2009	<i>No owner specified or incomplete address</i>	24	0.2%
2009	Palmhurst	6	0.1%
2009	Palmview	1	0.0%
2009	Pharr	17	0.2%
2009	Rio Grande City	4	0.0%
2009	San Juan	11	0.1%
2009	Washington	1	0.0%
2009	Weslaco	10	0.1%
2010	Alamo	128	1.2%
2010	Alton	77	0.7%
2010	Austin	1	0.0%
2010	BROWNSVILLE	1	0.0%
2010	Chandler	1	0.0%
2010	Combes	1	0.0%
2010	Corpus Christi	1	0.0%
2010	Dell Computers	1	0.0%

2010 Donna	118	1.1%
2010 Edcouch	46	0.4%
2010 Edinburg	892	8.5%
2010 Elsa	59	0.6%
2010 Encino	1	0.0%
2010 Falcon Height	1	0.0%
2010 Falfurrias	5	0.0%
2010 Flowella	4	0.0%
2010 Harlingen	16	0.2%
2010 Hidalgo	48	0.5%
2010 La Blanca	14	0.1%
2010 La Feria	6	0.1%
2010 La Joya	5	0.0%
2010 La Villa	3	0.0%
2010 Lufkin	1	0.0%
2010 Laguna Vista	1	0.0%
2010 Lane	1	0.0%
2010 Laredo	6	0.1%
2010 Lasara	1	0.0%
2010 Los Ebanos	2	0.0%
2010 Los Fresnos	1	0.0%
2010 Los Saenz	1	0.0%
2010 Lyford	1	0.0%
2010 McAllen	1,707	16.3%
2010 Mercedes	45	0.4%
2010 Mission	882	8.4%
2010 Monte Alto	6	0.1%
2010 <i>No owner specified or incomplete address</i>	88	0.8%
2010 Palmhurst	21	0.2%
2010 Palmview	5	0.0%
2010 Penitas	15	0.1%
2010 Pharr	284	2.7%
2010 Progreso	5	0.0%
2010 Raymondville	2	0.0%
2010 Rio Grande City	50	0.4%
2010 Rio Rico	1	0.0%
2010 Roma	5	0.0%

2010	San Antonio	4	0.0%
2010	San Benito	6	0.1%
2010	San Carlos	9	0.1%
2010	San Juan	202	1.9%
2010	Santa Elena	1	0.0%
2010	South Padre Island	2	0.0%
2010	Spring Valley	1	0.0%
2010	Sullivan City	6	0.1%
2010	Weslaco	219	2.1%
2010	Zapata	1	0.0%
2011	Alamo	166	1.6%
2011	Alexandria	1	0.0%
2011	Alton	88	0.8%
2011	Brownsville	2	0.0%
2011	Canyon	2	0.0%
2011	Citrus City	1	0.0%
2011	Clay	1	0.0%
2011	Devine	1	0.0%
2011	Donna	153	1.4%
2011	Ed Couch	1	0.0%
2011	Edcouch	36	0.3%
2011	Edinburg	927	8.8%
2011	Elsa	69	0.7%
2011	Emery	1	0.0%
2011	Encino	5	0.0%
2011	Falcon Height	1	0.0%
2011	Garciasville	6	0.1%
2011	Grulla	2	0.0%
2011	Hargill	3	0.0%
2011	Harlingen	1	0.0%
2011	Hidalgo	23	0.2%
2011	HOUSTON	1	0.0%
2011	La Blanca	7	0.1%
2011	La Feria	1	0.0%
2011	La Joya	46	0.4%
2011	La Villa	3	0.0%
2011	Lane	1	0.0%

2011 Laredo	1	0.0%
2011 Lasara	2	0.0%
2011 Linn	13	0.1%
2011 Livingston	1	0.0%
2011 Los Ebanos	1	0.0%
2011 Los Fresnos	2	0.0%
2011 McAllen	1,533	14.6%
2011 Mercedes	64	0.6%
2011 Mission	914	8.7%
2011 Monte Alto	3	0.0%
2011 <i>No owner specified or incomplete address</i>	178	1.7%
2011 Olmito	1	0.0%
2011 Palmhurst	9	0.1%
2011 Palmview	2	0.0%
2011 Penitas	28	0.3%
2011 Pharr	306	2.9%
2011 Pooler	1	0.0%
2011 Port Isabel	1	0.0%
2011 Progreso	5	0.0%
2011 Progreso Lakes	2	0.0%
2011 Raymondville	1	0.0%
2011 Reynosa	1	0.0%
2011 Rio Grande City	64	0.6%
2011 Roma	9	0.1%
2011 St. Louis	1	0.0%
2011 San Benito	5	0.0%
2011 San Isidro	3	0.0%
2011 San Jacinto	1	0.0%
2011 San Juan	201	1.9%
2011 Santa Elena	3	0.0%
2011 Santa Maria	4	0.0%
2011 Sullivan City	4	0.0%
2011 Texas	1	0.0%
2011 Weslaco	229	2.2%
2011 Zapata	5	0.0%
	10,491	

8B



RGV  
 Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic  
 2257 Pecan Blvd McAllen, TX 78501  
 Phone: (956) 687-7728 Fax: (956) 687-7730  
 www.rgvlowspayneuterclinic.org

January 16, 2012

Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court  
 County of Hidalgo

RE: Letter of Request

Dear Members of the Court:

The RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic would like to request funding for its proposed MASH Clinic Initiative for the citizens of Hidalgo County. The RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization located in McAllen which has been providing low cost sterilization services for the pets of the general public since November 2009.

The purpose of this Initiative is to reduce the pet overpopulation in the County of Hidalgo which will essentially reduce the amount of funding contributed to the disposition of the abandoned, homeless and unwanted pet population of the County. In addition, the Initiative will not only help address the budgetary issues facing the County every year, but will also address the health and public safety risks as a result of having uncontrolled strays on the streets.

The objectives of the Initiative will be accomplished by providing targeted, high volume, high quality, and affordable sterilization services to the citizens in the areas of most need. Analyzing intake records provided by Palm Valley Animal Center and County Animal Control will assist in determining the areas to be targeted. Most importantly, this program will go directly to the communities in need; eliminating common obstacles such as transportation. The availability of funding granted through the Texas Animal Friendly Program will also serve as an additional incentive.

The RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic is requesting an amount of \$50,000 to establish and conduct the proposed MASH Clinic Initiative for the County of Hidalgo. After deducting approximately \$5,254 for a one time purchase of portable equipment, just over \$44,700 will remain to operate 33 clinics at an estimated cost of \$1,350/clinic for staff and consumables.

With the goal of performing a minimum of 30 procedures at each clinic or almost 1,000 total; the County will be able to use its funds to sterilize these animals for less than the cost of the disposition of the same number.

On behalf of the RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic, its staff and Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Victoria Villanueva  
 Founder and President  
 RGV Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic



Mike Stafford  
Harris County Attorney

April 11, 2005

RECEIVED

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Attorney General of Texas  
Supreme Court Building  
P.O. Box 12548  
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

RQ-0338-GA

APR 13 2005  
OPINION COMMITTEE

FILE # ML-44188-05  
I.D. # 044188

Attention: Opinion Committee

Re: Whether Harris County Animal Control must provide to PetData, Inc. certain information made confidential under sections 826.0211 and 826.0311 of the Health and Safety Code;  
C.A. File No. 05GEN0329

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Harris County Animal Control maintains rabies vaccination certificates and a registry with the names and addresses of owners of vaccinated dogs and cats. Such personally identifying information is made confidential by sections 826.0211 and 826.0311 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides that the confidential information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity "for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety." Furthermore, sections 826.0211(b) and 826.0311(b) of the Health and Safety Code prohibit the use of such information for a purpose that does not "directly relate to the protection of public health and safety." Additionally, sections 826.0211(c) and 826.0311(c) provide that a person commits an offense punishable by both a fine and confinement in the county jail if the person distributes information that is confidential under sections 826.0211 and 826.0311 of the Health and Safety Code.

Harris County Animal Control has received a letter from PetData, Inc. asking County Animal Control to submit "at least monthly a record of each rabies vaccination administered to pets owned by City of Houston residents" including the owner's name, address, and phone number. The letter states that PetData, Inc. is a new contractor of the City of Houston Bureau of Animal Regulation and Control and is handling all aspects of Houston animal licensing for the City. Apparently, the City of Houston has not previously requested such information from County Animal Control.

We request your opinion as to whether such revenue collection is a purpose related to the protection of public health and safety, and whether County Animal Control must provide the requested information to PetData. Because of the criminal sanctions for violation of section 826.0211 and 826.0311, we are requesting your opinion. Our Memorandum Brief is enclosed.

Sincerely,

MIKE STAFFORD  
County Attorney

By:   
MARVA GAY  
Assistant County Attorney

Approved:

  
JOHN R. BARNHILL  
First Assistant County Attorney

## MEMORANDUM BRIEF

Harris County Animal Control ("County Animal Control") vaccinates an average of 5,500 dogs and cats each year against rabies, issues rabies vaccination certificates to owners pursuant to section 826.021 of the Health and Safety Code, and maintains a registry of dogs and cats pursuant to section 826.031 of the Health and Safety Code. See TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. §§ 826.021 and 826.031 (Vernon 2003). The main facility where County Animal Control vaccinates dogs and cats is located within the City of Houston.

County Animal Control has received a letter from PetData, Inc. ("PetData"), which apparently has a contract with the City of Houston Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care ("Houston BARC") to collect animal licensing fees. PetData is requesting that County Animal Control periodically submit to PetData a record of each rabies vaccination administered to dogs and cats owned by residents of the City of Houston, including the owner's name, address, and phone number. Apparently, PetData mailed the letter and accompanying instructions to County Animal Control and other veterinarians located within the City of Houston. The PetData letter reads, in pertinent part, as follows:

Dear Veterinarian and Clinic Staff,

By now, you should have received a letter from the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Control (BARC) announcing the change in animal licensing program. Here at PetData, animal licensing is our only business. . . .

Beginning in August, PetData began handling all aspects of Houston animal licensing including entry of license records, processing of licensing mail, providing license tags to citizens, and handling all customer service related to animal licensing. Going forward, we will also receive and process your rabies vaccination reports. Attached are instructions for submitting our monthly rabies information.

The attached instructions read, in pertinent part, as follows:

Since PetData will be processing all rabies vaccination records on behalf of BARC, we ask that you mail them to our office either weekly or monthly. Please keep in mind that rabies reporting by veterinarians is required by City of Houston Ordinance.

1. Please submit to our office at least monthly a record of each rabies vaccination administered to pets owned by City of Houston residents. You are not required to submit rabies information for owners that live outside of the City of Houston, but you may include those if sorting them out would be a problem.

2. Each record should include the owner's name, address and phone number, pet's name, species, breed, sex, color, age (if available), weight, and spay/neuter status. It should also include at minimum, a rabies vaccination date, and the expiration of the vaccination date.
3. Records may be submitted in one of three forms:
  - a. A copy of the individual rabies certificate.
  - b. A vaccination report, which provides all the above information for each vaccination, but is formatted to include multiple records per page.
  - c. An electronic file exported from your software program submitted either via email or on disk through the mail.

\* \* \* \* \*

Postcards will be mailed to residents who have vaccinated their pets and have not yet purchased a license to help boost awareness of the licensing ordinance. . . .

Letter and Instructions from PetData, Inc. to Veterinarian and Clinic Staff (Feb. 2, 2005) [*emphasis added*]. Therefore, PetData is asking County Animal Control to submit personally identifying information of the owners of cats and dogs already vaccinated by County Animal Control.

As required by sections 826.0211 and 826.0311 of the Health and Safety Code, County Animal Control keeps confidential the information contained in each rabies vaccination certificate that identifies or tends to identify the owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of the owner of the vaccinated animal. Section 826.0211(a) of the Health and Safety Code reads as follows:

Information that is contained in a rabies vaccination certificate that identifies or tends to identify the owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of the owner of the vaccinated animal is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code.

TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. § 826.0211(a) (Vernon 2003) [*emphasis added*]. Furthermore, County Animal Control keeps confidential the information contained in the County registry of dogs and cats that identifies or tends to identify the owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of the owner of the registered dog or cat. Section 826.0311(a) of the Health and Safety Code reads as follows:

Information that is contained in a municipal or county registry of dogs and cats under Section 826.031 that identifies or tends to identify the owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of the owner of the registered

dog or cat is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code.

TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. § 826.0311(a) (Vernon 2003). However, pursuant to sections 826.0211(b) and 826.0311(b) of the Health and Safety Code, the confidential information may be disclosed to a governmental entity “for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety.” Furthermore, the governmental entity that receives the information must maintain the confidentiality of the information and “may not use the information for a purpose that does not directly relate to the protection of public health and safety.” Section 826.0211(b) of the Health and Safety Code reads:

The information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. A government entity that receives the information, including a county or municipality that registers dogs and cats under Subchapter D, must maintain the confidentiality of the information, may not disclose the information under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may not use the information for a purpose that does not directly relate to the protection of public health and safety.

TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. § 826.0211(b) (Vernon 2003) [*emphasis added*]. Similarly, section 826.0311(b) reads:

The information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. A government entity that receives the information must maintain the confidentiality of the information, may not disclose the information under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may not use the information for a purpose that does not directly relate to the protection of public health and safety.

TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. § 826.0311(b) (Vernon 2003)[*emphasis added*]. Therefore, County Animal Control is authorized to disclose otherwise confidential information of the owner of a vaccinated animal only to a governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. Furthermore, governmental entity that receives such personally identifying information is prohibited from using the information for a purpose that does not “directly” relate to the protection of public health and safety.

Pursuant to sections 826.0211(c) and 826.0311(c) of the Health and Safety Code, a person commits an offense punishable by both a fine and confinement in the county jail if the person distributes such information for a purpose that does not relate to the protection of public health and safety. See TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN. §§ 826.0211(c) and 826.0311(c) (Vernon 2003).

The City of Houston ordinance, which is referred to in PetData’s letter, imposes certain duties on veterinarians and reads, in pertinent part, as follows:

- (d) It shall be the duty of each veterinarian who vaccinates any dog or cat for rabies within the city to . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

- (2) On or before the seventh day following the administration of the vaccination furnish to the chief of the city's bureau of animal regulation and care a copy of the veterinarian's fully executed vaccination certificate for the animal setting forth:

- (a) A description of the dog or cat including its breed, age, color and sex;
- (b) Whether the animal has been neutered (if known or determinable by the veterinarian);
- (c) The serial number of the vaccination tag furnished;
- (d) The name and the current address of the person owning or keeping the animal; and
- (e) The number of the City of Houston registration tag worn by the animal, if any.

CITY OF HOUSTON, TEX., ORDINANCE art. IV, § 6-96 (Ord. No. 85-296, § 7, 3-1-85; Ord. No. 88-689, §§ 1,2, 4-27-88) [*emphasis added*]. The Ordinance requires veterinarians located in the City of Houston to provide the City with the name and current address of the person owning or keeping the animal. We have no information indicating that the City of Houston has previously requested the names and addresses of the owners of dogs and cats vaccinated by County Animal Control.

The City of Houston, through its agent PetData, is requesting that County Animal Control provide the City of Houston with personally identifying information made confidential by sections 826.0211(a) and 826.0311(a) of the Health and Safety Code. According to the PetData instructions, “[p]ostcards will be mailed to residents of the City of Houston who have vaccinated their pets and have not yet purchased a license” from the City of Houston. It appears that PetData is seeking to use this confidential information for a purpose that does not relate to the protection of public health and safety but, rather, to collect a City licensing fee from the owners of dogs and cats that have already been vaccinated.

PetData states in its recent letter that “animal licensing is our only business . . . .” PetData does not vaccinate dogs and cats for rabies or other diseases. PetData does not provide animal care, housing, or veterinary services. PetData does not perform services to prevent or control infectious diseases in animals. PetData does not capture or control dogs and cats. PetData does not perform spay or neutering services. PetData does not microchip dogs and cats. In fact, PetData does not appear to perform functions related to protection of public health and safety. Rather, PetData appears to operate solely as a collection agent for the City. PetData is seeking confidential owner information to generate revenue for the City of Houston by collecting a license fee from owners of already-vaccinated dogs and cats. Collecting and generating revenue is a purpose that may not “directly relate to the protection of public health and safety” as is required by sections 826.0211(b) and 826.0311(b) of the Health and Safety Code.

**County Animal Control has already vaccinated the dogs and cats. Vaccinating dogs and cats is related to the protection of public health and safety. However, collecting names of owners of dog and cats that have already been vaccinated by County Animal County is not related to the protection of public health and safety. Furthermore, a direct relationship to the protection of public health and safety is required for use of confidential owner information under sections 826.0211(b) and 826.0311(b) of the Health and Safety Code.**

**It appears that sections 826.0211(b) and 826.0311(b) of the Health and Safety Code prohibit Harris County Animal Control from disclosing to PetData the personally identifying information of owners of dogs and cats already vaccinated by County Animal Control.**

8B

# Strays overload Cameron County shelter

>> Most cats and dogs picked up by area animal control officers are euthanized within 72 hours.

By ALLEN ESSEX  
AESSEX@VALLESTAR.COM

SAN BENITO — Harlingen businessman Dial Dunkin went looking for a lost dog recently and said he was shocked to see dozens of dogs awaiting euthanasia in small cages at the Cameron County shelter.

"The cages are full of really nice dogs," Dunkin said. "I'm really upset."

Something must be done to stretch out the time an animal is held for owners to retrieve them, or for the animal to have a chance to be adopted, Dunkin said.

Cameron County's animal control program cannot keep up with the population explosion of stray dogs and cats in rural areas, officials say. It's because the shelter is too small to house all the strays that most dogs or cats picked up by a county animal control officer will be euthanized within 72 hours.

Dunkin said he and his friend found the dog they were looking for.

But many other lost dogs are not so lucky, said Cameron County Health Administrator Yvette Salinas, who oversees the animal control department.

"It's really a sad story, but there are a lot more dogs

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## STRAYS

From Page 1B

than there are responsible pet owners," she said.

Many dogs picked up by animal control officers got loose or were abandoned by their owners and are in bad condition with injuries or have diseases such as mange when they are brought to the shelter, she said.

Those dogs are euthanized soon after they are examined because they can't be allowed to suffer, she said. Most are euthanized within 72 hours of arriving at the shelter.

A nearby incinerator is used to dispose of their bodies.

"If a dog looks like it is a pet, like it's been well kept, we'll keep it longer," Salinas said.

Animals are examined to see if they have identification tags or implanted microchips in hope of finding their owner, she said.

The county does have a program to put dogs up for adoption if they are healthy and not aggressive, Salinas said.

But the shelter is too small to house animals for longer than 72 hours, Salinas said.

Cameron County Judge Carlos Cascos said the main problem is the county needs a new animal shelter, which would cost at least \$500,000.

The current shelter was built in 1985 and has seven general population kennels and three quarantine kennels, a county report states.

Additional kennels are needed but the septic sys-

**Too many dogs are brought in having absolutely no ID. There are too many irresponsible pet owners."**

DAVID GARZA  
Precinct 3 commissioner, saying Cameron County patrols many miles of rural areas for stray animals

tem cannot be expanded, the report states.

A euthanasia room is needed because animals are being put down in a semi-open area, the report states.

A rabies control room is also needed to collect specimens in a laboratory area rather than in a semi-open area, the report states.

Lavice Laney, who led a 2004 probe of the county shelter for the Brownsville chapter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said she isn't surprised that Dunkin was upset by his visit.

"Somebody needs to get mad and stay mad," she said of conditions at the county's overcrowded facility.

There is no question the county needs to build a much larger and better shelter, Laney said.

She said Salinas wants to do more, but can't.

"She's interested, she cares," Laney said of Salinas.

But having only a small shelter in an industrial setting in the back of the Precinct 3 county shop, and

only three animal control officers for such a vast county, is unacceptable, Laney said.

A few improvements have been made since she and other SPCA members confronted county commissioners at a 2004 meeting at the courthouse, showing many photos of the horrendous conditions at the shelter, she said.

Since then, the addition of a small office and a restroom at the shelter, as well as construction of a small exercise yard, have been completed, but conditions are still very bad, she said.

A few animal rescue groups have been allowed to take dogs and cats out of the shelter for adoption, but the ceaseless euthanasia and incineration continue, she said.

Precinct 3 Commissioner David Garza said the county not only has to patrol many miles of rural areas for stray animals, but also helps out small towns that have no animal control program at all.

"Too many dogs are brought in having absolutely no ID," Garza said. "There are too many irresponsible pet owners."

Cascos said funds are tight for all county needs, but he welcomes any suggestions by Dunkin and would like to meet with him about the stray and abandoned animal problem.

"We'll listen," Cascos said. "But there are leash laws and we have to pick them up, and unfortunately if they aren't adopted, we have to euthanize them."

Allen Essex writes for the Valley Morning Star in Harlingen.



DANNY JOHNSTON | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
A rescued Boston terrier, who lost most of his hair to mange, sits on a counter recently at Pulaski County Humane Society near Little Rock, Ark.