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**ANALYSIS REVEALS REASONS WHY ATLANTA HUMANE SOCIETY KILLS PETS
Most Are Killed for Cold Symptoms or Upon Request**

Cat rescuer Kathi Mills has completed an extensive analysis of the reasons the Atlanta Humane Society records for killing pets, and found the most common reason is a case of the sniffles.

Mills obtained the data for the analysis through discovery in the \$75,000 libel lawsuit filed against her by the AHS in response to criticisms Mills made of the humane society in a private Internet e-mail group.

"In its fundraising literature, the AHS claims to be at the forefront of life-saving measures for animals," Mills said. "Yet they kill thousands for runny noses, diarrhea, and skin conditions."

Of the nearly 1,600 dogs in the report, 230 were killed for upper respiratory infections (colds). Six hundred and sixteen of the nearly 1,900 cats in the report were killed for the same reason, even though the humane society has an on-site veterinary hospital staffed by two full-time veterinarians.

The report, which includes pets killed by the AHS from January 1, 2001 through February 28, 2002, also shows the AHS offers a shocking kill-on-demand service to the public.

Two hundred and fifty-eight dogs and 490 cats were killed immediately upon impoundment because their owners completed a euthanasia request form. However, in many cases the owner didn't want their pet killed, according to a former volunteer.

"If a non-medically-trained AHS staff member thinks the pet has the slightest health or behavior problem—or if the owner says the pet has had one in the past—the AHS often tells the owner they will not accept their pet unless they sign a euthanasia request form, I was told," said Mills, who has never volunteered or worked for the AHS.

"The euthanasia request form gives the humane society an excuse to kill the animal immediately, saving them from spending one minute of time or one penny of money trying to find it a new home, although many owners undoubtedly believe the humane society will offer their pet for adoption," Mills said.

The reasons the humane society recorded for killing pets included:

Dogs (1,592 total)

- Health*: 909 (57.1%)
- Behavior: 319 (20.0%)
- Euthanasia request: 258 (16.2%)
- Age: 50 (3.1%)
- Space: 45 (2.8%)
- Pregnancy: 11 (0.7%)

Cats (1,888 total)

- Health*: 903 (47.8%)
- Euthanasia request: 490 (26.0%)
- Behavior: 347 (18.4%)
- Age: 128 (6.8%)
- Pregnancy: 20 (1.1%)

*Eleven health reasons were given for killing dogs, and eight health reasons were given for killing cats.

"Any old excuse" OK

Some of the reasons are self-contradictory, such as ten dogs who were killed at the age of a year and nine months because they were "too young," while another dog was killed at a year and two months old

for being "too old"; or ludicrous, such as the eight-pound black shorthair and 10-pound Maine Coon mix cats who were killed because they were "emaciated."

"The Atlanta Humane Society claims to be 'approaching' a 100% adoption rate for 'adoptable' animals, but they never define what 'adoptable' means," said Mills. "This analysis leads me to believe they have actually achieved a 100% adoption rate for adoptable animals, because the definition of 'adoptable' is circular: any animal that is adopted is 'adoptable.'"

"Any old excuse is sufficient to kill the ones who will probably take more than a few days to place in a new home," Mills said. "This report does not show an organization rendering only true euthanasia and killing only those deemed absolutely unadoptable after thorough veterinary and behavioral evaluation, as they would like potential donors to believe."

The tip of the iceberg

The 3,500 cats and dogs in the report are only a small fraction of the pets the AHS actually killed during this 14-month period.

The report includes only pets turned in to the humane society's shelter on Howell Mill Road. However, the humane society receives nearly \$2 million per year in taxpayer funds to operate the Fulton County Animal Control shelter, where more than three times as many animals were killed during the same period.

"Through both shelters, the Atlanta Humane Society's super-efficient killing machine is cranking out more than 13,000 dead animals a year—that's more than 38 dead cats and dogs, puppies and kittens every single hour," Mills said.

"AHS executive director Bill Garrett blames the public for this monstrosity, but the humane society is contributing to the problem by failing to spay or neuter pets before adoption, and refusing to give them to no-kill rescue groups rather than killing them, in violation of Fulton County ordinance," Mills said.

"According to the statistics on their Web site, the AHS has an abominable kill ratio, slaughtering 63.3% of all pets they take in," Mills said. "Other cities have a much lower ratio; for example, San Francisco kills only 28%," Mills said.

"San Francisco lowered their kill ratio through high-volume spay/neuter programs, foster care and treatment to prepare dogs and cats for adoption, and partnerships between the humane society and other shelters and rescue groups. Garrett has been the executive director of the AHS for more than 25 years and travels to conferences extensively at humane society expense, yet he can't seem to implement creative programs like this," Mills said.

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