

Euthanizing Stray or Feral Cats Can Be Avoided, Veterinarian Says

More emphasis should be placed on spaying or neutering.

A more realistic alternative to euthanizing stray and feral cats is to spay or neuter them instead, according to an Iowa State University (ISU) veterinarian. Every eight to 10 seconds, an animal is euthanized because there is no home available for it, but this can be avoided, according to Dr. Kim Langholz, a community practice veterinarian at the ISU Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Too many cats and dogs are reproducing. And a tremendous numbers are being euthanized each year in this country. To provide homes for all of the unwanted or homeless animals, every family of four in the U.S. would need to have approximately eight dogs and 20 cats, Langholz said.

According to the Humane Society of the United States and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, between three and four million cats and dogs are euthanized each year. And an equal number die from injury, starvation or disease when they're released by owners who no longer want them. Langholz recommends that pet owners not let their cats or dogs have a single litter. She also suggests that pet owners:

Become educated on pet overpopulation. Talk to family and friends about spaying and neutering their pets. Consider becoming an advocate for tougher spay/neuter laws. Adopt your next pet from the local humane society. Sponsor a fundraising event to help cover costs for the spays/neuters of pets owned by people on limited incomes. Volunteer at a shelter.

Additional information on overpopulation is available online at:

The Humane Society of the United States, www.hsus.org. The American Veterinary Medical Society www.avma.org. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, www.asPCA.org. The National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy www.petpopulation.org. Spay USA www.spayusa.org. The Feral Cat Coalition www.feralcat.com. Posted: June 9, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST