



*Updated*  
**5-YEAR  
ACTION PLAN**

TO REDUCE  
EUTHANASIAS OF  
CATS AND DOGS TO  
FEWER THAN  
5,000 PER YEAR

Heaven Can Wait Spay and Neuter Clinic  
has performed 96,000 spay/neuters,  
in cooperation with Las Vegas Valley  
Humane Society and C5.

**SPAY  
NEUTER**

**FERAL  
(Homeless)  
CATS**

**OUTREACH &  
EDUCATION**

**ENFORCEMENT**

**ANIMAL CONTROL  
ANIMAL FOUNDATION**

**ADOPTIONS**

**COALITION**

**CONFERENCES**

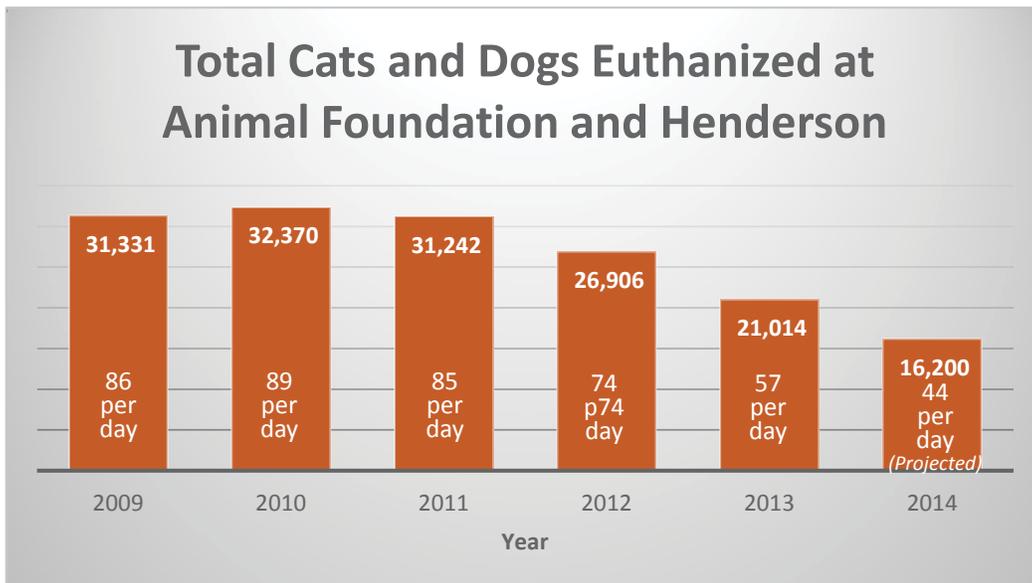
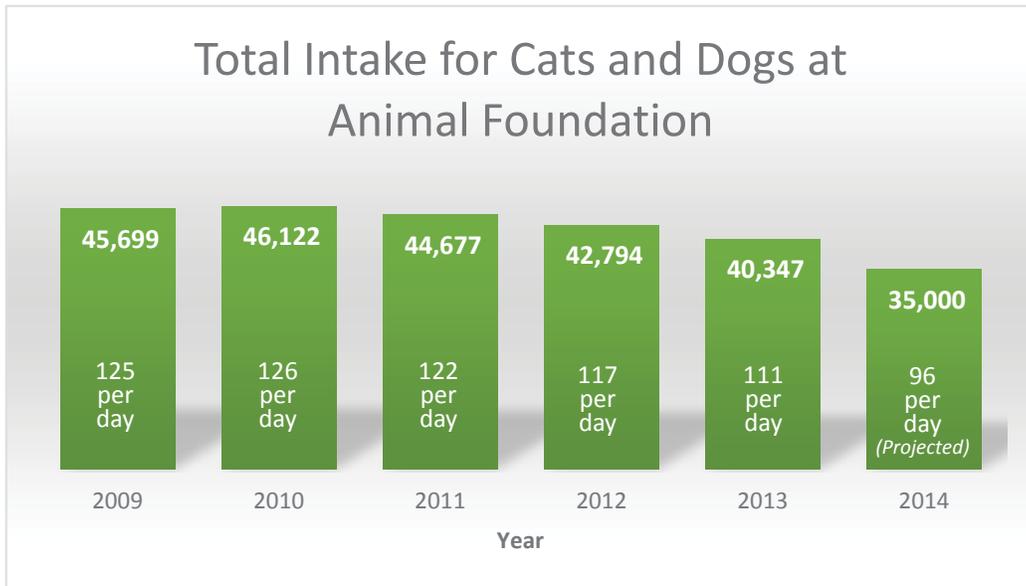
**Euthanasias are down 50% from 2010.  
See how we are going to reduce them to fewer  
than 5,000 in just 5 YEARS!**

**hcws.org**



**HCWS Mission:  
Making the Las Vegas area a safe community for cats and dogs.**

In 2010, in cooperation with the Las Vegas Valley Humane Society and C5, Heaven Can Wait enacted our first 5-Year Action Plan with the goal of reducing the euthanasia rate. With any goal, having some way to keep score is important; we chose to monitor our progress with the shelter intake and euthanasia numbers. Five years later, the statistics are improving across the board. What we are doing—over 96,000 targeted sterilizations—is working. We are projecting a 50% reduction in euthanasias by the end of 2014!



We understand there are many other opinions and philosophies out there, and we truly respect them all. However, based on our years of experience, we believe that the following plan is the quickest and most resource-efficient way to achieve our next five-year goal: reduce the euthanasia rate to fewer than 5,000.

## Spay and Neuter

Too many unwanted pets are being born, and because of this, too many are being euthanized. Changing this requires us as a society to either create more homes or produce fewer pets. The former is impractical given the number of unwanted pets, so we are left with reducing the number born as our only option. We do this through spay and neuter.

Every city that has successfully reduced their euthanasia rate has done so through spay and neuter programs that aggressively target the most likely to reproduce demographics—feral cats, Pit Bulls and Chihuahuas among them. Jacksonville, Florida, has performed 150,000 sterilizations since 2002 and has seen a staggering 90% drop in their euthanasia rate. San Francisco has had a no-cost/low-cost high volume spay and neuter program for years, and euthanasia of a healthy animal is unheard of. Time and again

sterilization programs have proven effective, and we are already seeing significant results from our efforts here. We have to keep at it though. If we stop now, the numbers could easily explode very quickly.

We project that we will need to continue to perform 20,000 sterilizations per year between 2014 and 2019 [for a total of 100,000] to reach our goal of fewer than 5,000 euthanasias per year. HCWS Spay and Neuter Clinic expects to perform 10,000 per year, in cooperation with LVVHS and C5, meaning groups such as the Animal Foundation, Spay and Neuter of Southern Nevada and other low-cost clinics will need to do another 10,000. If we can do this, we predict our results will be as follows:

### PREDICTED RESULTS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Goal</u>
2014	16,200 (44 per day)
2015	13,000
2016	10,400
2017	7,000
2018	UNDER 5,000

## Feral Cats (Homeless Cats)

Feral cats are far and away the most important demographic. Why? They will almost certainly reproduce multiple times per year and account for the vast majority of the unowned cat population. Clark County has 788 registered colonies as of June 1, 2014. The colonies being legal since 2009 has allowed us to stop many out-of-control population growth situations. As the number of these stable and monitored colonies increases, the number of cats trapped elsewhere decreases. Through them we can better monitor the feral cat population, believed to number as high as 200,000. As more of the high-density population areas become

managed colonies, trapping becomes more labor intensive and less efficient. In order to stay ahead of the curve, we will need to enlist the help of the public and make trapping something an average homeowner can do, rather than relying exclusively on specialists.

What seems to be working quite well in other cities is a program called *Return to Field*. Jacksonville has been doing this for years and their program is called *Feral Freedom*. This program is for the homeless cats.

When a homeless cat comes to our clinic, it is surprising to us what great shape it is in. They

actually seem to be thriving! So to us, it is crazy to put a perfectly healthy cat down for really no apparent reason other than being a nuisance to an uneducated neighbor. It takes so many resources to trap and kill it, and we all see how well that has worked in the past 50 years. So the theory on this program is to treat the homeless as part of the landscape, like pigeons, squirrels and jack rabbits, to name a few examples.

Currently, approximately 5,000 healthy homeless or feral cats get put down annually. We need to start

a *Return to Field* program on a very small scale and see for ourselves if society will tolerate such a program. If a person doesn't want a cat in the neighborhood, maybe it is best for him to trap and take it to the vet and have it euthanized. Why should taxpayers pay for that? There are many wrinkles to be ironed out, but it certainly needs to be tried. In other city shelters, after implementing this program, the shelter had more resources available for other areas, such as training dogs, giving dentals, and even starting ringworm wings in their shelter.

## Outreach and Education

Outreach is a key component in fixing the pet overpopulation problem. Pets living in lower-income areas tend to be less likely to be sterilized and more likely to reproduce. Over the past four years, using funding provided by PetSmart grants, HCWS has sterilized over 5,100 cats in these targeted areas. Providing low- and no-cost sterilization options has allowed us to reach animals we otherwise never could. Additionally, 1,500 kittens from these areas were placed into permanent homes. Continued targeting of these high-risk areas and demographics is an efficient and effective way of combating the problem.

Going forward, we believe outreach to predominantly Spanish-speaking populations could also have a positive effect. Removing the problem of a language barrier could reach another large population of unsterilized pets. We need Spanish-speaking people who will table and educate in front of Hispanic businesses and run strong commercials on Univision and Telemundo, showing what happens to these pets if they don't get fixed. Additionally, outreach by the way of social media could aid in spreading the message.

### In summary, our goals in this area are to:

- ✓ Have a strong outreach team
- ✓ Table at least once a month
- ✓ Speak at churches, schools and other venues
- ✓ Run commercials
- ✓ Have a dominant social media presence

## Coalition Building

In the past, we had summit meetings with all four jurisdictions as well as the Animal Foundation and the NSPCA. At that time, our goal was to get mandatory spay/neuter ordinances. That

has been accomplished! So now the coalitions that need to be formed are outreach, enforcing spay/neuter, adoptions and *Return to Field*.

## Enforcement

We need to crack down on people who have pets that are having litters of kittens and puppies one after another. Over a very short timeframe, these pets can cause a population explosion. Not only

do they have the litters, they give the puppies and kittens away without being fixed, thus starting a never-ending cycle of unwanted pets.

## Working with the Animal Foundation and Animal Control

We cannot do this alone. This is a community problem and the whole community needs to be part of the solution if we are to ever reach our goal. We need to work closer with the Animal Foundation and the Henderson Shelter, to implement programs, report hot areas, supply statistics and work on proactive plans together. For example: The Animal Foundation can be very instrumental in lowering cat euthanasias by working with us on the *Return to Field* program. This could save thousands of healthy cat lives yearly. Animal Control is also vital, for they can be working with us on certain rescues, enforcing pet responsibilities

and helping to develop proactive plans. We, in turn, can help them as well, for they are unquestionably understaffed. Through our coordinated outreach efforts, we can be their eyes and ears as well as help with hoarders and backyard breeders. Not only are the euthanasia numbers going down, but intakes as well. With a reduction of intake numbers, in theory, the Animal Foundation should have more funds to do more productive things, such as more spay/neuters, minor medical needs for cats and dogs, and obedience training. A couple of cities even started a ringworm wing. Say that three times fast!

## Adoptions

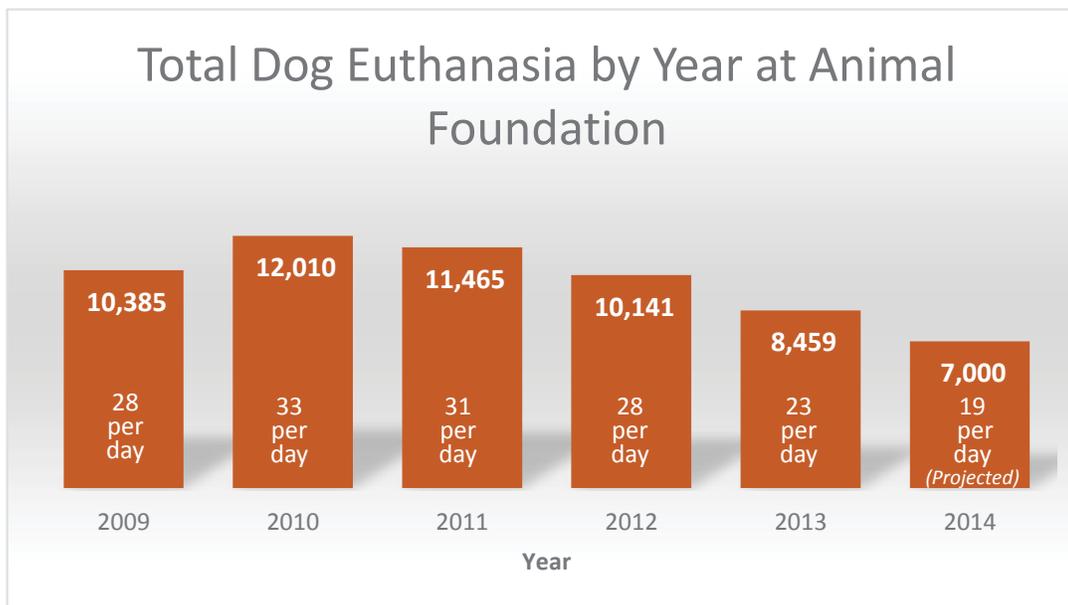
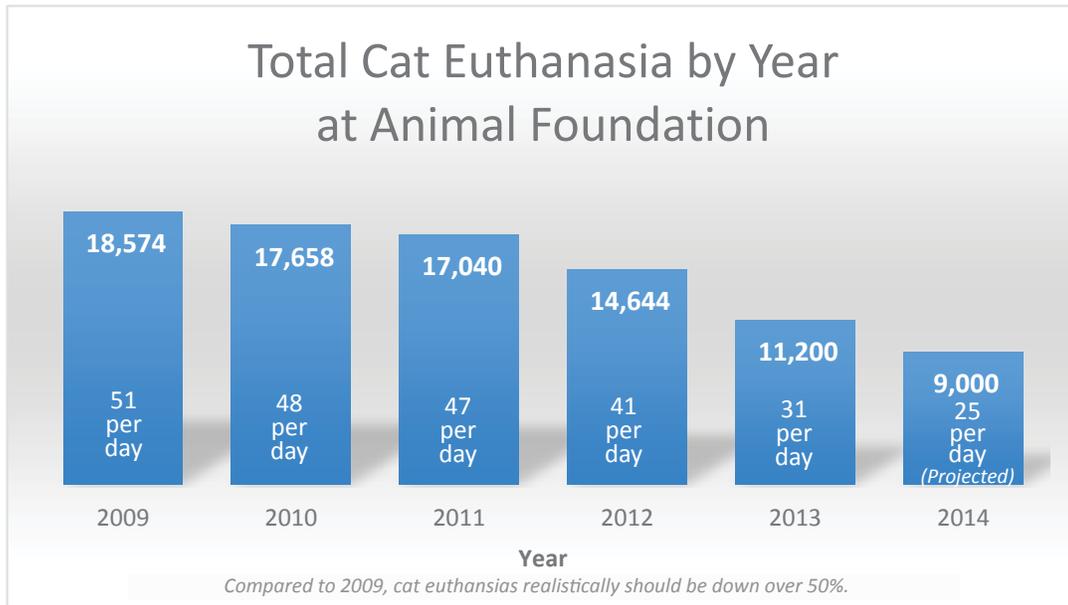
It is wonderful that there are so many rescue groups. They are truly angels for cats and dogs that need time, rehabilitation, vet care, and for so many of them, just plain old TLC. We think it is important for one to adopt from the shelters or reputable rescue groups for cats and dogs that are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and micro chipped. We would like to set a gold standard for rescue groups who go a bit farther. We should raise the bar to where every rescue meets certain “common sense standards.” The shelters and rescue groups should share their adoption numbers yearly which would allow us to track if there were more or less adoptions for the year. We should work together to create a plan on how to increase the number of

successful adoptions by identifying what works well, areas for improvement, and possible solutions. We tend to experience the same issues with much of our efforts being affected by the “irresponsible pet owner.” It would be a tremendous relief to many in our community if they knew their pets would be taken care of should they find themselves declining in health, getting deployed, or losing their home. Though not high on the list of priorities, adoptions are an important factor in lowering the rate of euthanasia. We should be proactive by working together to take the steps necessary to reduce the number of dogs and cats in need of rescue.

## Conferences

Once a year we will be presenting a day conference to tell everyone what is being done to solve the pet overpopulation problem and how close we are to

reaching our goals. We will get guest speakers who know what's going on nationally, what is working in other cities...as well as what is not.



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