

- 1. How bad is the pet overpopulation problem in Nacogdoches County?** Texas, Southern California and Florida have the highest euthanasias per capita in the US (www.petsmartcharities.com). San Antonio euthanizes about 40 animals per 1,000 capita each year (San Antonio Animal Control), and this is look upon by PetsMart Charities as being among the highest euthanasias per capita rate I the US. In the northeast, where pet population is under good control, euthanasias per 1,000 capita are about 5. Pet transport charities exist that transport pets from shelters I Texas and other states that have pet surpluses, to the northeast and other areas that have more homes than pets (Rescue Waggin' is one example). Over the past decade in Nacogdoches, we have euthanized 2000-4000 animals yearly at the shelter. In a county of about 60,000, out euthanasia per 1,000 capita are 30-70. Some years are much higher than the cities targeted by national humane organizations as being the worst in the country. In our county, it's as bad as it gets.
- 2. Why is spaying and neutering animals in Nacogdoches county important?:** It costs taxpayers in Texas as much as \$176 to impound, house, and destroy a homeless pet through the shelter system. About \$40-80 will spay or neuter the same pet (www.petsmartcharities.com).
- 3. Why is low cost spay and neuter important?** According to the 2007 US Census 21.1% of the 62,768 people who live in Nacogdoches County live below the poverty line – about 13,000 people. We have an average of 2.49 people per household in Nacogdoches County, so there are about 5300 households in our county living below the poverty line. According to the AVMA, 37.2% of US households own an average of 1.7 dogs, and 32.4% of households own an average of 2.2 cats. So there are likely about 3400 dogs and 2800 cats living in homes that absolutely can not afford veterinary care for their animals, including spaying and neutering.

According to Chu et al (JAVMA 2009), family income was the strongest predictor of whether cats in the household were neutered. The study did not attempt to address stray and feral cats, which represent a substantial but unknown percentage of the total US cat population. 50% of cats owned by household with incomes less than \$35,000 were not spayed or neutered.

Sexually intact cats have an average of 1.5 litters per year, with 4 kittens per litter. Feral cat populations are pretty consistently about 50% female and 50% male. Unaltered female cats usually have their first litter at about 1 year of age. Let's say 50% of the cats die of neglect each year. So the cats in the county living in poor households who likely will not neuter them, if left unchecked, will reproduce as below:

	Cats	After 50% death loss
Number of cats at time 0	1400 cats	n/a
1 year	700 m + 700 f + 4200 k = 5600	2800
2 years	1400 m + 1400 f + 8400 k = 11,200	5600
3 years	2800 m + 2800 f + 16800 k = 22,400	11200
4 years	5600 m + 5600 f + 33600 k = 44,800	22400
5 years	11200 m + 11200 f + 67200 k = 89600	44800

So even with 50% death loss, which is probably high, the cat population will increase 32 fold every 5 years, and the dogs will probably do similarly.

- 4. Will low cost spay-neuter negatively impact the local veterinary community?** A published study by Frank et al, funded by Maddie's Fund, shows that low-cost spay/neuter programs are effective at raising total community spay/neuter levels (i.e. they do not merely cause pet owners who would otherwise pay for spay/neuter procedures at a veterinary clinic to opt for low cost spay-neuter instead). 85% of those who use low cost spay-ener services that require proof of low income have pets who have never visited a veterinary clinic. It's crucial that we limit those who take advantage of the spay neuter clinic proposed to operate out of the Shelter to those who can verify low income or who adopt an animal from the shelter.