



ABSTRACT

Workshop 1

Birth control policies

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Overpopulation of stray animals (cats and dogs) is an important international animal welfare topic that brought many experts, politicians and specialized organizations to search for solutions.

Although the overpopulation of stray animals is not a new topic, much points to a strange tendency of reinventing a wheel. Local or central authorities around the world have tried in different ways to keep the stray animal's population under control. The most known methods are: killing stray animals, building shelters and birth control programs. In some cases we even have to face some time the strategy of ignoring the existence of stray animals. Despite of all conducted studies and clear recommendations made by the World Health Organization (WHO), many decision makers refuse to realize that Birth Control Programs are the only sustainable and humane methods to address stray animal's issue. More than this, many authorities are still using killing methods that are even not accepted by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The state authorities should therefore seriously consider these recommendations, made by respected experts and veterinarians, when making decisions to launch killing programs of stray animals.

The big steps in the right direction can be made only when the responsible authorities and politicians realize that the link between human and animal health is very strong and that through protecting and caring for animals we protect and care at the same time also for citizens. According to the OIE, the first guiding principle for animal welfare is a critical relationship between animal health and animal welfare.

Birth control programs for stray animals are very complex and these are not an issue that only animal welfare groups and organizations should be engaged with. As the dynamic of stray animal's population is tightly connected to the human population and social attitude, the birth control programs have to be planned very meticulously and include a whole spectrum of interdependent factors. Although stray animals' causes and problems may vary from one region to the other, the overpopulation of these animals has only one origin: the incapacity or even refusal of some authorities to follow the recommendations of experts and implement sustainable birth control programs.