



# Community Cat Management

A Different Approach

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**Best Friends<sup>®</sup>**

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# Community Cat Management

- What is a community cat?

"Community cat" means a feral or free-roaming cat that is without visibly discernable or microchip owner identification of any kind, and has been sterilized, vaccinated, and ear-tipped.

- *Utah State Code*



# Defining the Problem

- In Utah, 52% of all cats that enter shelters are killed
  - Compared to 17% of dogs
- 40% of stray dogs were reclaimed by their owners compared to only 4% of cats
- Cats must be treated differently than dogs in our shelter, specifically community cats



# What is the law?

- 11-46-303. Community cats.

(1) A cat received by a shelter under the provisions of Section 11-46-103 may be released prior to the five-day holding period to a sponsor that operates a community cat program.

(2) A community cat is:

(a) exempt from licensing requirements and feeding bans; and

(b) eligible for release from an animal shelter prior to the mandatory five-day hold period in Section 11-46-103.

(3) Community cat sponsors or caretakers do not have custody, as defined in Section 76-9-301, of any cat in a community cat colony. Cats in a colony that are obviously owned, as evidenced by a collar, tags, microchip, or other discernable owner identification, are not exempt from the provisions of Title 76, Chapter 9, Part 3, Cruelty to Animals.

(4) Sterilization and vaccination records shall be maintained for a minimum of three years and be available to an animal control officer upon request.

- Enacted by Chapter 130, 2011 General Session



# Community Cat Management

- Trap/Neuter/Return is a humane, non-lethal alternative to the trap-and-kill method of controlling cat populations
- Healthy (or easily treatable) cats are trapped, brought to a shelter or clinic to be sterilized and vaccinated, and released back to the area they were found
- Cats are ear tipped for future identification



# The Vacuum Effect

Using trap-kill programs causes a phenomenon wherein if a cat's population is reduced, remaining cats will produce kittens at a higher rate to compensate. Even if all of the cats are removed, the habitat attracts new cats, drawing the community into a costly and endless cycle of trapping and killing.



# How it Works - Complainants

- A successful TNR program must include a plan to address the legitimate nuisance complaints by community members
  - Sterilization naturally reduces nuisance behaviors
- Promote Deterrent Methods
  - Scat Mats, ScareCrow, CatStop



# How it Works - Benefits

- Reduces shelter admissions and operating costs while increasing adoption rates
- Creates safer communities by reducing the number of unvaccinated cats
- Improves the health and quality of lives of free roaming cats
- Reduces the behaviors that can lead to nuisance complaints such as fighting and yowling
- Increased job satisfaction among animal shelter employees
- TNR reduces the size of the colony over time



# Questions?

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