



Our Mission:

We are committed to saving lives and reducing suffering of homeless dogs and cats through education, advancement of knowledge and shelter outreach.

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Shelter Watch



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From the Director's Desk

Most shelters still have some "down-time" left before the onslaught of kitten season in the Northeast. These are the days for catching up on all those tasks (e.g., deep cleaning the cat rooms) that are impossible to tend to during kitten season. It is also the ideal time to plan – yes, that dirty word that is so hard to do in the midst of the daily crises in animal shelters. Planning, however, can go a long way towards reducing the number and frequency of crises. Crises such as outbreaks of kitten respiratory disease, insufficient foster-care providers, or too few cages for isolating all of the sick kittens, can often be averted or at least mitigated by planning ahead of kitten season.

One of the first steps in planning is to check the numbers of kittens you are likely to have to manage this year based on numbers from the last 2-3 years (see Numbers Count in this Newsletter). Shelters can identify their kitten foster care-providers now (including those caring for orphan kittens), assemble them and start their training sessions. Training many people at once has the advantage of efficiency for your staff and facilitates relationships among the care-providers. Better to address questions now in a group, than later one-at-a-time when individual crises arise. The kitten foster care provider's guide (or protocol) should be updated and ready

for distribution.

Use your database to look at the average length of time your kittens remain in your care. If you can shorten their stay, you can increase the numbers of kittens you can comfortably care for. Get your off-site adoption schedule finalized, including appropriate permissions, dates and staffing to cut down on your workload after the kittens arrive. It is also a good time to search out new venues for offsite adoptions as kittens sell themselves if people can view them.

Review your plans for ordering kitten food, other supplies (including those for orphans) and vaccines. Review your vaccination protocols for kittens, and since kittens that remain in the shelter system more than 2 weeks require re-vaccination, plan for a means to remind care providers to get these babies revaccinated promptly. Other issues to consider are adequate supplies of de-wormers, antibiotics, staff and volunteers, and adequate housing separate from adult cats. Even though it seems there is never time to plan, the irony is that planning reduces time spent attending to the issues that arise because the shelter didn't plan.

Jan Scarlett, DVM, PhD.

Starting Small: Instituting Daily Rounds for Population Management Dr. Elizabeth Berliner

What if I told you that you can start making a measurable difference in your population health and management tomorrow, with a minimal investment of time, and no additional costs? Who wouldn't sign up for that?

Starting **daily rounds** in your shelter may change your life and the lives of your shelter residents. If your shelter staff consists of

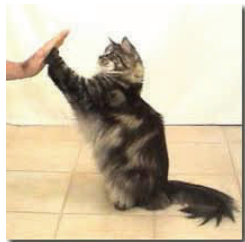
more than a couple of people, you know how difficult communication can be. With daily rounds, once daily, for 20-30 minutes, a small group of managers gets together and travels from cage to cage through the shelter. The goal is to look at each animal briefly, and to quickly evaluate what needs to happen to get that animal on the proper

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Daily rounds: a small step that can make a big difference!

“A simple target game is very enriching for shelter cats as it provides physical, mental and social stimulation.”



Clicker training for cats rates a “high five!”

Starting Small: (continued from Page 1)

pathway out of the shelter. Although too large a team can be unwieldy, there should be representation of the medical, behavioral, and operations aspects of the shelter staff.

A few quick pointers:

- Put one person in charge of “calling” rounds each day, and leading. This can shift with schedules.
- Pick a time, and stick to it. A good time seems to be after morning cleaning, treatments, and feeding -- just before the doors open to the public.
- Set a time limit, and stick to it. Do not let it become a “pseudo” staff meeting, or complaint session.
- Assign follow-up tasks as you move through so that the next

day it is clear who was accountable for taking the next steps for that animal.

- Offer positive feedback and suggestions to keep animals moving, and to keep staff energized.

These rounds are centered on population management, and do not replace medical rounds accomplished by medically trained staff. With the hectic nature of sheltering, daily rounds can prevent residents from lingering too long in intake or other areas where they are not adoptable. Furthermore, they reinforce efficiency, encourage active problem solving, and recognize the individual needs and pathways of some residents.

If you have a best practice that has changed your shelter, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at sheltermedicine@cornell.edu with your story.

Clicker Training is Not Just for Dogs: Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC

Last month I wrote about the “Click for Quiet” program to help reduce barking in your shelter’s kennels. But dogs are not the only species that can benefit from the science of clicker training. Cats learn the same way that dogs do so clicker training works on them too. In fact, clicker training has been used in the zoo and aquarium field for many years. Dolphins, elephants, lions, gorillas and many other species benefit from this powerful communication system.

‘Target training’ is used a lot in zoos and aquariums and involves teaching the animal to touch its nose to a presented ‘target’ item. Target training can also be very useful for shelter cats and the process is quite simple. Walk up to the cage of the liveliest cat in the room. Present a target stick of some kind (pencil, dowel, chopstick, etc.) and when the cat investigates the item (she will most likely sniff this strange item coming into her cage) “click” just as her nose touches the stick and then give her a treat. Remember – the “click” marks the exact

behavior that earns the reward (touching nose to target) and every time you click, you must provide a reward or you lose the power of the communication signal. Do this 3-4 times, repositioning the target stick each time to encourage the cat to move in order to touch it. Then go to the next cat and repeat the process. You will soon have a cat room full of cats that eagerly approach the front of the cage for engagement.

This simple target game is very enriching for the shelter cats as it provides physical, mental and social stimulation. It encourages the cats to move around in their cage, to approach a human at the front of their cage and to think and learn. It also gives the cats a little sense of control – something they are greatly lacking when living in a cage – because they learn that they can earn rewards by choosing to engage in a behavior. See the target – move to the target – touch the target – and earn a reward. A simple game, but so very beneficial.

Oh - and it’s also fun, for the cats and the humans!

Numbers Count: Dr. Jan Scarlett

Use the data you collected in previous years regarding kittens to help you prepare for this year's kitten season. For most shelters, the number of kittens anticipated this year will be close to the average number of kittens received annually over the past 2-3 years. You can estimate this number first by defining the dates of your shelter's kitten season; then count the kittens received over the past 2-3 years during that period and calculate your average annual kitten intake. Depending on how you manage your kittens, you will probably want to subdivide your numbers by calendar time and age of kitten (e.g., unweaned with or without mom and 6 + weeks of age) to plan for foster care needs, cage space and other supplies the

shelter will need. Similarly, look at the average length of stay for kittens in foster care, those sent to offsite locations, and those remaining in the shelter. Depending on your numbers, consider ways you might shorten length of stay in any of these locations. If you have data regarding numbers of sick kittens in the past (by date if possible), use these data to estimate your space needs in the infirmary, and take the opportunity to discuss strategies for reducing those numbers of sick kittens. These are only suggestions and by all means use your data to answer other kitten-related questions the shelter may have as well. Using the data (that you take time and money to enter) can increase your efficiency and minimize crises that will arise in the busy kitten season.



Early preparation can help you prepare for kitten season.

“Data collected in previous years regarding kittens can help you prepare for this year's kitten season.”

Rabies Protection for People: Dr. Kate Riley

Rabies vaccination is required by law for the dogs and cats (and sometimes ferrets) we care for, but what about the humans? The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported four human cases of rabies in 2009 and 6,690 rabid animals in 49 states and Puerto Rico. The risk of exposure is very serious, and very real. Is your shelter prepared?

- Identify staff members most likely to contact rabid animals, make sure they are vaccinated.
 - Animal Control Officers
 - Euthanasia technicians
 - Staff in bite hold/quarantine areas
 - Medical/intake staff
- Previously vaccinated staff members should have antibody titers checked every two years.
- Management should have an up-to-date list of vaccinated staff.
- Maintain appropriate safety equipment,

learn proper techniques for use.

- Gloves
- Traps
- Squeeze cages
- Catch poles/snare
- Have a clear operating procedure for holding suspect animals and handling all bites and scratches within your facility. Consult your Board of Health.

Pre-exposure vaccination is expensive (up to \$750 for three injections), and many health insurance policies do not cover it. However, it can save just as much money if post-exposure prophylaxis is ever needed, because immunoglobulin is not required. It can also lessen anxiety for staff and provide protection against unrecognized exposures. If you have key staff members that are currently unvaccinated or overdue for titers, address this as soon as possible with your municipality or board of directors.

For more information, see the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/> and your state or local Board of Health.



<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

Veterinary Support Services: Dr. Jodie Gerdin, Pathology Resident, Biomedical Sciences

It's the stuff nightmares are made of: First a kitten dies, then another in the same litter, then another in a different litter. Other kittens are sick, but seem to recover. You can do a necropsy on the kittens that have died, but what should you look for? What samples should you collect? Should you collect anything from the sick-but-still-alive kittens?

Fortunately, there are veterinarians at diagnostic laboratories available to help you with just these types of canine and feline "herd health" problems.

A major emphasis of the New York State Animal Health Diagnostic Center (ADHC) is to assist veterinarians and shelter staff in test selection and aid in interpretation of diagnostic laboratory data results. To accomplish this, the ADHC employs veterinarians with years of experience in practice and extensive training in diagnostic methods. These veterinarians are available by phone for consultation before, during, and after submission of samples to help guide the diagnostic work up and result interpretation. They work closely with faculty from the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program to also assist with shelter disease prevention, surveillance, and control programs.

For those actually addressing the kind of scenario outlined above, they have also developed a field necropsy kit. Complete instructions outline the full necropsy procedures and

guide sample collection. The kit includes instructions for cases that must also be considered rabies suspects or those that have toxicologic concerns. All sample collection, packaging and shipping materials are provided.

In addition, a number of recommended diagnostic plans for both canine and feline health problems (listed below) have been developed and are available on-line, along with test prices:

- Canine and feline fading puppies/ kittens and abortions in bitches/ queens
- Canine and feline diarrhea
- Canine and feline infectious respiratory disease
- Canine and feline neurologic disease
- Canine and feline fever of unknown origin
- Canine and feline dermatologic disease

To access the diagnostic plans, please go to the ADHC homepage (<http://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu>). In the "test selection" area (under the on-screen rotating image), select the species from the species-selection drop down menu box, and type the words "diagnostic plan" in the keyword search box. Personal assistance is available by contacting the veterinarians of the Veterinary Support Services directly (607) 253-4318.

Events Calendar

April 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 "Spay Your Momma" clinic
3 Behavior Rotation Week 2	4 MSU Extern	5 Shelter Medicine I class	6	7 Shelter Medicine I class	8	9
10	11 Cornell Extern	12 Shelter Medicine I class	13	14 Shelter Medicine I class	15	16
17	18	19 Shelter Medicine I class	20	21 Shelter Medicine I class	22	23
24	25	26 Shelter Medicine II class	27	28 Shelter Medicine II class	29 Oregon Humane & Oregon State University Conference	30



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Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program



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