

ARPA - Humanitarian Association to Reduce Pets Overpopulation and Abandonment

Everyday countless animals are abandoned in Portugal, mainly dogs and cats. These are abandoned for various reasons, usually due to a lack of the owners' commitment to their pets. This situation is exacerbated as a result of the excess number of animals and the ease of adoption. People do not give due consideration or thought to the love, care and dedication required when taking an animal into their homes.

Unfortunately these animals are doomed to one or more of the following fates. They will most likely to end their lives in a municipal kennel where they will inevitably have to be destroyed, in an animal shelter and wait to be adopted and hopefully get a loving home or be involved in a road traffic accident, left to starve, pick up a poisonous product or disease or die from hypothermia. This is not the way to allow animals to be treated. Not to mention the threat they pose regarding health and hygiene to humans especially children. In Portugal alone it is estimated that 100,000 pets are put to sleep in municipal kennels every year.

This number does not take into account the number that are destroyed without the details being properly recorded. These facts in themselves shows that overpopulation of dogs and cats is evident. The elimination of the surplus population is of the utmost importance. The policy adopted by the municipalities is clearly inefficient and ineffective and often inhumane.

It is a fact that a bitch and its descendants can produce 73,000 puppies and a queen 240,000 kittens in six years. Collecting these abandoned animals and keeping them in shelters for adoption has not been effective in reducing overpopulation and abandonment, despite being the action of most associations in Portugal.

The adoption rate in municipal kennels is only 20% and the future of these adoptions uncertain. Policing of adopted animals is just not possible in most circumstances.

It is estimated that 70% of the animals adopted in the US are offered to a third party, returned to the kennel or abandoned. Unfortunately the younger the animal the greater the chance of it being returned.

In Brazil, studies indicate that the average time an animal remains adopted is only 14 months. This academic study therefore proves the point that adopting animals is not the answer regarding the issue of reproduction, or the continuing increase of abandonment and most certainly does not solve the problem facing us today.

The most effective measure to reduce the overpopulation of dogs and cats is the humanitarian program of contraception. These programs involve neutering campaigns for free or low cost. These practices have been widely introduced in other countries with great success. However in Portugal implementations of these programs are rare, even with a law in place since 2003 where it clearly states the responsibility of local authorities for the implementation of reproductive control for dogs.

Incentives to reduce prices in private clinics for spay/ neuter are non-existent. This situation reduces dramatically the opportunities available to a fraction of the population.

Free neutering campaigns conducted sporadically by international veterinary organizations are restricted by the lack of legislation supporting them. This is as a result of

the rigid regulations stipulated and imposed by the Order controlling the activities of veterinary medicine in Portugal.

As a result of the direct regulations imposed, the percentage of neutered dogs in the Porto area was a mere 5 %. These figures were the result of a study carried out in the area of Porto in 2008. The survey also showed on average almost half of the owners were unaware of the advantages and disadvantages of spay/ neutering.

Taking into consideration all the facts available it is the utmost urgency that facilities are established and properly managed to create a neutering campaign for dogs and cats, males and females. Animal population control is not now a question of "If" but "When" local authorities will join with responsible professional Veterinarians for the purpose of animal population control. This exercise should involve education and awareness of the owners about the importance and benefits of early neutering and responsible ownership. Neutered animals have higher quality of life and bond to their owners - less than 10% of the animals who arrive in the US kennels are neutered.

Such actions will benefit the welfare of people, animal health is one of the pillars of global health, with a direct effect on environmental health, public health, also preserving the quality of life, the environment and most importantly the animals. These programs also reflect positively on veterinary clinics, as dogs and cats will make a more valuable contribution to our society, if properly cared for.

Finally, without overpopulation for which we the human race are in a large part responsible, there will not be the cruel necessity to destroy thousands of dogs and cats just because they are considered "unnecessary surplus". This will not only save countless sums of public money every year but reduce the cases of abandonment, neglect and animal abuse.

Faced with the obvious need for such initiatives and with the means and experience gained in over 10 years volunteering at various local associations, a veterinary duo have decided to create an association to provide information and affordable neutering for needy owners.

Mission: "ARPA works towards the day where no puppy or kitten borned will be considered an unwanted surplus."

Goals:

1. Provide low cost neutering/spay surgeries for needy pet owners and street/ feral dogs and cats,
2. Promote awareness and information about responsible ownership.

Strategy: Neutering campaigns,
Educational actions.

MO:

Neutering Campaigns

Neutering Campaigns at least 2 Sundays by month at the veterinary center Cãofraria dos Bichos, in Vila Nova de Poiares. The surgeries will be performed by experienced veterinarians, registered at OMV. The animal identification by microchip or ear tipping (the latter in the case of street cats) will be mandatory within the dissemination and application of responsible ownership and to enable the identification of neutered animals in future campaigns and TNR.

Step 1: Identification of needy owners, protectors of feral cat colonies and community dogs and cats

The campaign will be publicized through various media - using the internet, radio, local parish councils, events and posters – owners/ protectors will be required to fill out and remit the registration form (attached) along with the requested documents (list attached).

The next step is the interview, to get more information about the animals and owners/protectors and they will be advised about the risks and care before, during and after surgery to have with animals. Questions will be answered and advice on health and the responsibility of ownership will be given.

The owners/protectors will sign documents for - Authorization of Surgery/ Anesthesia / Identification of each animal to be neutered - and pay a contribution for each animal according to the following table *:

Male cat	20 euros
Female cat	35 euros
Dog	35 euros
Bitches < 10kg	40 euros
Bitches 10 to 25kg	50 euros
Bitches > 25kg	60 euros
Microchip	10 euros

*values are not definitive, depends of number of animals and owner's condition. Subsidized are possible, depending of the available funds.

Step 2: Organization of the Campaign

The neuterings will be scheduled for the nearest Sunday, depending of the veterinary center and team's availability and capacity, since animal welfare is always the priority taking secondary importance the number of interventions. As permanent voluntaries we have two vets, Cristiane Lima and Mildren Costa, one veterinary assistant Isabel Simões and two trappers Sofia Francisco and Jorge Francisco (also responsible for fundraising).

Depending of the number of surgeries the logistics for the day will be planned, and the material acquisition (through purchase or donations of laboratories) will be done. Every animal will have a file, with all the information needed about its condition and for the day of campaign every procedure will be recorded at this file.

Again the owners will be contacted and informed about the date, time

and place of surgery.

Step 3: Day of the Campaign

In the clinic the owners and their pets will face a reception area, where volunteers register each animal. After the processing pets will entry into the pre-surgical room. From this point they will be under vets care and control, for anesthesia, surgery and identification. They will then go to the recovery room and when ready, under vets authorization, discharged and returned to their owners.

Step 4: Results

With the data collected will be carried reports with the results for further analisis, they will be published on the association website. Reports with the results for further analisis will be published.

Educational Actions

Many initiatives specially at local schools will be promoted and performed by our volunteers, with children at all ages and with the purpose of give information and consciousness about responsible ownership.

Local fairs are also places where we can receive donations, inform the general public about the campaigns and responsible ownership and sell donated articles to revert some money.

We also have a facebook page where we can provide all the information and sell special pet related articles in our e-shop.

Actual Situation:

At the moment we are 2 vets, 2 trapper/fundraising, 1 vet assistant, 1 webdesigner and 1 lawyer, working as volunteers.

The material and equipment for the spay/ neutering is listed below.

At first all the equipment used will be on loan(for free) from Cãofraria dos Bichos Veterinary Center. The high cost of the equipment (~10.000 €) limits a initial investment in this but as soon as possible funding will be a priority in order to maximize the campaigns.

The material listed is necessary in the beginning. It consists of anesthetics, medications, sutures, microchips, etc with sufficient quantity for an initial 1000 surgeries. The first campaign will proceed with sufficient material for 100 animals with the intention of using any income for funding the material for the next stage of the process.

Any donation in materials or equipment will be most welcome as we certainly cannot count on sufficient public donations, neutering still has not had a great impact on public opinion in Portugal. Educational material in portuguese is also wellcome as our work with awareness of adults and children about pets care and responsible ownership will be as important as the campaigns. These two initiatives will always be together.

After the first campaign we will assess our situation , take stock of our strengths and weaknesses, possibly change some ideas and receive more donations but be prepared for some setbacks. "Rome was not built in a day" we will work in order to enlist the support of individuals and companies to raise awareness and have campaigns that will enable us to provide enough money to pay for the venture, also support the rest of the work (TNR and educational initiatives).

Our main concern is the possible repercussions from the veterinary class, some members of the Order may look on our work as a threat and unfair competition. With this in mind all beneficiaries of the campaigns will be thoroughly selected.

Each applicant will be required to sign a declaration where they will state in full their need for financial support to have the surgeries done. Prove they have no possibility to be able raise sufficient finance to be able to afford the cost as charged at a normal practice.

We also believe that other vets will see that the initiatives we hope to show can be good publicity for their clinic. It is our hope that in the future we will have more clinics and vets cooperating.

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS TO CAMPAIGN

1. Have legal residence in Portugal,
2. Have a monthly income equal or below the official minimum wage,
3. Be 18 years or more,
4. Provide the organization of the campaign the documents to verify their economic situation and his family,
5. Sign a declaration of “needy owner”,
6. Accept visit and interview at home by members of the campaign,
7. Provide written authorization to the organization's campaign for the anesthetic, surgical and animal identification procedures for each animal,
8. Commit to make a monetary contribution to the campaign at the time of booking,
9. Commit to attend on the date, time and place set for animals properly prepared for surgery under the guidance of members of the campaign organization.

Required Documents

A photocopy or send via digital along with the application form:

- Card taxpayer and valid identification of the owner (citizen card or ID card, passport).
- Proof of address.
- IRS Declaration of the previous year or if no declaration the receipts (wages, green receipts, pension) of the preceding month or three months earlier, if the monthly figures are erratic. (*not necessary for protectors*)

Material	Presentation	Price*	Quantity**	Total
Compresses	100 units	5	50	250
Cotton	Roll	5	1	5
Needle 23G	Box 100	3	15	45
Needle 25G	Box 100	3	5	15
Seringe 3mL	Box 100	5	20	100
Seringe 1mL	Box 100	8	10	80
Catether IV blue	Box 50	35	5	175
Catether IV yellow	Box 50	35	5	175
IV set for infusion	Unit	1	1000	1000
Fluid for infusion	Bottle 1L	2,5	100	250
Suture catgut Chrom 1	Unit or box	90	7	630
Suture polyglycolic acid 2-0	Unit or box	50	10	500
Suture polyglycolic acid 3-0	Unit or box	50	3	150
Needles for suture	Unit or box	40	90	3600
Surgery covers	Unit	1	1000	1000
Seton (xylazine)	Bottle 25mL	30	80	2400
Revertor/ antisedan	Bottle 10mL	60	5	300
Metacam	Bottle 20mL	60	5	300
Clorketam (ketamine)	Bottle 10mL	20	200	4000
Marbocyl 2% (antibiotic)	Bottle 100mL	20	20	400
Sterilized surgical gloves	Box 50	20	20	400
Propofol	Box 5x 20ML	40	2	80
Betadine	1L	9	10	90
Alcool 96o	1L	4	10	40
H2O2	1L	3	10	30
Antiseptic cream	Box 100	30	2	60
Absorbent underpads 40x60	Bag 25	5	40	200
Diazepam	Box 6x2mL	6	30	180
Pentobarbital	Bottle 50mL	35	5	175
Microchip	box 10	61,5	100	6150
Adhesive	Roll	15	5	75
Surface disinfectant	5L	70	5	350
Surgical blades	100 units	25	10	250
Vetbond	Tube	20	10	200
Latex gloves	Box 100	7	20	140
Profender	Box 20	100	5	500
Advantage 400	Box 4 pipets	20	125	2500
Equipment				
Clipper machine	Unit	200	1	200
Comb #40 for the hairclipper	Unit	55	2	110
Muzzle set	Kit	80	2	160
Safety Gloves	Pair	40	2	80
Cat restrainer	Unit	70	3	210
Cat trap comb	Unit	?	1	0
Cat cages	Unit	25	10	250
Cat traps	Unit	?	10	0
Sterilization unit 19L	Unit	2735	1	2735
Surgical set queen	Kit	250	10	2500
Surgical set bitch	Kit	350	10	3500
Termometer	Unit	4	5	20
Fluid holder	Unit	80	2	160
Estethoscope	Unit	2	50	100
Bags for sterilization	1000 units	500	1	500
Total				37320

*HenrySchein 2010

**Quantity/1000~females