Data-Driven Animal Protection

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• WellBeing International was founded in 2018 to “seek solutions for animals, people and the environment.

• Today – hope to provide a few examples of the use of data to examine animal protection progress in the US.

• In particular, will look at the growth of US animal protection and examine US dog & cat population trends and, in particular, what is happening today in US shelters and rescues.
Outline of Talk

• US Animal Protection Movement
  • Growth in numbers
  • Growth in income/resources

• US Pet Demographics
  • Trends – 1910 to Present (last 110 years
  • Some Oklahoma Data

• US Shelter Intakes and Outcomes
  • 1973 to Present
  • Current Stress in US Shelter/Rescue Community

• Concluding Comments
In 1910, there were – ca. 600 APM organizations.
In 1960, there were – ca. 1,000 organizations (& 600 shelters) (brick & mortar facilities holding rescued dogs and cats).

In 2004, there were – ca. 5,500 organizations (& 3,500 shltrs). Today, there are – ca. 22,000 organizations (& 4,500 shltrs).

In 1960, APM spending ca. $2 per capita ($ 2020)
In 1980, APM spending ca. $6 per capita ($ 2020)
In 2000, APM spending ca. $7.5 per capita ($ 2020)
In 2020, APM spending ca. $12 per capita – or around $3.7 billion in total – mainly (80%+) on dog, cat & other pet rescue & advocacy
The chart shows the percentages of US households with pets over time. Note that two of the national surveys find no/little change in ownership rates. One reports significant increases.
• People routinely take the latest survey estimate and then assume that reflects the correct dog/cat population.
According to the 2016 AVMA survey of US dog and cat populations, the map at right shows dogs per 1,000 people for each state.
In relative terms (per 1,000 people), shelter intake has dropped by 70% since 1973.
Recent Dog & Cat Intake Trends

USA: Dog & Cat Shelter Intake (indexed for 1,000 shelters & rescues)

Data from Petpoint Industry Reports, standardized for 1,000 shelters & rescues
• Nationally, 3.4 dogs and cats were euthanized in shelters per 1,000 people in 2019.
Shelter Dog Intake – National Trends

Dog Intake Into US Shelters/Rescues
(standardised for 1,000 reporting agencies)

- Stray intake
- Owner surrenders
- Transferred in
- Seizures by law enforcement
- Returned to shelter
Shelter Dog Outcomes


- Dog Adoptions
- Dog Transport out

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Conclusions

- Surprising lack of “Accurate” Pet Dog and Cat Data – most people use APPA estimates but indications are that they are too high.
- Tremendous growth in US Animal Protection Movement – both in number of organizations and in overall income since 1960.
- Huge improvement (decrease) in shelter intakes and shelter euthanasia for BOTH Dogs and Cats since 1970 – probably driven by S/N projects – majority of sterilizations carried out by private veterinary practices
- Major positive changes in pet owner “responsibility” in past fifty years – more indoor only cats, fewer roaming dogs.