

# Animal Welfare Position Statements



EDMONTON  
**HUMANE  
SOCIETY**

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## Devocalization of dogs

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the "devocalization" of companion animals.

### Rationale

- Devocalization prohibits animals from exhibiting their natural behaviour and hinders their ability to communicate.
- Devocalization may result in infections, laryngeal paralysis, and airway stenosis.
- Excessive barking may be a manifestation of behavioural illness such as generalized anxiety, compulsive disorder, or separation anxiety. In such cases, the underlying cause should be treated.
- Alternatives, such as behavior modification techniques, citronella bark collars, and various medications can be considered.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Surgical Procedures for Resolving Undesirable Behavior." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Surgical Mutilation." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 2012.
3. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Devocalization of Dogs." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2009.
4. Wells, D.L. "The effectiveness of a citronella spray collar in reducing certain forms of barking in dogs." Applied Animal Behavior Science, no. 73 (2001): 299-309
5. Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. "Devocalization Fact Sheet." HSVMA Advocacy Division, California, n.d.

## Dog Breed Restrictions

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the labelling of a particular breed of dog as “aggressive,” “vicious,” “dangerous,” or any other derogatory term. Instead, each animal within a breed grouping must be regarded individually.

### Rationale

- Dog bite statistics can be incomplete and misleading. All dog bite statistics are reliant on the victim’s or owner’s willingness to make a report to local authorities. In 2014, 530 dog bites were reported to the City of Edmonton Animal Control Department (City of Edmonton Animal Control Department statistics, 2014). However, 1,184 people were treated for dog bites at Edmonton hospitals. (Alberta Health Services).
- Often, dog breed restrictions are considered in municipal government directly following a well-publicized dog bite or attack. 1,184 people were treated for dog bites in Edmonton hospitals in 2014, however, the media only reported a small percentage of these cases. Their choice of stories will generally be based upon the highest potential for reader interest. Media stories reporting dog bites often lack (1) a complete understanding of factors involved in the attacks and (2) a desire to portray an accurate cross-section of the risks of every breed.
- Larger, stronger dog breeds have the potential and the body features to cause a great deal of damage in an attack. The incidents that involve a great deal of damage to the victim are generally the most publicized; therefore, the larger, stronger breeds are generally the target of media stories about dog bites.
- Simply possessing the strength and body features to cause damage do not cause a dog to develop aggression or bite. An individual dog’s temperament is determined by numerous factors, including breeding (genetics), amount and method of training and socialization, and treatment by its owner or guardian. The influence of humans on acts of canine aggression is frequently downplayed or ignored.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. “Breed-Specific Legislation.” ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. “Dangerous Dogs and Public Safety.” BC SPCPA position statement, Vancouver, 2004.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Breed Specific Legislation.” CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 2004.
4. Delise, Karen. The Pit Bull Placebo: The Media, Myths and Politics of Canine Aggression. New Jersey: Anubis Publishing, 2007.
5. Humane Society of the United States. “Breed-Specific Policies: No Basis in Science.” HSUS fact sheet, Washington, 2015.

## Humane Training Methods for Dogs

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society uses humane training methods that do not cause pain, fear, and/or undue stress.

### Rationale

- Recent years have seen a shift towards reward-based methods (e.g. clicker training), and the use of food, toys, and praise as motivators. Historically, training methods for dogs focused almost exclusively on the use of force and coercion to obtain the desired behaviour. Dogs trained using such methods often perform out of fear and anxiety, with a potential for increased aggression. For this reason, EHS deems aversive training methods as unacceptable.
- Aversive training methods discourage undesired behaviour by applying an unpleasant stimulus (typically physical force). Aversive training methods encourage desired behaviour by removing the unpleasant stimulus.
- Non-aversive training methods use positive reinforcement techniques, where desired behaviour is encouraged through praise and reward. Undesired behaviour is remedied through desensitization and counter-conditioning, retaining the praise and reward system.

### References

1. American Humane Association. Guide to Humane Dog Training. Colorado: AHA, 2001
2. Dodman, Nicholas. The Well-Adjusted Dog: Dr. Dodman's 7 Steps to Lifelong Health and Happiness for your best friend. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.
3. Landsberg, Gary, Wayne Hunthausen, and Lowell Ackerman. Behavior Problems of the Dog and Cat. Edinburgh: Saunders Elsevier, 2012.
4. Miller, Pat. The Power of Positive Dog Training. New Jersey: Howell Book House, 2008.
5. Overall, Karen L. Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats. St. Louis: Mosby Elsevier, 2013
6. Tucker, Maggie Tai. Professional Standards for Dog Trainers: Effective, Humane Principles. Washington: Delta Society, 2001.

Note: Neither the Canadian government nor any provincial jurisdiction regulates the conduct or skill of animal trainers or behaviourists. The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA) only recognizes animal behaviourists who are veterinarians and who have been certified by the American College of Veterinary Behavior (AVCB).

## Tethering of Dogs

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support inhumane tethering of dogs, which is the practice of fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake for prolonged periods of time.

### Rationale

- A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury.
- Tethering, chaining or otherwise leaving a dog outside for an extended period of time without supervision deprives him or her of companionship, care, exercise, and attention.
- Tethering may also lead to behaviour problems (including aggression).

### References

1. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "10 Questions About Tethered Dogs." BC SPCCA informational article, Vancouver, n.d.
2. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Bring the Dog Back into the Family." BC SPCCA informational article, Vancouver, n.d.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "The Facts About Chaining and Tethering." HSUS fact sheet, Washington, 2009.

## Tail Docking & Ear Cropping

### Position

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support ear cropping or tail docking when practiced purely for cosmetic reasons.

### Rationale

- There is no scientific evidence that cosmetic surgeries provide any welfare or medical benefit to animals.
- There is evidence to suggest that some cosmetic procedures cause acute and chronic pain, as well as behavioural evidence that cosmetic alteration may be detrimental to canine behavior.
- Research has shown the very low incidence of tail injuries in non-docked dogs does not provide sufficient protection against injury to justify tail docking of all animals.
- A dog's tail is important for balance and body language. Tail docking prevents this natural behaviour from occurring.

### References

1. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "A position statement on tail docking, ear cropping" CVMA Positions Statements, Jan. 2014
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Ear Cropping and Tail Docking."  
[http://cfhs.ca/athome/ear\\_cropping\\_and\\_tail\\_docking](http://cfhs.ca/athome/ear_cropping_and_tail_docking)

## Cat Traps

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the use of humane live cat traps only if all appropriate actions are taken to ensure the health and safety of the trapped cat.

### Rationale

- The Animal Protection Act (Alberta) legislates the humane treatment of animals caught in a live trap; the EHS enforces the Act to ensure animals are protected from harm.
- Humane live cat traps do not harm the animal; instead, they temporarily restrict the animal's freedom. It is a trapper's responsibility to ensure:
  - a trapped animal is not left in a trap for an extended period of time;
  - the animal's physical needs (food, water, and shelter from the elements) are attended to while in the possession of the trapper;
  - the animal is not intentionally harmed; and
  - the animal is:
    - returned to its owner;
    - released at the edge of the trapper's property; or
    - taken to the appropriate agency (e.g. City of Edmonton Animal Services Department).
- The EHS can provide resources on trapping and alternatives on managing free-roaming cat populations.

### References

1. Alberta Queen's Printer. Animal Protection Act: Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000. Government of Alberta, Edmonton, 2010
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Trapping." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
3. Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming, Abandoned and Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) HSVMA policy statement, Washington, 2011.
4. American Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming Abandoned and Feral Cats." AVMA policy statement, n.d.

## Feral Cats

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the non-lethal control and prevention of feral cat populations using a multimodal approach. The Society practices Trap-Neuter-Return of ferals, subsidized accessible spay/neuter, and community education about responsible pet care.

### Definition:

**Feral:** Feral cats exhibit wild, untamed behaviour due to lack of human contact during critical socialization periods as kittens. Feral cat populations result from uncontrolled breeding of free-roaming domestic cats.

### Rationale

- Cats choose to reside in locations for two reasons: (1) there is a food source (intended or not) and (2) there is a form of shelter. When cats are removed from an area, new cats move in or survivors breed to capacity.
- Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) benefits the cats and the community. Cats are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, tattooed, and ear-tipped (the universal symbol of a neutered and vaccinated cat that involves removing approximately a quarter-inch off the tip of a cat's left ear in a straight line cut. This is done while the cat is anesthetized for spay/neutering and healing is rapid), before being returned to their outdoor home. Without the opportunity for reproduction, the colony's population stabilizes.
- Trap-Neuter-Return improves cat lives and their place within the community. Undesirable behaviours and stresses associated with mating stop.

### References

1. American Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming Abandoned and Feral Cats." AVMA policy statement, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Feral Cats." CFHS position statement, 2003.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "The HSUS's Position on Cats." HSUS position statement, 2013.
4. Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming, Abandoned and Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) HSVMA policy statement, Washington, 2011.
5. Kortis, Bryan. "Defining Community Cats." PetSmart Charities. Last modified April 16, 2014. <https://www.petsmartcharities.org/blog/defining-community-cats>.

## Free-Roaming Cats

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that domestic owned felines be kept indoors, or allowed outdoors only in an enclosed area or secured with a leash/tie-out with appropriate supervision. The Society recognizes disparities in viewpoints of feline owners who may exercise personal choice in allowing their cats to roam outdoors. However, the Society does not support the practice of allowing cats to roam outdoors without supervision.

### Definition:

Free-roaming: “Free-roaming” owned cats spend most of their time unconfined outdoors; this term focuses more on lifestyle than temperament or ownership and can include ferals, strays, and pets.

Owned: “Owned” cats are companion animals with identifiable owners and homes.

### Rationale

- Research shows that indoor cats live longer and tend to be healthier than outdoor cats
- Free-roaming cats are exposed to numerous dangers:
  - DISEASE: Unvaccinated cats are at high risk of contracting diseases.
  - PARASITES: Cats can act as hosts for parasites such as fleas, ticks, worms, and/or ear mites.
  - POISONING: Cats may encounter antifreeze, yard chemicals, contaminated garbage, or poisoned animals. There are also reports of people intentionally leaving out poisoned food for cats.
  - OTHER ANIMALS: Some animals prey on cats.
  - HUMAN DANGERS: Some people view free-roaming cats as a nuisance, and may deal with them inhumanely.
  - TRAFFIC: Cats are not always adept at avoiding moving vehicles and vice versa.
  - DISORIENTATION: Cats can become disoriented when outside, leaving them unable to find their way home.
- Unsterilized, free-roaming cats contribute to the pet overpopulation problem. One unaltered male and one unaltered female can have approximately two litters averaging 2.8 kittens per year. Over the course of ten years, all those cats and the resulting offspring would add up to 80,399,780 cats.

### References

1. American Veterinary Medical Association. “Free-Roaming Abandoned and Feral Cats.” AVMA policy statement, n.d.
2. Humane Society of the United States. “The HSUS’s Position on Cats.” HSUS position statement, 2013.
3. Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. “Free-Roaming, Abandoned and Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) HSVMA policy statement, Washington, 2011.
4. Kortis, Bryan. “Defining Community Cats.” PetSmart Charities. Last modified April 16, 2014. <https://www.petsmartcharities.org/blog/defining-community-cats>.

## Declawing of Domestic Felines

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support onychectomy (declawing) of domestic cats.

### Rationale

- Scratching with claws is a normal feline behavior used for olfactory and visual communication, as well as claw maintenance.
- Fellow welfare agencies in Canada (e.g. BC SPCA, Calgary Humane Society) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association oppose medically unnecessary surgical procedures.
- In some European countries onychectomy is considered unethical (United Kingdom) or even banned (Switzerland).
- Risks include excessive bleeding, infection, exposure of remaining toe bone or distorted claw re-growth, and complications inherent with surgical procedures. There is no medical rationale for declawing.
- The EHS can educate clients, provide resources, and address potential owner concerns about destruction or aggression. Alternatives to declawing include regular nail trimming, plastic nail caps, and encouraging use of scratching posts/boxes. If aggression is a concern, the underlying causes of aggression should be treated rather than the symptom.

### References

1. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Cosmetic and Other Non-Therapeutic Alterations." BC SPCA position statement, Vancouver, 2014.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Declawing of Cats." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
3. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Onychectomy (Declaw) of the Domestic Felid." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2011.
4. Overall, Karen L. Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats. St. Louis: Elsevier Mosby, 2013.

## Breeding of Domesticated Animals

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the irresponsible breeding of domesticated animals.

### Definition:

#### Responsible Breeder:

A breeder is “responsible” when he/she is concerned about the welfare of each animal and ensures that all offspring are placed in suitable homes. Responsible breeders:

- Breed for the purpose of betterment of the breed, and therefore breed animals with positive temperaments (i.e. safe around humans), a good health history, and proper consideration of genetic tendencies in an animal’s family pedigree.
- Register their animals with the appropriate organization.
- Find responsible homes for each animal. Some responsible breeders will not allow their animals to breed until they have a waiting list for the offspring. If a home cannot be found for an animal, the breeder will keep the animal and be responsible for its care.
- Interview each potential client, as he/she wants to know about the person that is purchasing his/her animals.
- Provide information about the animal’s pedigree. Clients should also be able to meet at least one of the parents.
- Show the location and facilities in which the animals are being raised.
- Show health certificates and records of veterinary visits.
- Offer to take the animal back if there is a medical or behavioural problem, or if the client is no longer able to care for the animal.
- Encourage spaying/neutering of any animal that will not be needed to continue the genetic line through future breeding.

#### Irresponsible Breeder:

- Backyard Breeder: A backyard breeder is a person that breeds animals for personal gain (i.e. to make money, to show children the “miracle of birth,” etc.), with little or no thought regarding the consequences for or the well-being of the animals or the betterment of the breed. Backyard breeders usually breed animals without proper regard for pedigree, proper planning for future homes and, spay/neuter procedures, planning for offspring, and/or little knowledge of proper rearing techniques.
- Puppy Mill: A puppy mill is a large-scale commercial dog breeding operation where profit is given priority over the humane treatment of the dogs.
- Accidental Breeder: An accidental breeder is someone that has not had his/her animal spayed/neutered and an unplanned breeding has occurred as a result.
- Other: A breeder that registers his/her animals may be considered “irresponsible” if he/she does not follow the guidelines set out above.

### Rationale

- Irresponsible breeders often breed animals even though they are too young, too old, or not in suitable health for breeding.
- Documented problems of puppy mills include overbreeding, inbreeding, minimal veterinary care, poor quality food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and the killing of unwanted animals.
- Some puppies that come from puppy mills have genetic diseases or health problems that will not show up until years later, that are a result of poor breeding practices.
- Responsible breeders are concerned with genetics and health of their breeding animals. This increases the likelihood that animals with poor temperaments or health will not reproduce, therefore improving the breed.
- Responsible breeders choose their clients carefully and will take animals back if the client can no longer care for them. Theoretically, none of these animals should ever be left homeless or without care.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Criteria for Responsible Breeding." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Puppy Mill FAQ." <http://www.aspca.org/fight-cruelty/puppy-mills/puppy-mill-faq> (2015)
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Companion Animal Mass Breeding Operations." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 2012.
4. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Commercial Dog and Cat Breeding." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2014.

## Classroom Pets

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports classroom pets so long as the animal is owned by a responsible adult and taken home when school is not in session. Students must be taught how to care for, respect, and handle any animal visiting the classroom.

### Rationale

- Students who assist with pet care not only learn practical information about animal needs and behaviours, they also learn empathy and responsibility.
- Teachers are ultimately responsible for pet care. Students will look to their teacher as a model of responsible pet ownership. The Society believes the best way to model responsible pet ownership is for the teacher to adopt the animal and assume full responsibility for the pet.
- Before committing to a classroom pet, the responsibilities and requirements for owning the animal must be thoroughly researched. Teachers must determine the appropriate type of pet for a classroom setting, species and breed-specific needs, cost of food, shelter, and veterinary care, potential liability issues, proper animal handling, potential health concerns (e.g. student allergies), and animal behaviour and body language.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Pets in Classrooms." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Classroom Pets." BC SPCCA position statement, Vancouver, 2009.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Study and Use of Animals in Elementary and Secondary Schools." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1994.

## Pets as Gifts

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society recognizes that the decision to give a gift as a pet can be a well-thought out decision involving a future owner who has specifically expressed a desire to home an animal and has the ability to responsibly care for a pet.

### Rationale

- Research shows that pets given as gifts are at no increased risk of being surrendered.
- The Society does not support “surprise” gifts – meaning the recipient has not expressed an interest in owning an animal.
- Responsible pet ownership is a significant commitment and often requires making changes to an individual’s lifestyle. Someone that has not made the conscious commitment to caring for a particular pet may be unaware of the needs of that animal, or may be unwilling to make appropriate lifestyle changes.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. “Pets as Gifts.” ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Animals as Prizes.” CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.

## Transport of Companion Animals

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the unsafe transport of companion animals in vehicles.

### Rationale

- Pet owners should consider leaving their pets at home; if this is not possible, animals should be restricted from movement inside the vehicle. The Society supports the use of comfortable, well-ventilated crates and animal seatbelts to ensure secure and humane transportation.
- There are many risks to an animal's health and safety if transported without proper confinement or restriction from movement within the vehicle. This applies to the inside of the passenger compartment, as well as an open area such as a truck box. Risks include:
  - falling out of or being thrown from the vehicle during sudden stops;
  - jumping from the vehicle into traffic;
  - suffering injuries from wind, insects and flying debris; and
  - strangulation or dragging behind the vehicle if tethered in an open vehicle.
- Animals that are able to move around within a moving vehicle may distract the driver, which could result in an accident.
- Animals left in unattended vehicles may be easily taunted, stolen, or harmed by extreme environmental conditions.
- Animals left in unattended vehicles can be exposed to temperature extremes, particularly in Alberta. Pets left in vehicles can suffer heat stroke in hot weather and freezing in cold weather; both put the animal at risk for injury or even death.

### References

1. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Transporting Live Animals." BC SPCA position statement, Vancouver, 1997.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Animals in transit." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.

## Sale of Animals in Pet Stores

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the adoption of animals through shelters, rescue groups, and humane societies and opposes the sale of companion animals in markets or pet stores that are not satellite adoption centres, and that engage in the unethical or disreputable sourcing of companion animals.

### Rationale

- As long as there are companion animals available for adoption from shelters or rescue groups, the Society advocates adoption of homeless animals through one of these agencies.
- The Society supports pet stores that source animals from shelters, rescue groups, and humane societies in an effort to discourage large-scale commercial breeding, backyard breeding, and puppy mill operations.
- The Society does not support pet stores that are financially motivated to sell animals without a vested interest in the animals' well-being and future home. Pet stores that sell animals from a breeder commonly encourage irresponsible breeding.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Sources of Companion Animals." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Sources for Acquiring a Pet." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "Pet Stores." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Surgical Alteration of Companion Animals for Cosmetic Reasons

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the surgical alteration of companion animals for cosmetic purposes. Examples of cosmetic procedures include tail docking and ear cropping. Surgical alterations due to injury or for health reasons are not considered cosmetic.

### Rationale

- Cosmetic surgery may cause unnecessary pain and suffering.
- Cosmetic surgery may lead to life threatening complications such as infection and hemorrhage.
- Cosmetic surgery poses no benefit to companion animals, and is sometimes ineffective in achieving the desired result.

### References

1. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Cosmetic and Other Non-Therapeutic Alterations." BC SPCA position statement, Vancouver, 2014.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Cosmetic Surgery." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "Cosmetic Surgery on Animals." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Wild and Exotic Animals as Pets

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the keeping of wild and/or exotic animals as pets.

### Definition:

A wild or exotic animal is any animal that has not been subjected to domestication through many generations of selective and controlled breeding and is therefore not adapted to living in close association with humans.

### Rationale

- Wild and exotic animals are often exposed to suffering and/or death in capture and transportation.
- Nutritional requirements for such pets are often not well understood, leaving the animals at risk for illness and death.
- Wild and exotic animals may become unwanted pets in a short period of time due to lack of owner knowledge about care requirements and animal behaviour.
- Wild and exotic animals still retain their natural hunting and territorial defense mechanisms, which can result in injury to the owner.
- Wild and exotic animals can carry a number of diseases that are transmittable to humans and native animals.
- Wild and exotic animals may escape or be abandoned by owners. This results in the displacement of native animals.
- Wild and exotic animals may be endangered in their natural environment. The extensive trapping or capture of such animals may lead to species extinction.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Exotic Animals as Pets." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Wild or Exotic Animals as Pets." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1998.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "Wild Animals as Pets." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Animals used in Blood Spectacles

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of animals in blood spectacles such as dog fighting, bullfighting, cockfighting and similar activities.

### Rationale

- Animals used in these spectacles are forced to fight, causing severe injury and suffering to each other.
- Blood spectacles are inhumane and promote insensitivity to animal suffering, enthusiasm for violence, and a lack of respect for the law.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Fighting." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Blood Spectacles." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
3. Humane Society of the United States. "Animals in Entertainment and Competition / Blood Sports." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Domesticated Animals in Recreation or Competition

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the participation of domesticated animals in shows for public entertainment, recreation, or competition unless the following conditions are met:

- all aspects of the animals' care are addressed;
- all activities are designed with the animals' health and safety as a first priority;
- training techniques that cause pain, fear and/or undue stress are not used;
- live bait is not used.

### Definition:

Domesticated animal: A "domesticated animal" is one that has been subject to domestication through many generations of selective and controlled breeding and is thereby adapted to living in close association with humans (e.g. dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, etc.). Examples of recreation or competition for domesticated animals include horse racing, circuses, rodeos, etc.

### Rationale

- For any activities using domesticated animals for competition or recreation, steps must be taken to ensure the animals are treated humanely, with dignity, respect, and the animal's well-being at the forefront of consideration.
- The Society does not support any activities that portray or force animals to behave in ways that contradict typical species behaviour.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Animals in Entertainment, General Considerations." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Animals in Sport and Recreation, General Considerations." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Animals Used in Entertainment or Displays." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1995.
4. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Horse Racing." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
5. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Horse Shows and Eventing." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
6. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Rodeos." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
7. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Use of Animals in Entertainment and Recreation." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2010.
8. Humane Society of the United States. "Animals in Entertainment and Competition." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Marine Mammals in Captivity

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the capture or captivity of marine mammals for the purpose of public entertainment.

### Rationale

- The capture and transport of wild and non-domesticated animals has been known to cause stress, injury and in some cases, even death, to the animal. Capture may also disrupt the balance of family units formed in the wild.
- Traditional marine mammal exhibits focus on animals such as sea lions, dolphins, or whales who perform exaggerated tricks that are variations of natural behaviours; purely natural behaviours are compromised in captivity.
- Unlike that of some terrestrial mammals, the habitat of marine mammals is difficult to recreate or simulate.
- Captive facilities, with their logistical constraints, commercial considerations, and space limitations, cannot provide conditions that allow natural social structures to form; social groups are artificial in captivity.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Marine Mammal Shows." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Animals Used in Entertainment or Displays." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1995.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Marine Mammal Protection." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1990.
4. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Use of Animals in Entertainment and Recreation." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2010.
5. Humane Society of the United States. "Marine Mammals." HSUS policy statement, Washington, 2005.

## Non-Domesticated Animals in Entertainment

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support the use of non-domesticated animals in circuses, carnivals, and other traveling acts shows for the purposes of public entertainment.

### Rationale

- Animals become “domesticated” only after hundreds or thousands of generations of breeding for particular characteristics that allow human handling and contact. Wild animals are never entirely predictable and never completely under control.
- The Society believes animals used in circuses, carnivals, and other travelling acts experience undue stress due to the conditions in which they are kept.
- Animals in entertainment are often inhumanely kept in confinement for extended periods. Conditions are often unsanitary and overcrowded.
- Animals in entertainment often receive limited access to adequate and consistent veterinary care.
- Animals in entertainment are often subject to cruel and inhumane training methods that focus on punishment; the Society opposes such methods and advocates positive reinforcement training.
- Circuses often show animals performing unnatural behaviours, which holds no educational value for the audience and is of no benefit to the animals.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. “Circuses and Traveling Shows.” ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Animals Used in Entertainment or Displays.” CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1995.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Animals Which are Wild by Nature Used in Entertainment.” CFHS position statement, Ottawa, n.d.
4. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. “Use of Animals in Entertainment and Recreation.” CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2010.
6. Humane Society of the United States. “The Truth Behind the Big Top.” HSUS brochure, Washington, 2007.

## Euthanasia

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the use of humane euthanasia

### Rationale

- The Edmonton Humane Society does not have time limitations placed on an animal's stay in the shelter. Animals will remain available for adoption as long as they are physically and mentally healthy.
- The Edmonton Humane Society is a managed admissions shelter that accepts companion animals, which includes but is not limited to those that are ill, injured, behaviourally unsound, and/or pose a risk to the community.
- Each animal is considered for adoption on an individual basis. The role of the Edmonton Humane Society is to act in the best interest of the animal's well-being within the shelter context.
- The Society exercises every reasonable option to support successful placement of animals in the community. These options include, but are not limited to: foster care, placement partners, surgical procedures, behaviour modification training, extra socializing, and enrichment programs.
- Humane euthanasia decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. The decision to humanely euthanize requires agreement among a team of credentialed experts including veterinarians, behaviour specialists, and senior managers.
- Humane euthanasia is a difficult and sensitive topic. The Society provides alternatives wherever possible; however, it will perform services to end the unnecessary suffering of companion animals when no other viable options exist.
- The Society aims to reduce the need for euthanasia through its programs and services. Some of the Society's initiatives include: general and targeted training classes, animal behaviour advice, subsidized spay/neuter surgery program, and humane public education focusing on responsible pet ownership.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Euthanasia." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Euthanasia of Shelter Companion Animals" CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 2010.

## Farming

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the raising and marketing of livestock for food and resulting by-products so long as there is a standard of care that ensures the welfare of the animals.

### Rationale

- The Edmonton Humane Society understands humans' traditional dependence on livestock as a source of food and other products.
- The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that the welfare of animals must take precedence over financial considerations in humans' stewardship of those animals.
- The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that producers follow or exceed the standards set out by the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council in the "Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals."

### References

1. Canadian Agri-Food Research Council. "Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals." CARC code of practice, 2001.

## Improper Psychological Environment as a Form of Animal Abuse

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports animals being raised and kept in an environment that promotes and maintains the emotional and psychological needs of the animal, in addition to the physical needs.

### Definition:

Psychological wellbeing: An animal with a healthy psychological wellbeing is free from distress most of the time, is in good physical health, exhibits a substantial range of species-specific behaviours, and is able to deal effectively with environmental stimuli.

### Rationale

- Mental health in animals is an important medical facet that should be evaluated by veterinary and behaviour experts.
- Animals need companionship (human and/or animal, depending on the species), care, exercise, and attention. Animals can only be in a state of “psychological well-being” if their emotional and psychological needs are being met.
- Animals who are not having their psychological needs met can exhibit signs of distress (e.g. behavioral issues, depression, etc.)
- Although current Animal Protection Laws do not allow the Edmonton Humane Society to charge owners for psychological abuse, the Society still considers this a form of abuse.
- The Edmonton Humane Society supports the Five Freedoms of animal welfare adopted by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies [CFHS], which includes the following:
  - Freedom from Hunger and Thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
  - Freedom from Discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
  - Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
  - Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour – by providing space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.
  - Freedom from Fear and Distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

### References

1. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Animal Welfare Defined: the Five Freedoms.” CFHS. Accessed October 9, 2015. [http://cfhs.ca/info/understanding\\_animal\\_welfare](http://cfhs.ca/info/understanding_animal_welfare).
2. Farm Animal Welfare Council. “Five Freedoms.” FAWC. Last modified April 16, 2009. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121007104210/http://www.fawc.org.uk/freedoms.htm>.

## Vertebrate Pest Management

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society does not support methods of vertebrate pest management that cause undue suffering, pain or distress of an animal. While the EHS acknowledges that under certain circumstances, pest control and/or extermination may be required, the EHS only supports the use of humane methods.

### Rationale

- Regardless of the problems pest animals cause, they require the same level of consideration for their welfare as animals in other contexts.
- The EHS encourages a review of control or deterrent measures be taken prior to coming to the conclusion that extermination is required. Methods such as motion detectors, alarms and sensor lights can often be sufficient to rectify certain pest problems.
- In the event that extermination is required, the EHS recommends methods that result in a more humane death (i.e. without pain, suffering or distress). These humane, safe and cost-effective methods include catch and release and traditional quick death traps.
- Conventional methods, such as trapping (e.g. steel jawed leg hold traps), poisons and baiting strategies (e.g. cyanide) and/or inhumane burrow clearing and fumigation techniques cause an animal to experience extreme pain and suffering.
- Conventional methods of extermination often involve methods such as poisonous chemicals, which have effects on other non-target species, including humans. Other animals, children or adults can be harmed by an animal, which has been poisoned.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Rodent Control." ASPCA policy statement, New York, n.d.
2. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. "Pest Control." CVMA position statement, Ottawa, 2014.

### Notes:

- Vertebrate pests include (but are not limited to): coyotes, raccoons, skunks, rabbits, cats, squirrels, prairie dogs, gophers, rats, moles and mice.
- The EHS recommends adopting solutions to control pest issues before they begin/escalate as well as subsequent to humane control measures being implemented. Preventative measures including filling cracks in buildings, erecting fences, keeping potential 'pest infestation sites' clean, sanitary and free from food products help negate the need for any extermination issues.

## Wolf/Dog Hybrids

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society opposes keeping wolves and wolf hybrids as pets.

### Rationale

- While wolf/dog hybrids share some characteristics with dogs, these animals are not domesticated; behaviours that are natural for them in the wild pose dangers to people and other companion animals in the home.
- The needs of a wolf/dog hybrid cannot be met in a home setting.

### References

1. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Hybrids as Pets." ASPCA position statement, New York, n.d.
2. British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Wolf-Dog Hybrids." BC SPCA position statement, Vancouver, 2009.
3. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. "Wolf-Dog Hybrids." CFHS position statement, Ottawa, 1996.