

Solve pet overpopulation problems locally

It was nice to read about the barking success of the smart doggie mixer; this success benefits the animals. Hopefully the donations will be spent wisely and locally on 1) sterili-

zations and 2) awareness campaigns which are the best and smartest solutions for the pet overpopulation problem.

I am convinced that many good people want to help our

animals but no matter how good one's intentions might be it would not be smart at all to spend money on expensive animal exports, which would only benefit the freight/airline

companies and would not benefit the animals. Shifting our problem to another country is not the solution.

Transporting animals is very stressful, often takes too long

(sometimes up to 2 days or more) and it can become way too hot for those animals waiting in their crates. Sometimes life cargo gets lost just like any other luggage or the animal gets confiscated by customs because of their unacceptable condition - even distemper was discovered in the past - although each animal should travel with paperwork approved by a vet.

By the way, who can guarantee if our stray animals will ever be adopted from those temporary foster homes or shelters in the U.S.A. where most of them are sent to? What is their final destination? The following website mentions that the U.S.A. has 9.6 million animals euthanized annually; <http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/factsheets/animal-shelter-euthanasia.html>

Exporting and airlifting our animals would be very welcome when it is really necessary due to a hurricane, floods or an earthquake. Save such rescue operations for when it is really needed. Next to the 9.6 million euthanizations in the U.S.A. there are also other causes of animal deaths worth to be mentioned that most of us are not aware of or choose to ignore.

Here are just a few websites about animal shelters giving or selling their un-adopted pets to laboratories or universities where cruel experimental tests are performed on them, which is certainly not done here on St. Maarten nor do we have a military army using animals as life targets or freezing winters.

It is all hard to believe but check out these websites and find out for yourself; <http://www.anairhoads.org/animal/petsuni.shtml> and this one here: <http://paws4life.blogspot.com/2007/06/our-military-guilty-of-animal-cruelty.html> or here <http://onlovinganimals.blogspot.com/2009/01/fort-dix-nj-to-maim-animals-for.html> here it clearly states the difference between class A dealers and class B dealers: <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2183/Research-Animals-SOURCES-RESEARCH-ANIMALS.html> even no-kill shelters are sometimes forced to euthanize <http://pets.kansascity.com/article/3769&pt=Colo.-AG-says-'no-kill'-shelters-euthanized-many-animals>

It would be nice and wise for the animals if Smart would cooperate with the other well established and successful animal foundations that have years of experience on our island. On the Dutch side; the "St. Maarten Animal Welfare Foundation" AWF (20 years) and the "Animals R Friends St. Maarten" ARFS (6 years) have been true animal heroes and on the French side; the "I

Love My Island Dog Association" ILMIDA (4+ years) has been very successful and active for the well-being of animals.

All three foundations have dedicated, honest and very friendly volunteers who are always willing to help people and animals in our community. They can be proud of their achievements. Also the queen of animals needs to be mentioned: Elisabeth Reitz who tirelessly, for many years, has been feeding and helping most of the stray animals across the island. She is a beacon especially for the most unfortunate strays because she is the only one going to places like the dump. If there is someone who could use donations it would be Elisabeth. People can drop off dog food at her house where she has about 67 dogs all rescued. Kudos for Elisabeth!

The I Love My Island Dog Association has gained enormous trust from the French Government and in the meantime they have started construction of an adoption centre. Bravo!

There are too many unwanted stray animals roaming our streets. The animals need more responsible pet owners/guardians. It saves lives, time, money and lots of tears if people would spay or neuter their pets. People could call one of these vets to make a sterilisation appointment for their pet: Dr. Swanston 542-0111 in Cay Hill, Dr. De Witt 544-4111 in Cole Bay or Dr. De Ceuster 544-5500 in Cole Bay. Or call one of the vets on the French side.

We should not forget to vaccinate our pets against distemper because this nasty contagious canine disease is still going around on both sides of our island. Here is one of the numerous interesting websites about distemper. <http://www.animalhealthchannel.com/distemper/index.shtml>

The best solution to get the St. Maarten animal overpopulation under control would be if government introduced

1) a temporary ban on breeding, 2) a temporary moratorium on the import/export of animals until the problem is solved and fully under control and 3) tag/chip laws (see French law) so all animals are registered.

Why also a moratorium for export? Because we don't want negative attention by spreading distemper to other countries.

If we cannot solve these problems on St. Maarten, then we will never be able to solve bigger problems. Helping people starts with helping animals. Life started with animals, where would we be without them.

These are the web sites used:

- 1) <http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/factsheets/animal-shelter-euthanasia.html>
- 2) <http://www.anairhoads.org/animal/petsuni.shtml>
- 3) <http://paws4life.blogspot.com/2007/06/our-military-guilty-of-animal-cruelty.html>
- 4) <http://onlovinganimals.blogspot.com/2009/01/fort-dix-nj-to-maim-animals-for.html>
- 5) <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2183/Research-Animals-SOURCES-RESEARCH-ANIMALS.html>
- 6) <http://pets.kansascity.com/article/3769&pt=Colo.-AG-says-'no-kill'-shelters-euthanized-many-animals>
- 7) <http://www.animalhealthchannel.com/distemper/index.shtml>

Please click on these websites or Google these issues for more information thanks for your interest for the animals ☺

Mercedes