

Humane Society of Elmore County News – 5 March 2012
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Director

Fifty Two! Thirty Nine! Fourteen! Twenty Four! Ten! Are these quarterback calls, or bingo numbers? No, these are the numbers of kittens we took last year per DAY and we know these numbers are just around the corner this year. We have already received 240 puppies under six months old since 1 January as well as another 234 dogs over six months old. While the kittens aren't coming in just yet, we have still taken in 132 cats and kittens as well. Remember, these incoming animals are in addition to the 250-300 animals that are in our shelter on any given day!

Are these numbers abnormal? Sadly, no. Every shelter in Alabama takes in similar numbers each and every day and this is a direct product of dogs and cats not being spayed and neutered. Some people may think those of us in shelters are obsessed with this spay/neuter business and we are. You simply have to be on the receiving end of a shelter to understand what these kinds of numbers mean.

But my kittens/puppies are gorgeous and sweet! How often do we hear this? Every hour of every day. And yes, perhaps the batch of kittens or puppies you brought are lovely and sweet and will find homes – but what about those a bit less cute who are subsequently passed over for adoption? There are simply too many in need of homes and when we need adoptions the most is often when they are at their lowest because of the numbers of free kittens & puppies in area newspapers, store windows, the Bulletin Board, flea markets, etc. Sadly too many of these 'free' puppies and kittens will never see a veterinarian meaning the cycle of more unwanted litters will happen all over again as those animals reach sexual maturity.

We do understand that many of these litters are the products of strays (another sad issue for later discussion) that show up on people's property. These people are then faced with the dilemma of having an adult animal and/or a litter in need of homes that they did not cause. While it is difficult to say how many stray dogs there are, estimates are that there are upwards of 70 million stray cats in our country. Given that a cat can potentially have three litters per year starting at five-six months old, you can see why this problem is not going away any time soon. For those who have had one of these dogs or cats show up and that you perhaps can't afford to keep and have spayed or neutered (remember, it takes two to tango and make all of these puppies & kittens), we do encourage you to take that animal to your supporting shelter.

If you do take in a stray and choose to let it stay, we simply plead, beg and ask you to have it spayed or neutered as soon as possible. If it is an adult then don't delay and if a youngster then set an appointment up by the time the pet is six months old to prevent a surprise litter. You can then know the pet you love isn't contributing to the crisis of pet overpopulation and that it will be healthier, better behaved and just a better pet as a result. There are numerous veterinary options in the river region and we will be happy to give you phone numbers to veterinarians in your area if you need help. Please be a part of the solution, not the problem.

Feel free to give us a call at 334-567-3377 or email hselco@bellsouth.net if you have questions. Or go to our website at www.elmorehumane.org for resource info and to learn more about our efforts to help animals in need.

"Kittens can happen to anyone." Paul Gallico