Exposing the supply and use of dogs and cats in higher education

Laura Ducossaci, MA, Director, Animallearn, Jenkintown, PA
Nicole Green, Associate Director, Animallearn, Jenkintown, PA
Crystal Miller-Spiegel, MS, Policy Analyst, AWS, Jenkintown, PA

Abstract

Although Americans consider dogs and cats as household pets, many are killed and buried for teaching and training purposes despite the availability of effective alternatives.

Based on a survey of U.S. public universities' records, 52% are using live or dead dogs and cats in a mandatory teaching exercise in undergraduate science laboratories or veterinary, medical, and medical education, with 15% using the dogs and cats. A separate survey of university animal biology departments reveals that 100% of the respondents are using cats in their anatomy and physiology classes.

In specific cases, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) are failing to provide effective oversight in enacting adequate alternative options as required by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Despite the existence of AWA, dogs, cats, and other animals continue to suffer unnecessarily in universities teaching labs as an effort to provide educational experiences for undergraduate, graduate, and veterinary students.

Sterilization of dogs and cats for educational purposes includes Class A (green) and Class B (those that acquire animals and resell them) dealers that obtain sterile pets from pounds and shelters. All categories of dealers have been cited for health violations, including inadequate maintenance, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) records.

A growing number of universities, however, are instituting policies that replace harmful animal use with pedagogically sound alternatives including virtual dissection, ethically sourced cats, and clinical veterinary treatment programs.

Methodology

To estimate the use of dogs and cats in higher education in the U.S., we queried public colleges and universities located in a sample of 200 states (20% replication). Many of those schools also have veterinary and medical schools.

Data was acquired via three methods:

1. USDA public records 2008-2009
   - Information on the number and type of dogs and cats purchased or acquired for teaching purposes.
2. USDA respective reports and license renewal applications
   - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to USDA for Class A and Class B dealers (random and biological supply companies), to obtain information on sales of dogs and cats and records of regulatory violations.
3. Surveys of university biology departments
   - 150 biology departments from 175 institutions regarding their use of live and dead dogs and cats, how they are used, and whether or not students are permitted to use any other alternatives.

Findings

1. Universities are breeding and killing dogs and cats to fulfill educational objectives that can use non-animal alternatives.

   Institutions initiate terminal surgery labs at veterinary and medical schools, clinical skills teaching labs, and animal surgery. Many students are killed specifically for students to use, even though alternative ways are being implemented successfully on other campuses.

2. 52% of university records reviewed from 2008-2009, 52% are using live or dead dogs and cats, and 26% are using live dogs and cats.

3. 130% university biology departments surveyed in 2008/2009 (35% response rate), 65% are using dead dogs to teach anatomy and physiology.

4. Universities are acquiring and using dogs and cats from humane sources.

   Animals are acquired by the World Class A and Class B dealers, many of whom have a consistent pattern of AWA violations including falsifying records and providing inadequate care and use. In 2008, the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) at the University of Georgia (UGA) required terminal surgery procedures in pre-veterinary and junior surgery labs. During those procedures, a beak injector was performed and the dog was euthanized at the end of the surgery. Medical students approached faculty regarding the option of offering alternative means of terminal surgery labs. Faculty requested more evidence to support the efficacy of alternatives before teaching methods.

   During summer 2008, veterinary students from the Animal Welfare Club presented a proposal for a facility regarding implementing a small animal educational Memorial Program (EMP), since there was already an EMP in place for large animals. Faculty identified several limitations, including insufficient funds, space, and accommodable cadaver-UA. IACUCs were failing to provide effective oversight in enacting adequate alternative options as required by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). In 2008, the veterinary school required faculty to purchase a 3D-100 grant to help purchase new software. The school provided the 3D-100 software to the veterinary school.

   Students further learned that faculty members were changing the surgical curriculum, and students were given the opportunity to complete their surgical training. The veterinary school required the faculty to purchase the 3D-100 software and the students to complete the surgical training.

   Students also work on the development of a Shelter Medicine Program. Although this is a great start toward developing a Shelter Medicine Program, there are major impediments to achieving this objective.

   Students also need to be part of the development of a Shelter Medicine Program. Animallearn provided a grant to help UGA begin the program, and has since received more funding to support a fourth year senior elective rotation. The college sponsored its first Shelter Medicine seminar for shelter personnel in January 2009, and its first shelter medicine-related elective course in spring 2009. Another course on Shelter Medicine will be offered in fall 2010.

5. 52% are using live dogs and cats from humane sources.

   In 2008, the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) required terminal surgery procedures in pre-veterinary and junior surgery labs. During those procedures, a beak injector was performed and the dog was euthanized at the end of the surgery. Medical students approached faculty regarding the option of offering alternative means of terminal surgery labs. Faculty requested more evidence to support the efficacy of alternatives before teaching methods.

   During summer 2008, veterinary students from the Animal Welfare Club presented a proposal for a facility regarding implementing a small animal educational Memorial Program (EMP), since there was already an EMP in place for large animals. Faculty identified several limitations, including insufficient funds, space, and accommodable cadaver-UA. IACUCs were failing to provide effective oversight in enacting adequate alternative options as required by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). In 2008, the veterinary school required faculty to purchase a 3D-100 grant to help purchase new software. The school provided the 3D-100 software to the veterinary school.

   Students further learned that faculty members were changing the surgical curriculum, and students were given the opportunity to complete their surgical training. The veterinary school required the faculty to purchase the 3D-100 software and the students to complete the surgical training.

   Students also work on the development of a Shelter Medicine Program. Although this is a great start toward developing a Shelter Medicine Program, there are major impediments to achieving this objective.

   Students also need to be part of the development of a Shelter Medicine Program. Animallearn provided a grant to help UGA begin the program, and has since received more funding to support a fourth year senior elective rotation. The college sponsored its first Shelter Medicine seminar for shelter personnel in January 2009, and its first shelter medicine-related elective course in spring 2009. Another course on Shelter Medicine will be offered in fall 2010.

6. The 2008-2009 junior and sophomore surgery lab curriculum eliminated the use of dogs for terminal procedures for the Kenton, but substituted pigs for the cancerous breast cancer experiment in each section. Faculty offered students the option of choosing the terminal breast cancer procedure or a cancerous breast (ethically sourced) in lieu of the pig. Four students opted for the alternative cadaver procedures, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure, while the majority of students (approximately 180) elected the cadaver procedure.