



Animal Services

Responsible Euthanasia Policy



Responsible Euthanasia Policy

- **Identified Issues and challenges:**
 - DAS lacked formal written, adopted policy
 - Animal Industry as a whole, lacks an established, standardized process
 - Review of various entities confirmed lack of consistent practices across shelters and rescues
- **Policy Purpose:**
 - Ensure humane, ethical, and consistent decision-making regarding animal euthanasia
 - Establishment of Review Team and Roles
 - Sets clear decision-making, documentation, and approval process
 - Establish criteria for emergency euthanasia including after action review
- **Policy Development:**
 - Review of suggested best practices from a variety of sources
 - Draft of policy reviewed by:
 - Internal Staff
 - Best Friends Animal Society
 - Outside consultants
 - Policy Review Committee
 - Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

Key Policy Components

- **Limiting Euthanasia**

- No stray animal euthanized prior to expiration of its stray-hold period
- No stray animal euthanized on a day that the shelter is not open to the public
- Animal Services will not euthanize animals who do not meet the criteria set out by this policy.
- No animal shall be euthanized solely because the Shelter is at capacity.
- Euthanasia will be done in accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Subchapter D, *Standards for Allowable Methods of Euthanasia for Animals in the Custody of an Animal Shelter*
- The Animal Services Director (or their designee) shall approve all animal euthanasia recommendations.

- **Establishment of Euthanasia Decision Categories and Criteria:**

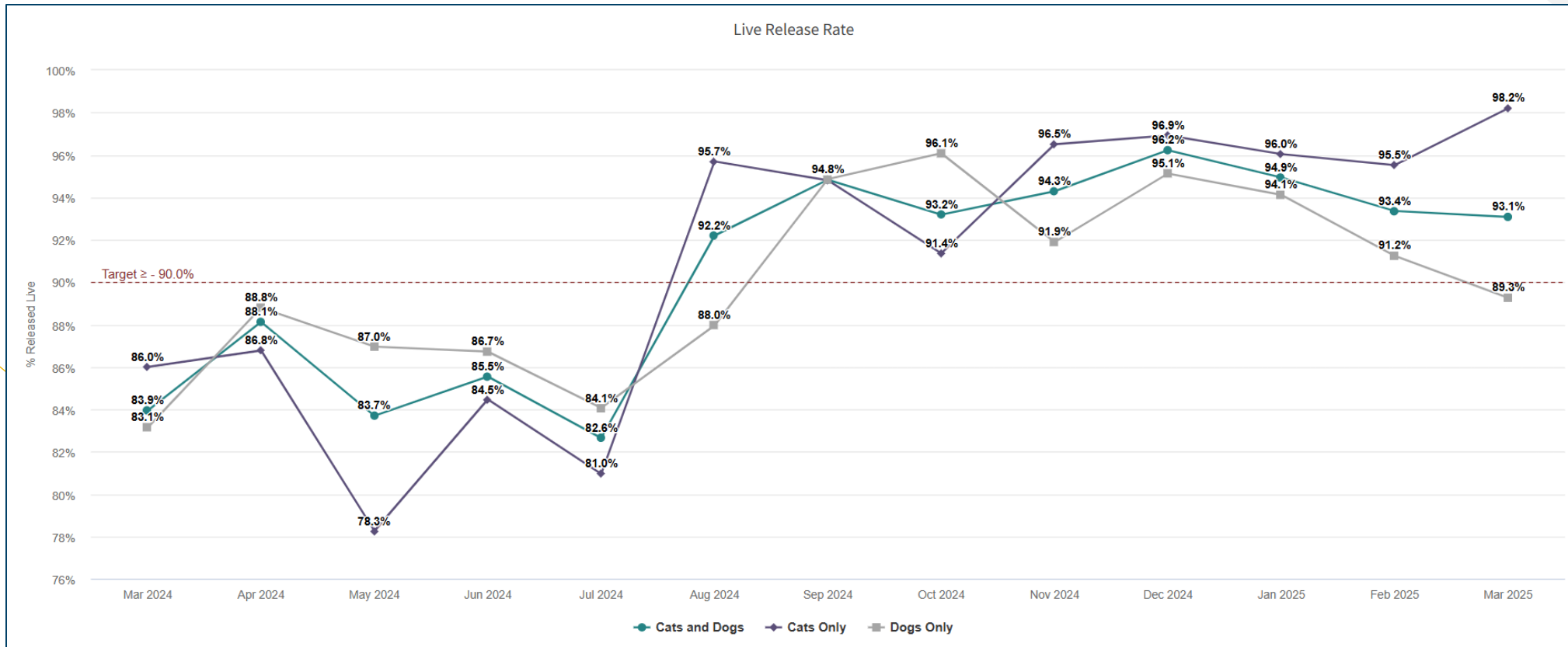
Category	Considerations
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An animal that is suffering from an acute or chronic disease, illness, condition, or pain that cannot be alleviated to a satisfactory degree, given the practical and financial resources available, or • An animal that poses a health risk to other animals or people
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In cases where behavior modification is not possible, such as an animal with a behavioral problem that results in suffering, risk to itself, other animals, people, or the environment that cannot be mitigated
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final order by a court of legal authority to euthanize an animal • An animal that must be euthanized pursuant to Chapter 6-Animals of the Code of Ordinances City of Denton, Texas, Texas Health and Safety Code, or Texas Penal Code.
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife suffering from an injury that cannot be alleviated to a satisfactory degree • Wildlife or high-risk rabies vectors who are at higher risk to transmit the virus to other animals or people (bats, racoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes) • Neonates or unweaned wildlife without a mother who cannot be provided appropriate care given the practical resources available
Prohibited Animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An animal that is considered unlawful to possess within the City limits as defined by Chapter 6, Sec. 6-2.- Definitions, of the Code of Ordinances City of Denton, Texas and cannot be placed in a timely manner with a rescue or other animal welfare entity
Neonates/ Unweaned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neonates or unweaned animals without a mother who cannot be given appropriate care

Review Team and Assessment Process

- Review Team:
 - Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM): Provides medical evaluations
 - Management Team Member: Facilitates review process, ensures documentation completeness, and submits assessments
 - Shelter Staff Member: Offers hands-on insights from daily interactions and provides perspective
 - Animal Services Officer: Offers hands-on insights from daily interactions and provides perspective
 - Shelter Behaviorist: Provides behavioral evaluations
 - Animal Services Director: Reviews all recommendations, validates the review process, and logs final approval in system
- Process Outline:
 - Physical review of animal
 - Review of animal's profile in shelter management software
 - Use of Welfare Assessment Tool
 - Submission of documented findings for final review and approval by Director
- Emergency Euthanasia
 - Time-critical circumstances where convening the full team is not feasible
 - Authorized by Director
 - Post-evaluation by Review Team to ensure adherence to policy

Implementation and Findings

- Began Beta Testing September 16, 2024
- Worked to refine documentation process
- Continued to seek feedback from outside experts and staff
- Current Live Release Rate (LRR) of 93.1% for March 2025
- LLR has been above 90% since implementation in September



Policy Operational Considerations & Fiscal Impact

- Resource Constraints, balancing Animal Welfare with Fiscal Responsibility
- Ethical Considerations & Transparency
- Explore developing a cost-benefit framework
- Current Spend on outside Veterinary Services \$47,596
 - 54 animals treated
 - 32 cases Parvo/specialty not able to treat at shelter





Questions