IN MEMORIUM

Dr. Craig Mabray, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Medical Officer and Kennel Specialist, and Dr. Steve Thompson, head of the Purdue Pet Wellness Clinic initiative and clinical associate professor in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences lead discussion on canine dentistry and health.

Dr. Craig Mabray, USDA APHIS Animal Welfare Center
WHY REHOME?

• RESPONSIBILITY
• ETHICS
• PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS
RETIRING AND REHOMING BREEDING DOGS: DISTINCTIONS

• ALL BREEDING DOGS WILL RETIRE

• CAN THEY BE SUCCESSFULLY REHOMED?
COMMON COMPLAINTS/CHALLENGES WITH RETIRED BREEDING DOGS

• UNANTICIPATED HEALTH CARE COSTS
• GLOBAL FEARFULNESS
  • LACK OF SOCIALIZATION
• HOUSEBREAKING ISSUES
• LACK OF TRAINING
• FINICKY EATING
STRESSORS EXPERIENCED BY RETIRED BREEDING DOGS

Why do these problems occur?
Rehoming ≠ relocating
SETTING DOGS UP FOR SUCCESSFUL REHOMING
BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Do the dogs have what they need?

• Space
• Social interactions
• Exercise
• Enrichment
• Ongoing socialization
“My advice is to learn all the tricks you can while you’re young.”
EFFECTS OF MATERNAL STRESS DURING PRENATAL PERIOD

• FETAL DEVELOPMENT
• EFFECTS OF STRESS
  • ↑ CORTISOL
  • CHANGES ‘SET POINT’ HPA AXIS

How can we accurately assess and address dam welfare in kennels?
SOCIALIZATION

• GRADUAL, CONTROLLED EXPOSURE TO VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL STIMULI
  • TEACHES APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES, SOCIAL SKILLS AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Ideally requires introduction to as many different people, things, animals, places, and experiences as possible
Well socialized dogs are less likely to be fearful, aggressive or difficult to handle.
ADULT SOCIALIZATION

• OFTEN, FOCUS IS ON PUPPIES
• ONGOING PROCESS THROUGHOUT THE DOG’S ADULT LIFE

Especially important for breeding animals intended for re-homing
Enrichment: a critical tool for building on socialization

- **SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**
  - GROUP HOUSING, HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTIONS
- **NUTRITIONAL ENVIRONMENT**
  - FEEDING METHOD
- **PHYSICAL & SENSORY ENVIRONMENT**
  - LANDSCAPING, SPACE, TOYS
STAGES OF REHOMING PROCESS
SETTING RETIREMENT & REHOMING CRITERIA?

- AGE
- WELFARE STATUS
  - HEALTH
  - GENETIC ISSUES
  - BEHAVIOR

Decision tree needed: triage accordingly

- Retire
- Transition for retirement
- Re-assess prior to rehoming decision
- Transition for rehoming
Factors to consider

Where will dogs be retired?

Previous history of the dog

What level of care can be provided?

What training and transitioning is needed?
SPECIAL NEEDS OF RETIRED BREEDING DOGS

• Physical health monitoring
• Behavioral support
• One on one caretaker interactions
• Secure resting area
• Positive, reward-based training
  • All aversive techniques caused aggression in some dogs (Luescher, 2016)
TRANSITIONING TO HOMES

Social facilitation/stress buffering via other dogs

Knowledgeable, prepared rehabilitators and owners
• Low stress handling
• Acclimation to home environment
  • Ideal is to simulate in kennel design

No one-size fits all acclimation period
ASSESSING CANINE WELFARE IN KENNELS
Development of a canine welfare assessment tool for use in kennels
• PHYSICAL METRICS RECORDED (BCS, CLEANLINESS, OTHER HEALTH INDICATORS)
METHODS

Canine welfare assessment tool (WAT) developed

Behavior: dogs’ responses to approach categorized

Fight or flight
Frozen
Stereotypic

Ambivalent

Affiliative, Attention-soliciting, Neutral
IMPORTANCE OF FEAR ASSESSMENT

• IF FEARFUL IN FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSITION TO REHOMING LIKELY ⇒ DISTRESS

• MAY BE INTERPRETED AS POOR PRIOR CARE

• MAY COMPLICATE ADOPTION/RETENTION

• MAIN REASONS FOR ADOPTION:
  • APPEARANCE, SOCIAL BEHAVIOR WITH ADOPTER, PERSONALITY

Weiss et al. 2012. Animals, 2(2), 144-159
RECOGNIZING FEAR AND DISTRESS

Some behavioral responses may be counter-intuitive
We are seeing physically healthy but fearful dogs... and some major improvements.
WHAT CAN A BREEDER DO?

• EVALUATE EARLY AND OFTEN (FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR PERSON)
• EVALUATE IN DIFFERENT PLACES (NOT JUST HOME PEN)
• EVALUATE GENETIC SELECTION
• REVISIT SOCIALIZATION, ENRICHMENT AND CARETAKER INTERACTIONS; MODIFY AS NEEDED
WHAT ABOUT EUTHANASIA?

Euthanasia decisions should not be made on basis of convenience.

- Establish criteria
  - Severe, poor prognosis physical or behavioral health issues that result in ongoing poor quality of life
  - E.g., dangerous behavior
TAKE HOME MESSAGES

• SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT & REHOMING IS DIFFICULT
  • REQUIRES PLANNING AND COLLABORATION

• SET DOGS UP FOR SUCCESS EARLY

• ASSESS DOGS EARLY AND OFTEN USING CRITERIA FOR BOTH RETIREMENT AND REHOMING

• FEAR IS THE ENEMY OF SUCCESSFUL REHOMING
  • ADDRESS IN SELECTION & MANAGEMENT
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• SPONSORS
  • THE STANTON FOUNDATION

• COLLABORATING DOG BREEDERS

THE STANTON FOUNDATION
QUESTIONS?

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HTTP://VET.PURDUE.EDU/CAWS/
WHAT DID THE ASSESSMENT TELL US?

• NO MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS
• BUT SOME FEAR OF STRANGERS PRESENT
Candace Croney, Ph.D. presented at NAIA, 2015

**Effects of Flooring on Animal Health and Well-Being: Implications for Kennel Dogs**

**Introduction**

Weaning is an important stage in the life of a puppy. During weaning, puppies begin to eat solid food and di...
REHOMING CONSIDERATIONS

• OWNER SATISFACTION
  • BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS ARE POORLY TOLERATED
  • IMPACTS ON ADOPTION, RETENTION, EUTHANASIA
  • LEADING CAUSE OF RELINQUISHMENT TO SHELTERS (AVSAB; SCARLETT ET AL., 2002)
  • RISK TO BREEDER REPUTATION

• WELFARE OF DOGS AT ALL STAGES OF TRANSITION

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CANINE WELFARE ASSESSMENT TOOL APPLICATIONS

- Identify fearfulness upon approach
- Facilitate interventions
- Improve adoptability and retention
- Applicable to multiple “field” settings
QUESTIONS?
MEASURES OF FUNCTIONING WELL: APPLICATIONS TO DOGS

• STRESS HORMONE LEVELS
• INDICATORS OF IMMUNE FUNCTION (WBC/RBC)
• OTHER INDICATORS
  • RESPIRATION RATE
  • HEART RATE
  • BODY TEMPERATURE
• HEALTH
  • DISEASE, INJURY, MORTALITY RATES
• GENERAL APPEARANCE
• BODY CONDITION
• REPRODUCTIVE SUCCESS
  • LITTER SIZE AND QUALITY
• PERFORMANCE/PRODUCTION

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MEASURES OF FEELING WELL: BEHAVIORAL METRICS

Normal behaviors

- Maintenance (e.g., grooming, conflict, social

Abnormal behaviors

- Excessive/unpredictable aggression
- Apathy/unresponsiveness; hyper-responsiveness
- Excessive grooming/lack of grooming
- Behavioral vices/stereotypies

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MEASURES OF NATURAL LIVING

What elements of the dog’s living conditions are both natural (species-specific) and preferred?

What can reasonably be accommodated?

• Group living
• Access to outdoors/natural surfaces
• Exercise
• Clean, dry, comfortable resting areas
• Quiet, separate whelping/nursing quarters

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INDICATORS OF BEHAVIORAL STATE
INDICATORS OF BEHAVIORAL STATE
IMPLEMENTING A RETIREMENT PLAN

Assess dog in different areas of facility

Identify retirement location

Determine if candidate for rehoming

Assume dogs will need social support

Pair-adoptions where feasible
  - Dogs should be stable, familiar and compatible
THREE CONCEPTIONS OF ANIMAL WELFARE
(FRASER ET AL., 1997)

ANIMALS SHOULD:

**Function well**
- Good health
- Normal growth, reproduction

**Feel well**
- Minimize negative feelings (pain, fear)
- Experience positive feelings (contentment)

**Be able to lead reasonably natural lives**
- Perform behaviors that are important to them
- Have natural elements in their living spaces
ASSESSING BEHAVIORAL RISKS IN REHOMING CANDIDATES

• WHAT % OF DOGS IN BREEDING KENNELS ARE LOW RISK FOR TRANSITION PROBLEMS DURING REHOMING?
  • FEAR ASSESSMENT

• WHAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH LOW RISK IN COMMERCIAL BREEDING KENNELS?

• WHAT INTERVENTIONS ARE BEST?
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