



Our Mission:

We are committed to saving lives and reducing suffering of homeless dogs and cats through education, advancement of knowledge and shelter outreach.

Program Staff:

- Dr. Jan Scarlett, Program Director
- Dr. Elizabeth Berliner, Director of Clinical Programs
- Ms. Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC, Director of Behavior Programs
- Ms. Kelly Garner, MA, Program Coordinator
- Ms. Sue Honig, MS, Computer Technician
- Dr. Mike Greenberg, Clinical Fellow

Shelter Medicine Interns:

- Dr. Kate Gollon
- Dr. Nicole Putney

Contact Information:

Shelter Medicine Program
Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine
S1-066 Schurman Hall
Ithaca NY 14853

(607) 253-3349

sheltermedicine@cornell.edu

Shelter Watch



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From the Director's Desk

We've devoted this month's issue of Shelter Watch to transport programs that move dogs from one geographic area to another with the expectation that the transported dogs will find a forever home. We recognize that there are other variations of animal transport, but in this issue we are focusing on dogs moving from one area to another. The two areas may be within the same state or represent two or more states.

At first thought the premise seems sound. If a shelter in a sending area has more dogs than adopters, and the receiving shelter has too few dogs with waiting adopters, then what objections can be raised with regards to the movement of these animals between these areas? Animal lives would be saved!! Were it only that easy and uncomplicated . . . Numerous controversial issues have arisen as transport programs have expanded in number and scope.

In this brief issue, we won't address all of the advantages or concerns, but we can provide insight into the nature of some of the more common ones. The big advantages include saving lives, and helping shelters. Staff at sending shelters get some relief from the burden of euthanizing animals in areas where communities produce way more dogs than they can absorb into good homes. Receiving shelters save lives and have dogs available that people come to the shelter hoping to find. That's good, right?

Unfortunately, not always. The widespread transport of dogs from areas with infectious diseases common to their re-

gions (e.g., heartworm, babesiosis) into areas where these diseases are rare, has resulted in large veterinary bills for receiving shelters or for unsuspecting adopters, diagnostic challenges for veterinarians unfamiliar with these diseases, the risk of transmission of these diseases to local animals, and concerned veterinary regulatory officials. Responding to the challenges, humane organizations (including shelters) have tried to address these concerns with well-written contracts and guidelines for good transport programs. Receiving states are beginning to enact legislation to regulate (and discourage) transport. And, as is often the case, regulatory officials, the veterinary community and the humane community have addressed the issues largely without collaborating with each other. The result is the usual polarization of groups ultimately seeking similar outcomes.

The introduction of infectious diseases into receiving areas is only one concern. Poorly designed and managed transport environments can promote disease transmission among the transported animals and be highly stressful to already disadvantaged dogs. Receiving shelters can find themselves with parvovirus or distemper outbreaks, precipitated by newly arrived transport dogs. Sending shelters, seeking to avoid the euthanasia of poorly socialized, but physically healthy animals, can pass the difficult decision to euthanize on to unsuspecting receiving shelters or adopters. Well-meaning people (not necessarily affiliated with shelters) can seek to rescue potentially doomed dogs

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“As the volume of shelter animals undergoing interstate transport has increased, so have questions about the ramifications about this practice.”



It is important to be aware of what is occurring in your state with regard to transport laws.

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by transporting them, and animal transport businesses can increase revenues by trucking dogs between areas for profit. Done well, this is not necessarily a problem. Done without regard to existing laws and without sound knowledge or regard for the welfare of the animals, people, shelters or existing dog populations in receiving areas has led to severe restrictions (or even prohibition) of well-conceived and well-run programs that save lives.

So what is the solution? Certainly, adherence to well-conceived guidelines for transport programs, education of transporting parties, and adherence to the laws will go a long way towards addressing the issues. I also suspect that better cooperation among regulators, the humane and veterinary communities on this and other issues of mutual concern would result in better outcomes for our animals overall. But . . . that is a topic for another issue.

Jax Scarlett, DVM, Ph.D.

State Animal Transport Regulations: Dr. Kate Gollon

As the volume of shelter animals undergoing interstate transport has increased, so have questions about the ramifications of this practice. Specifically, there are concerns regarding the introduction of infectious diseases, the questionable practices of some “rescues” that do not adequately provide for animal health, and the welfare of existing animals in the state receiving transports. These issues, among others, have been brought to the attention of state governments in some northeastern states.

In Connecticut, a new law regarding shelter animal transport became effective as of October 2011¹. Cats and dogs being transported must now have a certificate from a veterinarian within the last 30 days stating that that animal is not exhibiting signs of infectious disease. Additionally, animals coming into Connecticut must have a physical exam by a veterinarian within 48 hours of arrival. Upon arriving in Connecticut, a physical exam must be provided every 90 days, and within 15 days prior to adoption.

Massachusetts recently had changes regarding its regulations as well. First,

an emergency order was filed in 2005 requiring that all shelters and rescues receiving transported animals register with the Department of Agricultural Resources. This required organizations to provide proof of 501(c)(3) status and keep health records of each animal. The order also required a 48-hour isolation period upon arrival and a timely veterinary exam.

In order to make this emergency order permanent in Massachusetts, a bill² was introduced by the legislature in 2009. A hearing was held in May 2011, but the bill was not acted on and has not yet been made state law.

These new regulations are impacting the way shelters and rescues operate in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Individuals in the sheltering community have varying opinions about the regulations’ necessity, feasibility, and possible underlying motivations. It is important to be cognizant of what is occurring in your state with regard to transport laws, and to voice your opinions to your state legislators.

For information on laws in your state, including laws regulating the transport of shelter animals, see www.animallaw.info.

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¹ S.5368, An Act Extending Certain Pet Shop Licensee Requirements to Persons and Organizations that Import Animals for Adoption. (Conn. 2011)

² H. 561 and H. 1445, An Act Relative to the Regulation of Animal Shelters. (Mass. 2009)

Guidelines for Companion Animal Transport Programs: Dr. Elizabeth Berliner

Done responsibly, transport of companion animals from regions of high supply/ high euthanasia to areas of low supply/ low euthanasia undoubtedly saves lives. Helping dogs and cats find loving homes when they would otherwise be euthanized is what we all want to do on a most basic level. Historically, transport has acted on a small-scale, usually through the efforts of individuals involved in animal rescue networks. However, in the last few years, large-scale transports have become more common, and more organized.

Responsible companion animal transport requires an investment from both source and destination shelters, as it needs to encompass more than just a means of transport from one place to another. Responsible programs have medical, behavior, and transport guidelines in place to assure that participation in the transport is the most humane outcome for each animal, and not just a default when options have run out.

The National Federation of Humane Societies offers a “Best Practices” guide to creating a transport relationship between shelters or humane organizations. A few key principles should guide all decisions related to companion animal transport:

- Public health and safety must be a primary concern;
- All agencies must be registered 501-c3 or municipal agencies;
- Local, state, and federal regulations must be followed; and
- Humane standards of care must protect every single animal transported.

Truly, establishing a safe, humane and

successful transport program is about establishing a relationship, which requires the participating partners to have candid discussions about medical procedures, behavioral assessments, resources, protocols, liabilities and philosophies.

While each transport relationship may be different, some basic rules apply regarding infectious disease screening, preventive medicine, behavioral assessment, and safe practices. The NFHS “Best Practices” document is a nice place to start in designing a transport protocol that meets the size and resources of particular partner organizations. Their tiered approach outlines protocols ranging from basic requirements to ideal solutions, and encompasses investments and benefits to both organizations.

Beyond the details directly involved in transport, there is a responsibility on destination shelters to aid in addressing the issues contributing to overpopulation in the source organizations. This, too, takes an investment of time, resources, and expertise, but has the most potential to positively impact the welfare of animals in these communities over the long-term.

Resources for further information

- National Federation of Humane Societies, *Companion Animal Transport Programs*. <http://www.humanefederation.org/TransferBestPractice.cfm>
- Michigan University College of Law Animal Legal and Historical Center <http://www.animallaw.info>
- Pet Smart Charities’ *Rescue Waggin’* <http://www.petsmartcharities.org/rescue-waggin>

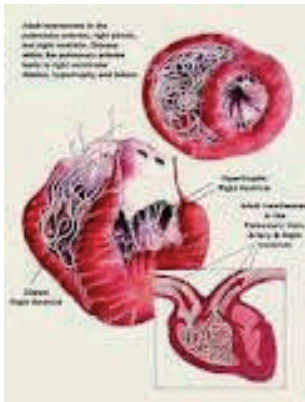


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The NATIONAL FEDERATION
of HUMANE SOCIETIES



“Heartworm remains a major concern in animals transported from the south and a plan for screening and treatment must be set in place prior to starting a transport program.”



Diagnostics: 4DX tests: Dr. Nicole Putney

Commonly found tick-borne diseases from the Southeast and Southwest United States include Ehrlichia, Babesia, and, although also common in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, Lyme disease. *Ehrlichia canis* infection is particularly prevalent in Arizona and Texas. Ticks aside, heartworm remains a major concern in animals transported from the south and a plan for screening and treatment must be set in place before starting a transport program.

Diagnostics: 4DX - Are the blue dots always the answer?

Whenever implementing a transport operation, having a veterinarian involved is imperative. Diagnostic tests are NOT necessarily black-and-white, yes-or-no answers to your infectious disease questions. Having adequate medical staff available for consultation is crucial for correct interpretation of diagnostic results.

A commonly used diagnostic tool in shelters is the 4DX SNAP test, which tests for heartworm antigen, and antibodies to *Anaplasma*, *Ehrlichia*, and *Borrelia burgdorfi* (which can cause Lyme disease). The heartworm component of the SNAP test detects *antigens* produced by the adult, female worm, which indicates the *actual presence* of the adult worm, i.e. it is very likely that this animal is infected with heartworm and has already developed adult worms. However, the *Anaplasma*, *Ehrlichia*, and Lyme disease components of the test detect *antibodies*

against the infectious agent. Antibodies are produced by the animal’s immune system in response to previous exposure to the agent – it does NOT necessarily equate active infection causing a disease state in the animal.

To test or not to test?

So who should we test? And if the tests are positive, who should we treat? While it may seem like best practice to test every animal that walks through your shelter doors for as many infectious agents as possible, this is actually not the case. For example, antibody tests are not necessarily yes-or-no answers as to whether an animal has a specific disease and needs treatment. In a clinically healthy animal, a positive antibody test may merely suggest a previous exposure to the infectious agent. That said, clinically *ill* animals should always be tested and treated appropriately for positive test results. However, testing every *healthy* animal with a 4DX may be an unnecessary expense for your shelter. Heartworm-only, in-house tests are advisable in healthy animals who may have antibodies to tick-borne disease agents, but do *not* have an active disease process which warrants treatment.

Additional resources can be found at::

Companion Animal Parasite Council (CAPC): <http://www.capcvet.org/>

American Heartworm Society: <http://heartwormsociety.org/>

“On the Go” Cleaning and Disinfection: Dr. Mike Greenberg

Transport programs can be an effective means for improving an animal’s chances for adoption. However, without proper cleaning and disinfection, they can also be an effective means for transporting viruses, bacteria, parasites, and other

pathogens. A *written* cleaning protocol based on specific infectious diseases, your transport vehicle, and your cleaning schedule will ensure that you are transporting animals and leaving their bugs behind.

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The Bugs

Before developing a protocol, be sure to consider the pathogens that you are up against. Rather than looking at every possible “bug,” simply think about those that are toughest to kill. Parvovirus, ringworm, and calicivirus are the hardest agents we typically encounter. There are a few disinfectants that work against them; more information can be found at <http://www.sheltermedicine.vet.cornell.edu/shelter/documents/DisinfectantChart.pdf>. In addition, if you are working with an organization that has had problems with a particular infectious disease, be sure to consider this when designing your protocol.

The Vehicle

A cleaning protocol should address “animal,” “human,” and “utility” areas in your vehicle; remember that hardy pathogens stick to our hands, shoes, and clothes so even “non-animal” parts of the vehicle need to be properly disinfected. The materials in each area must be considered when choosing a disinfectant. For instance, dilute bleach might work well on heavy-duty plastics in your animal cages, but could quickly rust exposed metal on your vehicle’s floor.

The Schedule

Cleaning and disinfection should take place on a fixed schedule. Your protocol should address “day-to-day” cleaning

during trips, “deep” cleaning between trips, and “accidents” that might happen along the way. Daily cleaning protocols should focus on maintaining clean, dry areas throughout the vehicle, and not necessarily complete disinfection. Assuming animals are kept in assigned cages throughout the trip, a “spot cleaning” protocol can be employed in animal areas. Daily cleaning agents used in animal areas should ideally be non-caustic; this will minimize respiratory irritation. Accelerated hydrogen peroxides (e.g. Oxivir TB) and potassium peroxy-monosulfates (e.g. Trifectant) are generally less irritating than bleach. Deep cleaning must be performed between transports, ideally right after a group of animals is unloaded. All bedding should be removed; if possible, cages should be removed and disinfected in such a way as to inactivate ringworm (1:10 bleach dilution for 10 minutes). It is important to have an adequate supply of cleaning supplies to address any “accidents” that might occur along the way; for instance, have a plan in place for dealing with a dog that suddenly has bloody diarrhea (a sign of parvovirus) in his cage.

Your Protocol

Developing a cleaning and disinfection protocol before your next transport will protect the animals in your care. A healthier transport population will ultimately strengthen the relationship between you and your transport partners, in turn strengthening the foundation of a successful transport program.



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Many dogs struggle with the transition created by the transport.

The Behavioral Downside of Dog Transportation Programs: Ms. Kelley Bollen, MA, CABC

While the transport programs have saved countless numbers of dogs in disadvantaged parts of our country, there are some downsides, behaviorally speaking, that I would like to address. As a behaviorist who works both with animal shelters and private pet owners, I have seen my share of dogs struggling with the transition created by the transport.

One of my major concerns, and a recurring issue that I see in my private practice, relates to adolescent dogs that are transported from situations where they were not socialized to humans during their critical period for socialization. This critical period in dogs is from 3-12 weeks of age, with the socialization period continuing until about 16 weeks. Adolescent dogs who spent the better part of this

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The Behavioral Downside of Dog Transportation Programs: Continued from Page 5

period living outside or in a shelter missed out on being socialized to humans and living in a human home, and they have a very hard time adjusting to this new life. These dogs are often fearful and untrusting of people and their adoptive families struggle with helping them adjust.

My other behavioral concern with the transportation programs involves the trauma of the trip. Thousands of dogs are transported around the country for a chance for a better life. The well-organized and well-funded programs have guidelines for their transports. They often restrict the distance they will travel from one location to another, thus limiting the length of time the dogs spend on the road. They have guidelines for how many stops must be made to provide the dogs with walks and to give them food and water. They even use climate-controlled vehicles that are clean and well ventilated. But there are many individuals and groups who transport dogs without any regard for their physical and psychological well-being during the trip. Many of these groups use box trucks with no lighting or ventilation and do not re-

strict the length of time the dogs spend in the back of the truck. I just read a news report about the finding of 128 dogs and one cat in the back of a U-Haul truck being transported across country. The animals had been in the truck for four days. While this type of trip is traumatic for any age dog, it can be extremely detrimental to the emotional wellbeing of young puppies. As I stated above, the critical period of socialization is an important time to expose puppies to people, environments and events that they will be exposed to later in life. But this is also a very sensitive period to experience trauma. A frightening experience, like this type of transport, during this sensitive period can have lasting affects.

I urge shelters that participate in transportation program to make sure they are working with reputable groups who consider the mental wellbeing of the animals they are transporting.

Events Calendar

February 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			Extern - Tufts University →			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Shelter Consult →						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Clinical Rotation in Shelter Medicine →						
	Companion Animal Welfare Issues Course	Companion Animal Welfare Issues Course		Companion Animal Welfare Issues Course		
26	27	28	29			
Intern Experience at Lollypop Farm →						

