



Santa Barbara County Animal Services

Addressing Pet Overpopulation

11-3-2009



What is the Problem?

- Increasing numbers of animals in county shelters
- Animal shelters are over capacity
- Volunteer and foster care system is overburdened
- The current system isn't meeting the needs of animals, volunteers, staff or the community





What are the Causes?

- **Too many unwanted dogs & cats**

- Unaltered animals reproducing
 - Shelters are safety net for unwanted animals
 - Foster care for injured, nursing and underage offspring, other special needs
- Lost & abandoned animals
 - Owners don't redeem
- Owners relinquish animals
 - Unable or unwilling to provide care



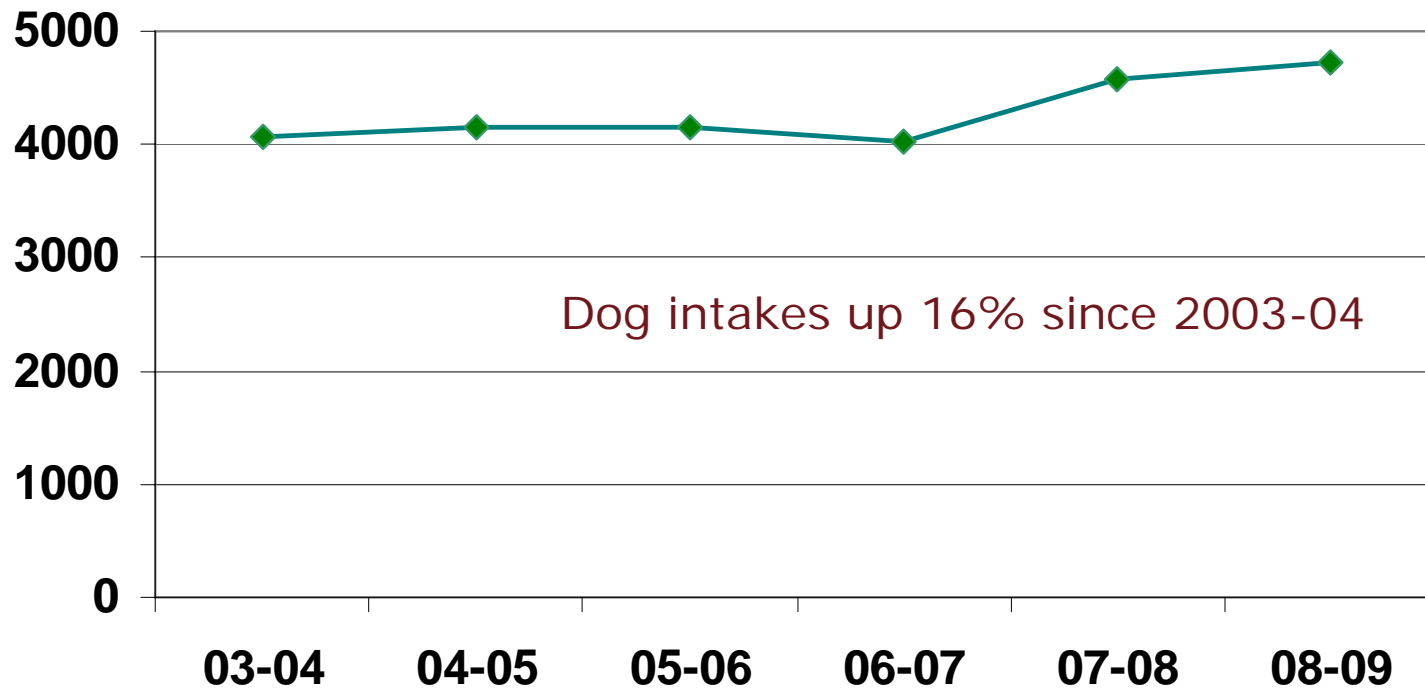
- **Too few homes to adopt them**

- Adoption rates are below need

County Animal Shelter Trends

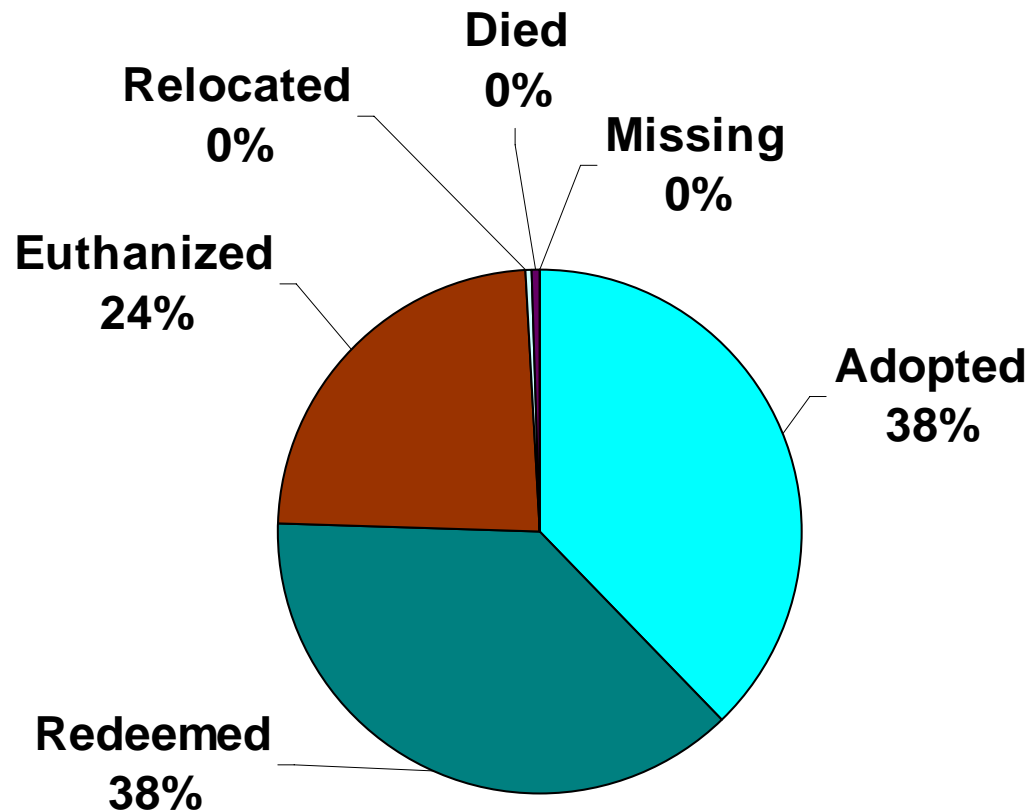
Dog Intake

SB County Animal Shelters
2003-04 through 2008-09



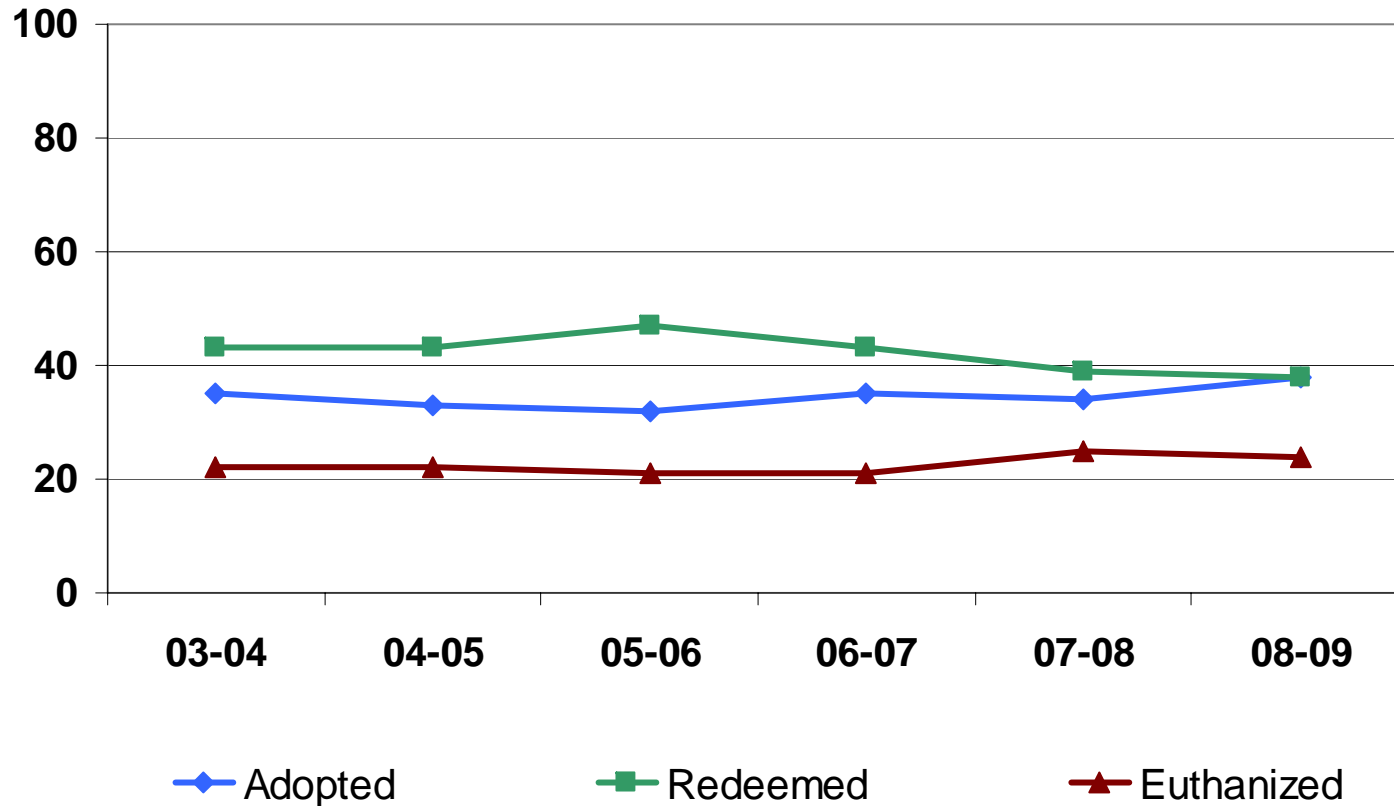
Outcomes for Dogs

SBC Animal Shelters 2008-09
(n=4,722)



Dog Outcome Trends by Percent

SBC Animal Shelters 2003-2009

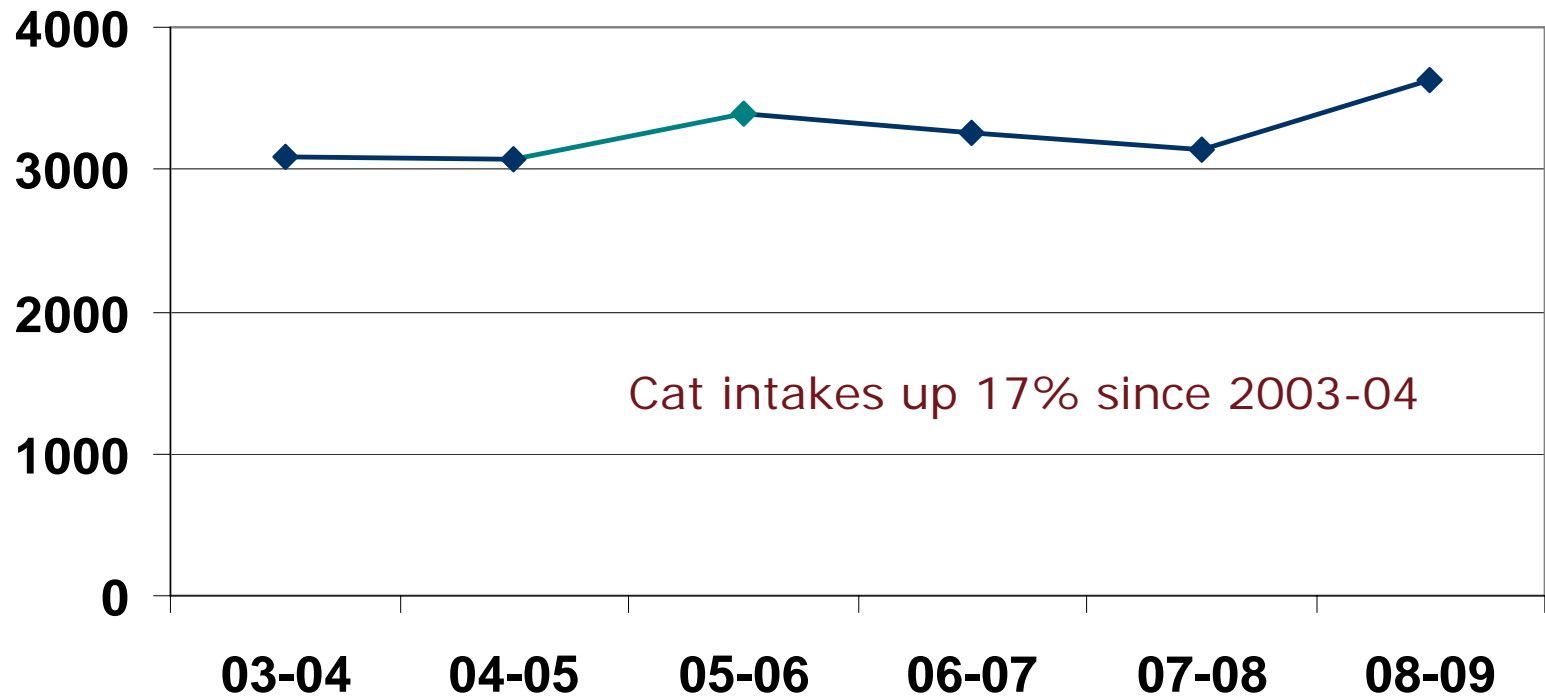




County Animal Shelter Trends

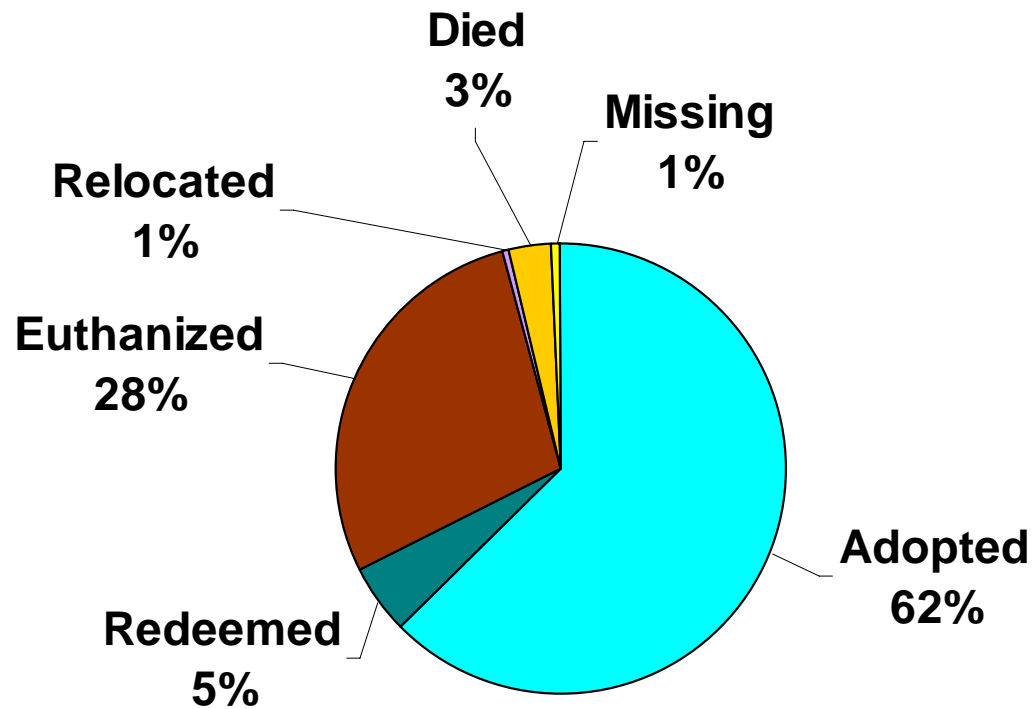
Cat Intake

SB County Animal Shelters
2003-04 through 2008-09



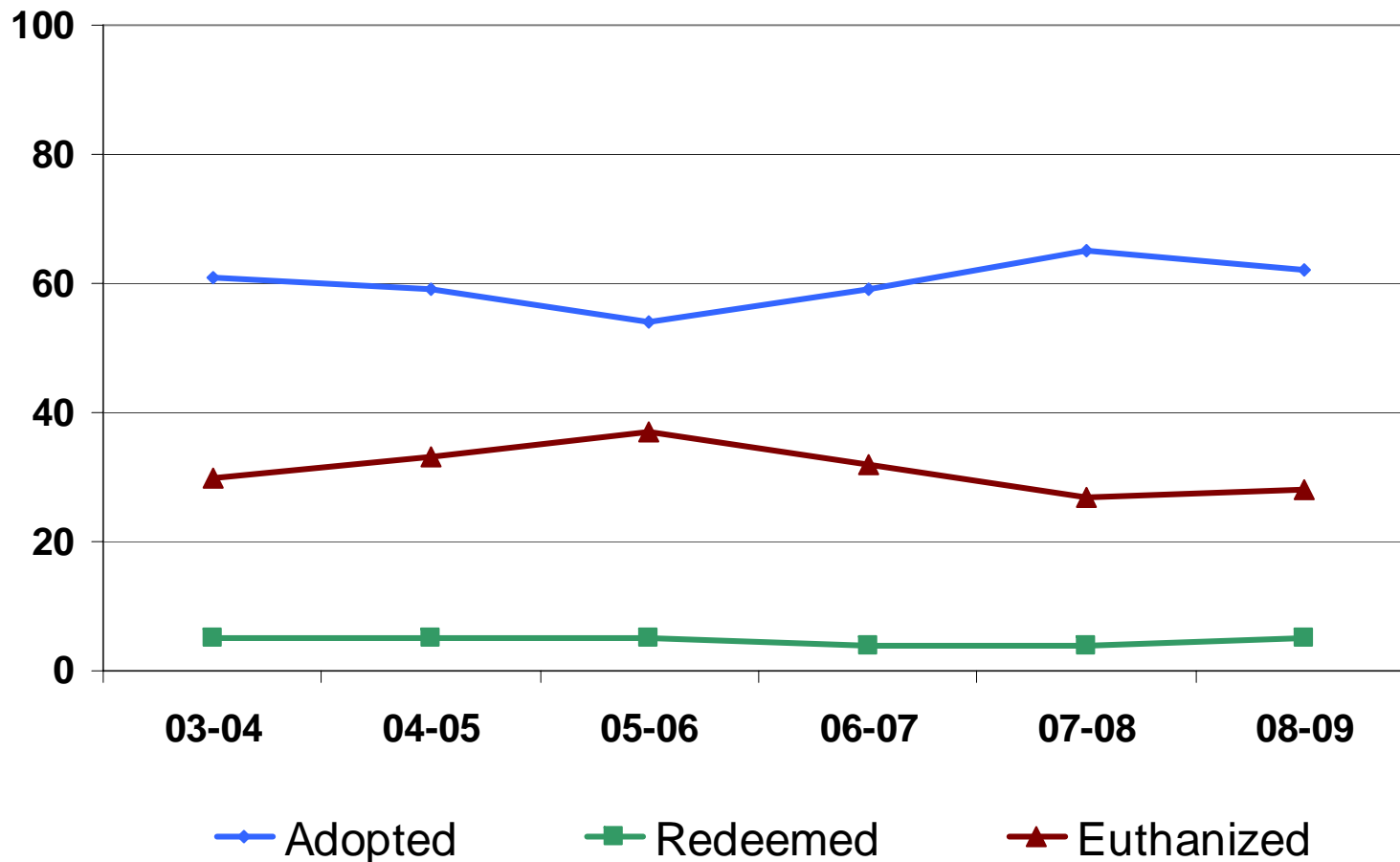
Outcomes for Cats

SBC Animal Shelters 2008-09
(n=3,582)



Cat Outcomes by Percent

SBC Animal Shelters 2003 to 2009



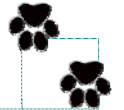
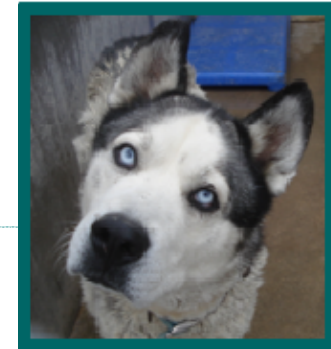
Thousands of Cats & Kittens Come into the County Shelters Every Year



Hundreds of foster homes provide needed care



The Shelters are Overflowing with Cats and Dogs





What are the Consequences?

- **Poor outcomes for animals**

- Longer shelter stays, warehousing
- Increased potential for behavior problems
- Stress, illness, disease
- Lowered adoptability of pets
- Ongoing need for euthanasia

- **Poor outcomes for residents**

- Increased costs
- Stress for employees and visitors





What is the Solution?

- Reducing the number of unwanted animals
 - Responsible Pet Owner Ordinance
 - Provide access to spay-neuter services
 - Promote spay-neuter clinics
 - Provide subsidies for low-income residents
 - Utilize incentives
 - Phase in the program to assist pet owners



What is the Solution?

- Implement Responsible Pet Ownership Program
 - Provide outreach and education
 - Licensing and spay-neuter, “your pet’s ticket home”
 - Increase pet licensing
 - Increase return to owner rate
 - License fees support animal shelter system



Key Points from Dr. Ron Faoro

- 70% of animals in shelter are strays
- Almost all strays are not spayed or neutered



Responsible Pet Owners

- Responsible owners take their pet to the veterinarian



Key Ordinance Provisions

- Veterinary Certificate for unaltered dogs and cats
 - Owners may have an intact dog or cat with a Veterinary Certificate to purchase an Unaltered Animal License.
 - Owners without a Veterinary Certificate shall spay or neuter their dog/cat.
 - \$10 surcharge for each Unaltered Animal License will provide spay and neuter subsidies and support



Key Ordinance Provisions

- Owners do not qualify for Unaltered Animal License in specific circumstances:
 - Owners convicted for crimes against animals or domestic violence.
 - Dog or cat impounded and/or cited at large three times within a year.
 - Dog whose owner has been found guilty of allowing dog to run free resulting in injury to human or animal.



Key Ordinance Provisions

- Unaltered Cats
 - Veterinary Certificate required for unaltered cats
 - Require license for cats
 - Yearly fee for unaltered cats
 - One time fee for altered cats
 - Free lifetime license for cats which are altered and microchipped



Key Ordinance Provisions

- Transfer of Dogs and Cats
 - Provide new owner with access to health records and ordinance
 - Display Unaltered Animal License when advertising the Transfer of an animal



Principles Guiding Ordinance Approach

- Support responsible pet ownership
- Reduce the number of unwanted animals
- Decisions should be made between the owner and their veterinarian
- Minimize fiscal impacts



Implementation Strategy

- Phase in
 - Implementation would occur during normal license cycle for already licensed animals
- 6 month free license for new licenses
- Rabies clinics throughout the County
- Electronic system to make it simple and easy

Enforcement

- Enforcement complaint-driven or related to other violations
- No “pet patrol”
- No additional enforcement staff





Responsible Pet Ownership Program

- Modeled after program in Calgary, Canada
- Promotes responsible pet ownership by increasing:
 - Outreach and education
 - Licensed pets
 - Pets returned to owners
 - Fiscal viability of Animal Services
- Spay-Neuter subsidies
- Media outreach
- Incentives for compliance
- Consequences – “Fix It” Ticket



Responsible Pet Ownership Program

- Positive approach to increase licensing
- Staffing throughout the County for education/outreach
 - Funded by one-time revenues
 - Self-supporting with increased license revenue within 2-3 years
- Amnesty period
- Leverage compliance with penalty
 - Amend fee schedule to include \$250 penalty for unlicensed dog/cat



Unique Approach

- **Responsible Pet Owner Ordinance**
 - Spay-neuter is not required
 - Considering pet's breeding potential in consultation with a veterinarian is required
- **Responsible Pet Ownership Program**
 - Compliments the ordinance
 - Provides info to residents on key issues:
 - Responsible pet ownership
 - Importance of animal licensing
 - Benefits of spaying-neutering pets
 - Spay-Neuter resources in our communities

***Volunteers are Fantastic
Still there is the issue of high
numbers of animals coming in***



Closing

Thank you

