

**Stanislaus Animal Control Services  
Grand Jury Case No. 04-33  
2003-2004**

**REASON FOR INVESTIGATION**

A citizen complaint was received regarding spay/neuter procedures and veterinarian services of Stanislaus County Animal Control Services (SCACS). The Civil Grand Jury also investigated the two other Animal Facilities in Stanislaus County being Turlock Animal Control Services (TACS) and Oakdale Animal Control Services (OACS).

**BACKGROUND**

The Stanislaus County Animal Control Facility is located on Finch Road (Modesto) in the unincorporated area of the County of Stanislaus. It is a part of the Stanislaus County Government and provides service to both incorporated cities (contract) and unincorporated county populations. Oakdale Animal Control Services is located and operates only in the city limits of Oakdale. Turlock Animal Control Services is located and operates only in the city limits of Turlock.

**PROCEDURES FOLLOWED**

1. The Civil Grand Jury interviewed the following:
  - a. Staff of Stanislaus County Animal Control Services (SCACS)
  - b. Staff of Turlock Animal Control Services (TACS)
  - c. Staff of Oakdale Animal Control Services (OACS)
  - d. Complainants
  
2. Records requested and / or reviewed included:
  - a. Animal Service Forms
  - b. Animal Services Data for services rendered
  - c. California Animal Laws Handbook (2002-2003)
  - d. California Code of Regulations (Title 16. Sec 2031-2032)
  - e. California Penal Code (Sec. 597; 12583)
  - f. California Food and Agricultural Code (Sec.: 30410-30526; 21881-21886; 31751-31754; 31760-31766)
  - g. Board of Supervisors, Stanislaus County (Tape Recording of Meeting Minutes)
  - h. Board of Supervisors, Stanislaus County (Agenda)
  - i. Animal Services - Organization Chart
  - j. Stanislaus County Job Classifications
  - k. "The Incredible Journey" – Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services – (January 2004)
  - l. Animal Service incident cases (2000 – 2004)

- m. Animal Services – Intake and Dispose Reports (2002, 2003)
  - n. Animal Services - Annual Report of Local Rabies Control Activities (2002, 2003)
  - o. Letters from rescue groups and/or adoption recipients (2000-2004)
  - p. Information from Auxiliary Animal Care providers - Handouts
  - q. Newspaper articles (2000-2004)
3. Toured the Animal Services Facilities (City of Turlock, City of Oakdale and Stanislaus County)

## **FINDINGS**

1. Stanislaus County Animal Control Services (SCACS)
- a. The SCACS facility has a full time Veterinarian on staff since 1998.
  - b. The SCACS has a computer database to track receipt, adoption, care and disposal of animals.
  - c. SCACS performs spay and neuter services at their facility by their Veterinarian. This service is a charge to the customer when purchasing the animal.
  - d. The cities of Modesto, Ceres, Patterson, Hughson, Waterford, Riverbank and Newman contract services with SCACS.
  - e. Incidents were reviewed as to services provided by the animal facilities and veterinary staff at SCACS.
  - f. Some cats had not been spayed / neutered when records noted they were. Staff at SCACS recognized that errors have occurred and action has been taken to eliminate these mistakes.
  - g. The cases reviewed (2002-2004) showed no evidence of canines being euthanized before the waiting period. One case involved owner request for euthanasia.
  - h. The SCACS Volunteer program has over 240 active members.
  - i. The SCACS facility has plans to remodel its present facility (Quarantine area).
  - j. SCACS has proposed a new facility called “Animal Village”.
  - k. SCACS has developed programs such as Four Footed Fair and SCATE (Stanislaus Alternative to Euthanasia).
  - l. SCACS is developing and seeking partnerships with cities, law enforcement, fire departments, animal rescue groups, humane societies, volunteers, veterinarians, educators, wildlife care centers and parks departments.
  - m. SCACS has measured their progress and services with San Francisco Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals SPCA, Fresno SPCA, and also with Animal services in San Diego, Sacramento, Oakland, Merced, Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Denver, Colorado.
2. Oakdale Animal Control Services (OACS)
- a. OACS uses a local Veterinarian that provides spay/neuter service on a per animal fee basis.

- b. OACS has a lack of operational space and minimal staff which limits education, adoption, and hours of operation.
3. Turlock Animal Control Services (TACS)
- a. TACS uses a local Veterinarian located next door that provides spay/neuter service on a per animal fee basis.
  - b. TACS has a lack of operational space and minimal staff which limits education, adoption, and hours of operation.
4. General Information (SCACS, OACS, TACS)
- a. Rescue groups obtain animals from all three-service facilities.
  - b. Rescue groups sell animals at pet stores and to the general public for a fee.
  - c. Animal services are regulated by State of California Penal Code, California Code of Regulations, Food and Agriculture law, and local agency codes and operation procedures.
  - d. Methods by which animals enter the shelters are: Captured by Animal Control Officer; surrendered by owner; surrendered by public; impounded for animal bite quarantine; transferred from another shelter.
  - e. Euthanized disposal of animals is due to behavioral observation/history, contagious disease, feral, medical, owner request, age, pregnant, or time/space considerations.
  - f. During non-operational hours, private emergency veterinary hospitals are used for medical care.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

1. SCACS has taken steps to provide improved animal services. They are meeting with groups to work on animal care and control issues. SCACS staff members take part in these meetings. These steps are needed to enhance animal control services to the community.
2. The OACS facility has made efficient use of its space, although it could use a larger facility more conducive for adoption programs. It has dual use of its facility with the City of Oakdale Police Department. This provides space for potential animal education programs.
3. The TACS has limited hours and a small facility with a lack of operational space for care and control services. Citizens visiting and bringing in animals have to jointly use a small counter space. Space is limited which decreases their ability to expand services such as education or an adoption center. The adoption kennels were in a small crowded room, not very conducive to serve as an adoption center.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Board of Supervisors, in coordination with the director of SCACS, should move to complete the immediate remodeling of the facility quarantine area.
2. The Board of Supervisors, in coordination with the director of SCACS, should begin the planning process and take action on the new facility called Animal Village.
3. SCACS should continue to review issues relating to proper animal care and control. They should take steps to eliminate any deficiencies.
4. SCACS should continue its meetings with auxiliary animal support groups to provide partnerships for the best use of resources for animals and the citizens of Stanislaus County.
5. The City of Turlock should do a study of their animal facility and services. They should look into the possibility of contracting and/or partnering with the County of Stanislaus. The present facility needs to be studied for its ability to handle present and future growth. Staffing issues should be studied to provide staff to attend to facility needs, animal education programs, develop animal adoption center and increased time in the field.
6. The City of Oakdale should do a study of their animal facility and services. They should look into the possibility of contracting and/or partnering with the County of Stanislaus. The present facility needs to be studied for its ability to handle present and future growth. Staffing issues should be studied to provide staff to attend to facility needs, animal education programs, develop animal adoption center and increased time in the field.
7. Stanislaus County should meet with the City of Turlock and the City of Oakdale to explore options available to partner for the betterment of animal services for Stanislaus County.