

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the biggest animal protection organisation of the world, has organized these events for over 20 years offering up-dates and training to staff working in shelters or in veterinary clinics and to authorities who have to answer and handle any future disasters. There are more and more vets attending these conferences to learn about animal welfare and especially to improve their skills in shelter medicine (visit www.humanesociety.org).

But not only American professionals attended the event. The international branch of HSUS, the Humane Society International (HSI) invites representatives and veterinarians of animal protection organisations from all over the world to come: this time there were 81 attendees from 45 different countries and continents.

On offer were a variety of training subjects: how to catch dogs and cats in a secure way – for the animals and the catcher, how to find the necessary funds to work in favour of the animals and many more. Harry Eckmann and Joy Lee from WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) offered a workshop on how to start a response to a stray problem. Different animal protection organisations from Colombia, Peru, Bosnia and India demonstrated how they resolved the problem with strays in their countries, often with little resources and nearly no help.

Dr. Alice Utlang, a public veterinarian, responsible for the town of Cebu in the Philippines illustrated how she convinced her colleagues and superiors to start and to keep going a mass spay/neuter and return program in her town. Very interesting were two talks by representatives from Kuwait and India about quality of life and how difficult it is sometimes to decide on euthanasia for animals in poor conditions. Dr. S. Chinny Krishna, president of the organization “Blue Cross of India” (not a vet, but an engineer), demonstrated with statistics the success of his admirable work in the last 20 years: the method of catching, spaying/neutering, vaccinating against rabies and releasing the animals on the territory (ABC-program). Still in these days in India a high number of people die every year from rabies infection. In the areas where he worked his program the human death rate dropped to zero. As “side effects” his statistics shows that there are less people bitten every year and naturally the total number of dogs went down 45 % in the last 20 years.

It looks like there is a big change going on. Nobody wants to kill healthy and friendly animals. But an only “NO KILL” is not possible without an “overflow valve”. The recovering of high numbers of dogs in kennels becomes a “SLOW KILL” situation and it is not possible anymore to respect the welfare of all the individuals. Catching the animals, spay/neuter them and release them back in their habitat is a valuable method to reduce the total number of stray animals. Everybody agreed and is convinced that correct information and training will be the most effective instrument for change. The **responsible pet owner** is not going to abandon his dog or cat. He will identify and register it to make sure to get re-united again with it in case of an accident or any emergency and naturally he is going to program the birth of puppies of his pet dog or cat (like most of humans are doing now) in respect of the number of puppies he already has requests for.