

NEWS ARCHIVES... SPAY DAYS 2005 - 2010

BRAVING THE HEAT IN LADISPOLI

The first time we came to Ladispoli in November 2005 it had been so cold that my joints stiffened up whilst I was working in our mobile clinic! During ten busy days we neutered 277 cats and 26 dogs and we also had the help of a very well trained state veterinarian.



This time we nearly melted, because it had been really hot and the sun shone down on the spay van without mercy. The lady from the town hall expected miracles and in just 2 days we did very well: only 2 vets (*Giuliano and Dorothea*), without any help from the public veterinary services (who are responsible for free spay/neutering of strays in Italy!). With just our two volunteers, Dora and Rosa together with a few from Ladispoli, **we managed to s/n 150 cats (92 female and 58 male) and 10 female dogs in just 3 days.**

SPAY DAY SUCCESS

July 2009

Our 12th "SPAY DAY" (*providing free-of-charge neutering for stray cats*) was another great success: **115 cats (78 female and 37 male)** were caught and then brought to LPA's SPAY AND NEUTER CENTRE. A team of 4 vets trained in high volume and young animal spaying/neutering, assisted by numerous volunteers from all over the world (*USA, UK, Germany and Ukraine*), worked tirelessly from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The result was more than satisfying, especially when you think about all of the unwanted kittens that will not be born in the future. A female cat can have up to 4 litters a year, with up to 8 kittens in each litter. During this "Spay Day," 13 cats were pregnant with 62 kittens (*thus averaging 4.8 kittens per litter*). Very simple mathematical accounting shows the success: more than 900 kittens less will be born in the next year (*78 cats x 3 litters x 4 kittens per litter*). And this accounting does not consider the kittens of the kittens, because they can become pregnant as young as 5 months of age...



We can also easily calculate the number of kittens that had been already born to the cats brought in on July 10th:

11 cats were under 4 months of age and never had a litter.

23 cats were between 5 and 12 months of age and most of them showed evidence that they have had a litter already: $23 \times 4 = 92$ kittens

26 cats were in between 1 and 3 years old. Using the a median of 2 years of age, they had already produced over 600 kittens: 26×2 (years) $\times 4$ (kittens per litter) $\times 3$ (litters) = 624

12 cats were between 4 and 7 years old and had bore 720 kittens already: 12×5 (medium age) $\times 4$ (kittens per bitter) $\times 3$ (litters)

6 cats were over 8 years and had 576 kittens already.

THE 78 FEMALES HAD PRODUCED OVER 2000 KITTENS BEFORE BEING SPAYED! These calculations make it easy to understand why there are so many stray cats in this region. Now we know why there are so many sick kittens, many with their eyes popped out, in a miserable condition. A high number of these kittens are dying. Spaying and neutering is therefore a benefit for all of the cats and dogs in this area.



Our organization LEGA PRO ANIMALE wants to continue and if possible to increase the PREVENTIVE MEASUREMENTS of birth control through the increased sterilisation of cats and dogs. We are always looking for sponsors and volunteers.

ANOTHER POPULAR SPAY DAY!

October 2009

Over 40 cat caretakers (*people who feed stray cats*) waited anxiously for the announcement on our website offering another “spay day”. Within a couple of days the appointment book had been overfilled and there were so many cats we could not accept anymore. The Italian animal protection law prescribes free of charge spaying and neutering of stray cats performed by state veterinarians. Unfortunately, most of them are very busy with food inspections or they do not have the skills. Some are practising, but far too little; most of them ignore the law and do not do anything. Therefore LEGA PRO ANIMALE decided to give the authorities a hand to stop the huge cat overpopulation problem in the region of Campania. We all know too well that most of the abandoned kittens have a fatal destiny: they get hit by cars, killed by dogs or die from infectious diseases. And sometimes they can harm humans, causing car accidents and spreading zoonotic diseases.



For all these reasons LEGA PRO ANIMALE is constantly searching for financial resources to offer as many surgeries as possible. Thanks to many donors all over the world we offer days such as this (besides our “daily” surgeries in the clinic!) on a regularly basis. We started offering these special days from July 2007 and over 1400 cats have been neutered. And on the 2nd of October another “spay day” took place: **94 females and 38 males** lost their “fertility” in only one day.

Good news: for the first time in 25 years we managed to get a small contribution for our work from the local government, the region of Campania. Therefore we can increase the number of “spay days” and we will accept even cats during the week. Anyone who wants to spay/neuter stray cats in their parco (only residents on the territory of Regione Campania) should call 0823-859552 (Monday to Thursday) to make an appointment. We can loan traps and cages for a refundable deposit.

14th SPAY DAY FOR STRAY CATS AT OUR CENTRE

November 2009

This time **105 stray cats** (*72 female and 33 male*) had been caught and taken to the centre of LEGA PRO ANIMALE for free spaying/neutering. Unfortunately it had been raining the night before surgery and many of the animals did not cooperate and refused to enter the traps.



And this time it was very exciting too: on Thursday a man from the electricity company had shown up announcing that on Friday the 27th of November – our “spay day” – the electricity would be cut off from 9am to 4pm. Wonderful! But since we have a generator there should not be a problem (I thought). When we bought this wonderful machine, I wanted to cover emergency situations. During our spay days the autoclave runs constantly to sterilize the surgical instruments and this consumes 2 kilowatts per hour. So we had to switch off all other machines and electrical instruments. Normally we warm up little blankets on an electric heater to keep the cats warm after surgery. This time we piled them up on the autoclave. Right from the beginning 2 of our surgical lamps died (maybe the power supply from the generator is not as constant as it should be). Nevertheless we kept going, fixing desk lamps on our surgical tables...

Spaying and neutering of dogs and cats is the only way to alter the supply and demand of puppies and kittens. Can you imagine? 72 female cats were spayed, they all would have had 4 litters in 2010, let's say “only” 3 kittens per litter this sums up to 864 animals. Only a rather small percentage of these 864 little cats would have survived. Most of them would have died under cars or from diseases.

I am very glad that our “spay days” are well accepted by the population. Cat care takers from all over the Region of Campania are calling for appointments. The next “spay day” is already

planned: the 11th of December and there are already 50 cats on the list. Hopefully we find enough sponsors for our work that avoids so much misery.

Heartfelt thanks to our international “spay team” Teresa (Italy), Dora (Italy), Renate (Switzerland), Michelangelo (Italy), Seline (Germany), Eve (UK), Lynn (UK), Giovanna (Italy), Mena (Italy) and naturally to the vets: Gigi, Giuliano, Emanuele, Dorothea and Lorenzo.

PLEASE HELP WITH A DONATION TO ENABLE THE NEXT S/N EVENT.

OUR 15TH SPAY DAY FOR STRAY CATS

December 2009

On Friday 11th of December 2009 the 15th “Spay Day” took place. During these days stray cats from all over the region of Campania are caught, taken to the spay and neuter centre of LEGA PRO ANIMALE, where they are spayed/neutered free of charge. Altogether **109 cats (86 female and 23 male)** passed through the surgery room. 36 “gattare” (this is the Italian word for cat care takers) had been busy trapping cats. And this time the weather had been wonderful and the staff of LEGA PRO ANIMALE were wondering why over 50 cats did not show up for surgery. Many Italians called for an appointment, some for up to 15 cats and then they did not bring in even one and they did not even call...

This time nothing bad had happened, the electricity run constantly and the lights worked wonderfully. There had been an interruption of the “non-stop-neutering”, but only because a troupe of Canale 5, an Italian national television showed up, to film what we were doing. I really hope that they broadcast my little contribution on the importance of spaying/neutering...

This time over half of the cats we spayed/neutered were not even 1 year old (28 were under four months, 56 in between five and twelve months). 20 were young too: age one to three years and only 5 had been four years or older. Nature would have taken its course: when the kittens reach age 5-6 months, that would have happened in Spring, they can become pregnant. 86 female cats would have had a litter in a couple of months and at least 250 kittens would have been born – with little hope of survival. And cats do not have only one litter per year, here in the warm climate they give birth to kittens up to four times a year. Coming back to our 86 female cats: another two or three litters, and there is to add at least one litter from the surviving female of the 250 kittens of the first litters..... Our Friday-Spays-Day saved at least 1000 kittens from being born and being killed by cars, from diseases and people mistreating them.



The stray problem is a public safety issue (accidents, bites, scratches) and certainly a public health risk (diseases transmittable to humans) and its solution should be at the top of the

agenda of any politician and/or authorities. Not doing anything or doing not enough is causing an enormous expense for the tax payers: communities in only the Region of Campania are paying over 20 million Euros a year to keep stray dogs in kennels for a life time – and the streets are more than full of them. It is common sense to adapt the offer to the demand. This means in the case of the stray problem that only so many puppies and kittens should be allowed to be born as responsible pet owners are asking for. Only birth control will lead to success and this means to perform surgery in dogs and cats because up until now other secure methods do not exist.

Who wants to help to make the next spay day possible? You can send a donation directly to the bank account of LEGA PRO ANIMALE in Italy.

OUR 16th SPAY DAY FOR STRAY CATS

February 2010

LEGA PRO ANIMALE celebrated **SPAY DAY INTERNATIONAL 2010** with another free of charge spay/neuter event for stray cats in the Region of Campania. This 16th “spay day” for stray cats took place on February 19th at the **Spay and Neuter Centre for Dogs and Cats of Lega Pro Animale** in Castel Volturno and was another big success: **161 cats (105 female and 56 male)** were neutered. All of these cats had been caught by their care takers (69 different people).



Even if there was no sign of Spring, obviously the mating season for cats had begun: 17 cats were pregnant with 79 kittens and 6 cats operated on were already on a heat cycle.

There is a lack of correct information and only a few people know that cats can have 4 litters per year and each time up to 8 kittens can be born! Nearly nobody is aware of the fact that kittens 5 months of age can be fertile and have fun with male cats. And strangely only a few people realize that every time a cat is mating a pregnancy will definitely follow.

Keeping entire cats indoors is not a solution: the cats themselves will “show” the owner their disapproval (aggression, “ignoring” the litter box and more). The only solution is neutering the animals, female and male, performed by a vet under total anaesthesia. Once neutered the animals no longer produce sexual hormones and do not feel the necessity to search for a breeding partner. Another most positive side effect: the cats are less likely try to go outside and they will have less possibilities of getting infected with contagious diseases. In other words: the welfare of the animal improves.

LEGA PRO ANIMALE would like to offer at least one “spay day” on a monthly base for stray cats. Anyone who lives in the area and feeds stray cats and wants to get them neutered can [contact us](#)

The 17th “SPAY DAY” (free sterilisation of stray cats) took place on Friday, March 26 2010. Forty-six people who devote their energies towards looking after colonies of stray cats (generally called in English “cat ladies” - although there were also some “cat gentlemen!”) managed to capture 127 cats from all over the Campania Region (Naples) and brought them to the **STERILISATION CENTRE FOR DOGS AND CATS** organised by the **LEGA PRO ANIMALE** at Castelvolturno. The **SPAY TEAM** (veterinarians and volunteers) carried out neutering of 80 females and 47 males. Almost all the females were either on heat or were already pregnant. Eighty females have now been sterilised: they would have produced up to 4 litters per year, with an average of 4 kittens per litter, for a total of more than 1000 stray cats. And all these strays would certainly not have lived long and happy lives: they would have been killed on the roads, died of infectious diseases, or been attacked and killed by dogs, or even by adult male cats (the fathers of kittens kill their own offspring, so that the female will immediately come into heat again ...).

Sterilisation is the only remedy to combat the ongoing phenomenon of stray cats and dogs in Italy. Keeping animals in kennels or catteries DOES NOT solve the problem, and only creates very high expenses for the taxpayer. In the Campania Region (the area in which the *Lega pro Animale* works), there are currently 25,454 dogs, living at the expense of the local municipalities (www.anagrafecaninacampania.it). Even at a daily price of only 2,00 euros per dog (but the municipalities often pay more!), the result is a sum exceeding **18,5 million Euros a year, levied on the taxpayer**, for a “service” which does not make a profit.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES? YES PLEASE!

May 2010

On Friday 28th of May 2010 another “spay day” took place in the SPAY AND NEUTER CENTRE of LEGA PRO ANIMALE in Castel Volturno (CE)/southern Italy. In this 18th event 53 different care takers caught 131 cats in the entire territory of the region of Campania. 85 females and 44 males were neutered. One of the cats had to be put to sleep because of an incurable tumour and another cat had already been spayed. These spay events are announced in the LEGA PRO ANIMALE home pages and in the local newspapers and the response of the public is incredibly positive.

On Friday morning all the cats checked in the Centre of LEGA PRO ANIMALE in their cages or traps. The entire day was dedicated only to these cats and the entire staff (5 vets, 2 assistants and lots of volunteers) worked heavily without any incidents. After one overnight stay in the clinic of LEGA PRO ANIMALE, on Saturday morning the cats were picked up again and released at their feeding points.

The founder and president of LEGA PRO ANIMALE, German vet Dorothea Friz, is convinced and has demonstrated in the past working on the territory that has a stray problem can be resolved through birth control. The “production” of puppies and kittens has to be restricted to the demand of pet owners who wish to adopt a new family member (for the entire life of the animal!). If the “production” is excessive, “goods” (dogs and cats) are losing their value and are “sold off” (abandoning, accumulating in kennels, etc).

Spaying and neutering of stray cats in Italy should be performed free of charge by the public veterinary services, but very often this service does not work very well or if the numbers neutered are not high enough to make a difference on the territory. We should not forget that a cat at 5 months of age can already be pregnant and there can be up to 4 litters in just one year. On average there are 3 kittens in a litter, but during this event we found a cat pregnant with 10 (!!!) kittens at the beginning of her pregnancy.



LEGA PRO ANIMALE is constantly searching for funds to continue this important task of preventive measures that is offered free of charge to the cat care takers.

“SPAY DAY” – A REAL “HOT” AFFAIR

On Friday 2nd of July 2010 the 19th “spay day” took place at the LEGA PRO ANIMALE Spay and Neuter Centre of Castel Volturno in southern Italy. It was a very “hot” day, not only because of the weather conditions. The sun burned down the entire day, making the vets and volunteers suffer a lot, as there is no air conditioning in the veterinary clinic. The heat increased constantly because of the high number of animals: 135 female cats were spayed in only one day – an absolute record! Together with the 52 tom cats neutered the total number of cats that had surgery on this “hot” spay day was 187; a long day lasting from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. A special THANK YOU to all participants.

This time again the cats arrived from all over the Region of Campania. 74 different care takers caught them. There are so many requests from the public for these surgeries, we could offer a “spay day” every week. Unfortunately for economic reasons this is not possible.

Spaying and neutering of stray cats in Italy should be offered free of charge by the public veterinary services. In many areas of the Campania region this service is not active and in other places they offer it “in dribs and drabs”. Unfortunately cats are proliferating very quickly: aged 5 months they can have their first litter. They can have up to 4 litters a year with on average 4 kittens per litter. Only “mass” spaying/neutering can stop the vicious circle. All available vets should be involved, spaying/neutering everywhere and every day. In a couple of years the problem would be under control and nobody, not even tourists from foreign countries, would complain about sick and skinny kittens searching for food in the rubbish.

LEGA PRO ANIMALE with its vets and volunteers is determined to continue with its preventive measures and is constantly searching for sponsors to increase the numbers of surgeries.

SPAY DAY RECORD: OVER 200 CATS NEUTERED IN ONLY ONE DAY

October 1° 2010, the contribution of LEGA PRO ANIMALE to the World Animal Day: full of stress and everlasting, but the team of LPA obtained a new record: 211 cats were neutered, 137 female and 74 tom cats. Over 80 cat care takers from all over the Region of Campania had caught cats and taken them to the Spay and Neuter Centre in Castel Volturno in southern Italy. Around 8.30 a.m. the parking area and the street going to the animal centre were so crowded that two of the Vets, Gigi and Giuliano could not reach the veterinary clinic. Emanuele, another vet had problems with his car and came two hours late and Valentina (vet) had to go to University first. Only at 1 p.m. the team worked at full speed and at 9 p.m. the last cat was neutered. Some of the volunteers had already left the scene.

Only a few of the female cats were on heat and some were pregnant. Autumn has started already and nature is clever: in winter only a few kittens have a chance to survive. But 137 female cats will not have any litters of cute kittens in the Spring. This means that around 500 cats will not be born!

Spaying and neutering is the key to resolve this often very sad situation of stray animals. There are many more animals than can be re-homed with caring people. Since 1991 the Italian law has prescribed this method of population control, but unfortunately it is not enforced in most of the areas in Italy. Many of the public veterinary surgeries are more or less well equipped, but the number of animals spayed and neutered is very low. Maybe private vets should be involved in this battle.

This time the foundation of Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. in Bonn took over the expenses of the "Neutering Record". The team of LEGA PRO ANIMALE, the volunteers and naturally (and hopefully!) the cats give their most heartfelt thanks for this very important support.