



NETWORK NEWS

Linking Members Of North Shore Animal League, Inc.,
The Pet Savers Foundation, Inc. And The SPAY/USA Networks

North Shore Animal League and National Canine Defence League Host Conference In Bratislava



The van from Sloboda Zvierat parked outside the conference center in Bratislava.

As part of its outreach to help other animal protection groups worldwide, the North Shore Animal League's international program and the National Canine Defence League co-hosted a conference May 14-16 in the Slovak Republic. This was the second of the conferences in Eastern Europe, the first having been held in 1996 in Budapest.

Recent political and economic changes in this region have resulted in great disruption and have, at the same time, opened opportunities for constructive change. Representatives from 31 countries attended the Bratislava conference. Many were from the Czech and the Slovak Republics, Poland, the Ukraine, Hungary, Estonia, Belarus, Romania, and Russia. Delegates from as far off as Japan and India also attended – in all, 150 people.

Plenary and practical sessions covered population control, publicity, fundraising, education, setting up and running a shelter, and

legislation. Delegates were particularly interested in learning about juvenile spay/neuter techniques.

Delegates brought with them a wide array of program ideas and experiences, two of which we will share with our readers:

Italy

summary by Esther Mechler

Several years ago as a tourist in southern Italy, veterinarian Dr. Dorothea Friz witnessed enormous suffering amongst the cats and dogs. She decided to stay in

Italy and work to solve the problem – the huge numbers of homeless companion animals who roamed the streets. In addition, since legislation forbids euthanasia, animals taken from the streets are put into huge “maxi-kennels” — literally filled with thousands of dogs who will never find homes. The humane solution: effective and widespread spay/neuter campaigns to cut off the oversupply. Lega Pro Animale is the name of the organization Dr. Friz started.

The veterinarians in Italy, as in many other countries, are not familiar with efficient spay/neuter techniques. Dr. Friz set up a special training course at her hospital, starting in August of 1997. Under the supervision of two fully trained veterinarians, ten veterinarians were taught efficient s/n techniques including early s/n. Approximately 200 dogs and cats were s/n free of charge as the veterinarians improved their skills. At this time a second course is running, with another ten vets learning to do spay/neuter surgery efficiently and well.

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Spay Day USA 1999!

Tuesday, February 23, 1999, will mark the fifth anniversary of Spay Day USA. This groundbreaking event was created as the first national day of action toward ending the tragedy of pet overpopulation through spaying and neutering. Spay Day USA has resulted in unprecedented cooperation between the veterinary and

humane communities to end the needless killing of homeless animals. 1999 promises to be the biggest record-breaking year yet. To receive an Action Pack or Veterinarian Pack for Spay Day USA 1999, please call the Doris Day Animal Foundation at 202-546-1761 #31 or send email to TheDDAF@aol.com.



Conference In Bratislava continued



Dr. Dorothea Friz and staff with Lega Pro Animale's mobile van

Interest on the part of the public and government officials is growing, as is the number of vets interested in taking this course. At this time, the pilot project is limited to a region near Naples, but interest is growing in neighboring regions. As Dr. Friz says, "On our own, we cannot solve the problem of the pet surplus throughout Italy. However, we can, in the process of s/n our local strays and pets, help train other vets to do this in their own regions, thus gradually spreading the information and the techniques throughout the country. Once municipal authorities are convinced, our organization can concentrate more and more on holding courses for vets, their assistants, volunteers, animal wardens and teachers. The ideas will spread with our graduates." North Shore Animal League and National Canine Defence League are helping support this worthwhile effort.

The Netherlands

summary by Mattheus Bleijenberg

The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals is a 130 year old organization that stands up for the rights of all animals. The Society has four divisions: animal welfare, Kids for Animals (youth), communication division, and political division (lobby).

At this moment, there are 110 shelters for dogs and cats in Holland, all associated with the Dutch Society. From 1992 till 1996 the numbers of stray cats coming into the shelters increased from 23,500 to 31,000 (25% increase in 5 years).

Due to the increasing numbers of stray cats every year, our society decided to start a campaign. The shelters were unable to find homes for the increasing number of strays especially in the summer, when many kittens are born, and around the holidays. Thus the shelters had reached 150% of capacity. The campaign had 4 phases:

1. The first phase began with a press conference in early May. At this conference we published our year-end figures from the previous year. The result was astonishing - the news of the overcrowding problem made every newspaper and news-program in Holland. Awareness in Holland grew - everyone recognized the severity of the problem and the need to have their cats altered. Due to the curiosity and interest of the press, not much money was spent on advertising. Instead, we made 20,000 folders for distribution in veterinarian waiting rooms and shelters. Posters were made, emphasizing the need for spay/neuter and we announced at

the conference the start of a national castration campaign.

2. The second phase was to determine a way to lower the cost of spay/neuter or "neutralization" as it is called in Holland. All 115 departments of the Dutch Society received the equivalent of \$5.00 for each castration from the head office. The departments also contributed \$5.00 and the local vets paid \$5.00 for each neutralization. So, prices were very reasonable for the cat owners: \$20 for a castration (instead of \$35) and \$50 for a female (instead of \$65). In 1997 we managed to castrate 15,000 cats using this method!

3. In the third phase, we provided each of our departments with 2 humane traps to catch feral cats and guidelines on how to trap. As a result, 3,000 feral cats from all areas of the county were castrated and released. In addition, all those cats within our shelters (30,800) were neutralized before adoption. In total the Dutch Society neutralized indirectly 48,800 cats!

4. The fourth and final phase was another campaign we organized to run during the entire month of September. September is the best month for the adoption of cats (or rehoming, as it is called in Holland) because many people are back from their holidays and because October 4th is World Animal Birthday. So our goal was to rehome all of the cats in our shelters (5,000 during this month) by October 4. We were lucky - "Whiskas", a large animal food manufacturer, helped strengthen our campaign by providing 5,000 packages of food with a surprise in each for every new cat owner. We had hoped to place 4,000 cats that month, but to our surprise we did 5,027 rehoming!!! On the 4th and 5th of October all of our shelters went from overcrowded to empty!