
North Georgia Animal League

Animal Welfare
Position Statements

January 01,2009





North Georgia Animal League is a registered 501c3 non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve the quality of life for animals through public educational programs and activities, to serve in an advisory capacity to the community, to assist during emergencies involving animals, to reduce the suffering among animals, and to reduce the unwanted pet population through spay/neuter advocacy.

It is the policy of NGAL to advocate the humane treatment of all animals by maintaining and maximizing the standards upheld by the Humane Society of the United States.

NGAL maintains several programs to achieve these goals including but not limited to:

- ❖ “Forever Home”
- ❖ Humane Education
- ❖ Spay/Neuter Assistance Program (S.N.A.P.)
- ❖ NGAL Dog Park
- ❖ Emergency Animal Response Services (E.A.R.S.)
- ❖ Pets, Peeves, and Petpourri



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Animal Fighting

The so-called “sport” of animal fighting continues to thrive though it is illegal. Dogfighting, cockfighting, and other such events often result in abuse, maiming, and death for thousands of animals every year. Such organized barbaric events promote willful abuse of animals and are contrary to the values of a humane, aware and caring society.

North Georgia Animal League condemns and opposes all such blood sports and calls for an immediate end to any legal acceptance of blood sports and for strong enforcement of laws that now exist banning these brutal activities. North Georgia Animal League appreciates the support from elected officials, animal control, and other animal rescue organizations that help to create more comprehensive laws providing for the enforcement of animal fighting prohibitions.



Euthanasia

North Georgia Animal League considers euthanasia by injection (EBI) of sodium pentobarbital to be the only acceptable method for euthanasia of dogs and cats in animal shelters.

Euthanasia should only be carried out by properly trained and certified personnel. Such training should meet all Federal, State and Local guidelines.

NGAL recognizes the fact that there are certain circumstances in the field that may require an animal to be euthanized. Field Euthanasia by a trained and certified Animal Control Officer must be done in a humane way such that the animal does not suffer.



Pet Overpopulation

Every year, millions of cats and dogs are euthanized in our nation's Shelters. One of the chief causes of this is, there are more pets than there are responsible homes. Preventing the proliferation of these unwanted animals would dramatically decrease their numbers and the resulting deaths.

North Georgia Animal League believes that no dog or cat adopted from a Shelter should be allowed to reproduce. Furthermore, given the current prevalence of breeding operations and the present pet overpopulation, failure to spay or neuter one's own animal is reckless and irresponsible. Only pet owners with a responsible desire to breed their animals and the means to place every animal produced in a loving home should keep unsterilized pets.

NGAL supports the passage of State laws mandating that all dogs and cats adopted from public or private animal care and control agencies be sterilized.

To ensure that all animals adopted are unable to reproduce, surgery would have to be performed prior to adoption or at an acceptable age. Unfortunately, not all Shelters or Rescues have the capability to sterilize animals, and some that do have these resources may not sterilize before puberty due to concerns of biological and psychological effects or traditional beliefs. The promotion and subsidization of spay and neuter operations through low-cost spay/neuter clinics, rebate, and incentive, programs have proven to be helpful ways to counter these issues. The reduction in cost serves to motivate both those who cannot and those who will not pay the non-subsidized price for the operations.

As a result of this North Georgia Animal League supports the establishment and operation of low-cost, no-cost, and rebate programs and clinics.



Puppy Mills and Mass Breeding

The mass breeding of dogs for commercial sale has resulted in numerous large –scale breeding operations around the Country known as “puppy mills”. For the profit of the breeding operation owners, animals suffer abuse, physical stress, exposure to the elements, and lack of proper nutrition. They live in unfit conditions that foster disease and in most cases never receive veterinary care. Adults are excessively bred and housed their entire life in small runs and cages. Puppies are neglected and lack emotional needs such as socialization. In addition indifference or ignorance to good breeding practices often results in dogs with genetic disorders.

North Georgia Animal League strongly opposes the mass breeding of puppies for profit because of the suffering and exploitation of the dogs. NGAL also opposes these practices because of the unnecessary addition of animals to an already tragic pet overpopulation. NGAL seeks to end mass breeding through enforcement of current laws and regulations, enactment of legislation, and public education. North Georgia Animal League applauds elected official who have made and will make this issue a priority.



Dangerous Dog Laws and Breed Specific Legislation

North Georgia Animal League (NGAL) believes that no breed of dog automatically poses a high risk of attack and it is unjust to punish responsible dog owners merely based on the breed reputation. NGAL support efforts to protect members of the community from dangerous animals and encourages communities to hold animal owners responsible for any injury incurred by an animal in their care. NGAL also encourages dog owners to undergo basic obedience training with their pets and to socialize them with people and other animals at an early age.

By definition, dangerous dogs are those that without provocation, have attacked or behaved in a terrorizing manner. In order to protect the public from these types of animals, communities may legitimately enact “dangerous dog” laws. Such laws may impose reasonable restrictions on dogs *proven* to be dangerous, such as housing requirements, fencing, leash length, muzzles, posted warning signs, sterilization, additional licensing, behavior training, and liability insurance. Any dog, whether previously labeled as dangerous, that has attacked humans or domestic animals may be euthanized when local laws and jurisprudence are followed. The Owner should be given a period of time and a process by which to appeal, and should be required to post a bond for the care of the animal during the appeal.

North Georgia Animal League opposes legislation that seeks to ban a particular breed of dog. Such laws provide a false sense of security as all dogs, when improperly treated or trained, can present a risk to public health. Breed specific legislation that outlaws specific breeds of dogs can increase the danger to the community by spawning black market interest, indiscriminate and irresponsible breeding, and subsequent overpopulation problems.

North Georgia Animal League opposes any insurance policy that denies insurance coverage to all owners of certain breeds of dogs.



Permanent Pet Identification

North Georgia Animal League believes that all pets should have identification. Tags are the most accepted method of identifying animals and their owners as well as for licensing and rabies vaccination certification. In addition to tags North Georgia Animal League highly recommends permanent identification of all pets, using such methods as microchipping. This method offers the best long-term solution to pet identification and aids the efforts of shelters to reunite pets with their owners. This is especially true during emergency and disaster situations when separation of pets from their owners has been proven to be a serious problem.

North Georgia Animal League supports public education on the importance and methods of permanent pet identification.



Animals in Disaster

North Georgia Animal League supports the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 and in doing so commits its resources to provide for the establishment of NGAL's Emergency Animal Response Services. This program is intended to assist local Emergency Management operations during a disaster or during a qualified event in which animal welfare may be an issue. Assistance may be in the form of but not limited to:

- Temporary Animal Shelter
- Animal Rescue
- Caring for injured animals
- Reuniting pets with owners
- Basic Human First Aid/CPR
- Distribution of pet food and supplies



Reference

American Humane Association Animal Welfare Position Statements

Official Code of Georgia

Walker County Animal Control Ordinances

North Georgia Animal League By-Laws

Humane Society of the United States

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Georgia Emergency Management Agency