The Animal Control Perspective

Brought to you by:

Florida Animal Control Association

Palm Beach County
Public Safety Department
Animal Care and Control Division
The mission of the Florida Animal Control Association is:

- To improve the **methods and standards** of the animal control and protection profession throughout Florida,
- To inform the public of the true nature and importance of the work performed by animal control and protection organizations,
- To cooperate with the other public agencies dealing in animal control and protection,
- To **promote** local and state animal related regulations and **laws**,  
- To provide assistance to local animal control and protection organizations,
- To assist state agencies and local animal control and protection organizations in disaster planning and post-disaster operations, and
- To promote justice and equity in the enforcement of animal control and protection laws.
• **FACA Certification Courses**
  – Animal Control Officer (FSS 828.27)
  – Chemical Immobilization (FSS 828.27)
  – Euthanasia Technician (FSS 828.058)

• **Continuing Education Conferences**

• **Legislative Issues**

• **State Committees/Panels**
  – Rabies, SART, FAF, FFWCC
• 67 Counties in Florida, plus Tribal Lands
• Most have an Animal Control function
• Many cities have their own, most do not
• Some contract with Humane Society/SPCA
• Significant differences
  – in services provided
  – in available resources
  – in political approach
PBC Animal Care and Control

• Largest Animal Control Agency in the State

  – Based on:
    • Annual budget
    • Full Time Employees
    • Scope of services provided

  – NOT Based on:
    • Shelter Intake
Discussion Points

- Rabies Vaccination Certificates
  - Specifically the requirement to submit to the animal control authority (FSS 828.30)
  - Why is compliance important?

- Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI)
  - Specifically why good animal description/documentaion is important (FSS 828.29)
  - Not all clients have honorable intentions

- Reportable Disease vs. General Neglect/Other Issues
  - Specifically how a “reportable” disease concern can complicate an animal neglect case/cruelty investigation
  - Limited resources exist to manage either, but together can be an extreme challenge
FSS 828.30 - Rabies vaccinations of dogs, cats, and ferrets.

• “Upon vaccination against rabies, the licensed veterinarian shall provide the animal’s owner and the animal control authority with a rabies vaccination certificate...”
Why do some Vet’s not comply?

• Not all jurisdictions require compliance, as not all jurisdictions track this information.

• Some vet’s feel they should be compensated for doing the extra work.

• Some vet’s feel they are betraying their clients, by “turning them in” to the government.
Why is compliance important?

• Larger Counties have many animal bites reported.

• PBC alone routinely has 2200 – 2400 animal bites annually.

• PBC is funded for 1 position (desk job) to coordinate quarantine for all of them.

• This job is dramatically more efficient when the owner, the animal and the vaccine status is already on file.
Why is compliance important?

• When vaccine info not on file, ACO must be dispatched... often over and over again.

• Owner then given time to request their vet to fax records to us... most times should have been done months earlier.

• Enforcement comes with delicate balance of cooperation.
Why is compliance important?

• License Tag program generates much needed revenue.
  
  – PBC sells 123,000 tags annually.
  – This generates $2.1 million in revenue.

(over 25% of our operating budget)
FSS 828.29 – Dogs and cats offered for sale; health requirements; consumer guarantee.

• A.K.A. “Pet Lemon Law”

• Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI’s)
• DOACS has lead role on oversight, but has limited resources.

• FSS requires vets and pet dealers to retain OCVI’s for 1 year

• FSS gives the authority to inspect these records to the USDA, DOACS, any LEO, or any agent appointed under FSS 828.03 (ACO’s)

• FSS gives the State Attorney authority to enjoin violators from being a “Pet Dealer”
Common violations uncovered

• Pet stores offering puppies for sale without a current OCVI.

• Pet stores requiring customers to sign away their rights afforded under the Statute.

• Pet stores requiring customers to use their own veterinarian and refusing to reimburse otherwise.

• Vet’s signing off on “out of state” vaccines as if they were done in their own office.

• Vet’s leaving blanks on the certificates
How is enforcement handled?

• For Pet Dealers... PBC put entire Statute in County Ordinance to enable the issuance of civil citations and ultimate permit denial, rather than as Criminal Violations. Then added stricter regulations.

• For Veterinarians... violations forwarded to DOACS, reviewed then forwarded off to DPBR
Major Case Profile

• “Bulldog Exchange” & “Bulldog Express”
  – 2007 Imported 400+ puppies from Hungary
  – 2008 Imported 600+ puppies from Hungary and Alabama
  – Web-based sales, elaborate scheme, misrepresented puppies
  – Used 2 residential locations in PBC
  – Way more puppy trafficking than we ever expected
Why did we get involved?

- Consumer complaints
- Media tenacity
- Loopholes in our own Ordinance
What did we find?

• Concerns that reached far beyond our jurisdiction and beyond our authority

• Extensive apparent violations with OCVI’s

• SAO, DOACS, DPBR
Importation Concerns

• CDC/Division of Global Migration and Quarantine

  – Puppies were shipped to a “Customs Broker” and given “Confinement Orders”.

  – No way to prove if “Confinement Orders” were being passed to importer, but definitely were not being adhered to.

  – Final purchaser was not made aware of them.
Importation Concerns

• USDA

  – 2008 Farm Bill added to the Animal Welfare Act
    • Prohibits importation of puppies for the purpose of re-sale
    • Formal rule language still under review
    • Puppies can still be legally imported today for the purposes of resale
Fraud Concerns

• Local Sheriff’s office & FBI
  – Fast food comparison

• Office of the Attorney General, Economic Crimes Unit
  – “Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act”
    • Selling puppies with known illnesses
    • Failure to disclose geographic origin of animals
Financial Concerns

• Internal Revenue Service
  – Federal Income Tax

• Florida Department of Revenue
  – State Sales Tax
Current resolution

• Shut him down locally through a Civil court agreement stemming from a separate issue
  – He will not own animals in PBC
  – He will not sell animals from PBC
Local resources for livestock vary

- Response for “At Large”
- Response for neglect
**PBC Shelter Resources**

- **PBC Animal Control**
  - 14 acres, including 6 stall barn and multiple paddocks
  - 5 Veterinarians on staff
  - Equine/Livestock Veterinarian specialists on contract
  - 14 Veterinary Assistants
  - 20 Animal Care Specialists
PBC Enforcement

• Local Ordinances

• FSS 828.073
  – Animals found in distress
  – When agent may take charge
  – Hearing
PBC Neglect

- Property tax breaks for agriculture
- Soremouth (*Contagious Ecthyma*) vs. FMD
Abandoned property located 1 hour from our facility
Grave concerns for this specific animal
Vesicular Stomatitis?
Who’s going to provide care or treatment in absence of Owner?
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