



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

Depopulation

Last reviewed: January 2014

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians believes that depopulation in response to a disease outbreak should only be considered as a last resort, when morbidity and mortality of disease are uncommonly severe. While depopulation may create a break between exposed and unexposed populations and lead to quicker resumption of normal sheltering activities, it may result in the euthanasia of healthy animals. Along with stakeholders such as shelter administrators, board members, and staff members, veterinarians experienced in outbreak management should be consulted for guidance before deciding to depopulate. A plan must be in place to communicate the decision to the public and enhance community outbreak control measures. The reasons for the infectious disease outbreak should be fully investigated and measures must be taken to prevent recurrence.

POSITION STATEMENT