

# Building Responsible Pet Ownership Communities The Calgary Model



In North America we do not have a problem with pet overpopulation, stray animals, nuisance or vicious animals – we have a problem with responsible pet ownership.

Virtually every animal that ends up in a shelter or on the street is there because a human relationship failed them.



Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein

Shifting from traditional animal control to responsible pet ownership

# Vision

- Create a government department that citizens want to work with
- Create a collaborative environment with animal interest groups
- Eliminate euthanasia as a animal management strategy
- Focus on humane animal management strategies – a “No More Homeless Pets” philosophy:
  - Return to owner
  - No healthy adoptable animal euthanized
  - Utilize the clinic and veterinary skills to make more unclaimed animals adoptable
  - Utilize behaviour modification to correct issues to allow the animal to be adopted
  - Programs to teach and support responsible pet guardianship
- Reduce aggressive animal incidents
- Be self supporting without tax dollars



# From Vision to Action

1. Identify the issue
2. Engage stakeholders
3. Build a process that works
4. Educate people to use it
  - 95% voluntary compliance
5. Back it up
  - 5% enforcement
6. Measure it
  - how do you know you are improving

# Identify the Issue

What are the **behaviors** in our community that are creating problems or threatening public safety

What is the desired outcome

Do we have the authority to regulate the issue – if not, who does



BSL - is the issue particular breeds  
or is the issue aggressive  
canine behavior

Pet Limits - is the issue the number of  
animals or is the issue  
related to noise, smell or  
care being given to the  
animals

# Engage the Stakeholders

- Educate the public on the issues and how the proposal will address the issues
- Gather opinions on the issues and solutions
- Provide an opportunity to be heard
- Measure support or opposition to the proposal



# Engage the Stakeholders

- Who will be affected by this regulation
  - Community animal experts
  - Public
  - Victims of an incident
- What will their position be
- What are their interests

# Build Processes that Work

- Use a standard business project process (SMART)
- Gather data on the current state in the community and vision where we would like it to be
- What facts are available
- What facts do we need to find or validate



# Build Processes that Work

- Engage the stakeholders in the solutions
- How will you measure and report on the progress
- Be realistic in how long it may take to implement change – identify the milestones
- The regulation on its own is not the whole solution – what needs to be done to support it

# Public Education

- Education is the most powerful tool to change behavior
- Build knowledgeable citizens – why we have these rules
- Give people good information to support making good choices
- Supports the perception of fairness



# Four Principles of Responsible Pet Ownership

1. Licence and provide permanent identification for pets
2. Spay or neuter pets
3. Provide training, physical care, socialization and medical attention for companion pets
4. Do not allow pets to become a threat or nuisance in the community

# Principal 5

## (Under Development)

### Ethical Procurement of Companion Animals

First, ask yourself if this is the right time to bring a companion animal into your family

Do your research on your companion animal's physical needs, what to expect for medical, food and care costs what type of training, socializing and exercise will be needed – can you provide it over the 10 to 20 year commitment

Source companion animals only from credible rescues or ethical breeders



# Enforcement

- Final step if all else failed - consequences
- Needs to be effective – perception of getting caught
- Needs to provide deterrent value – cost of non-compliance
- Perception of fairness

# Measurement

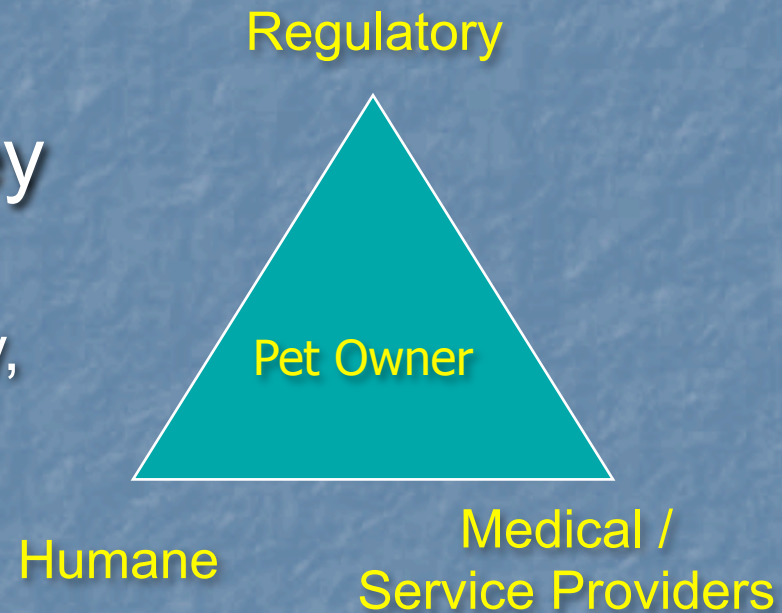
- Confirms if the program is being successful or not
- Tracks changes or trends in the community
- What to measure and what is it telling you



# Our Responsible Pet Ownership Partners

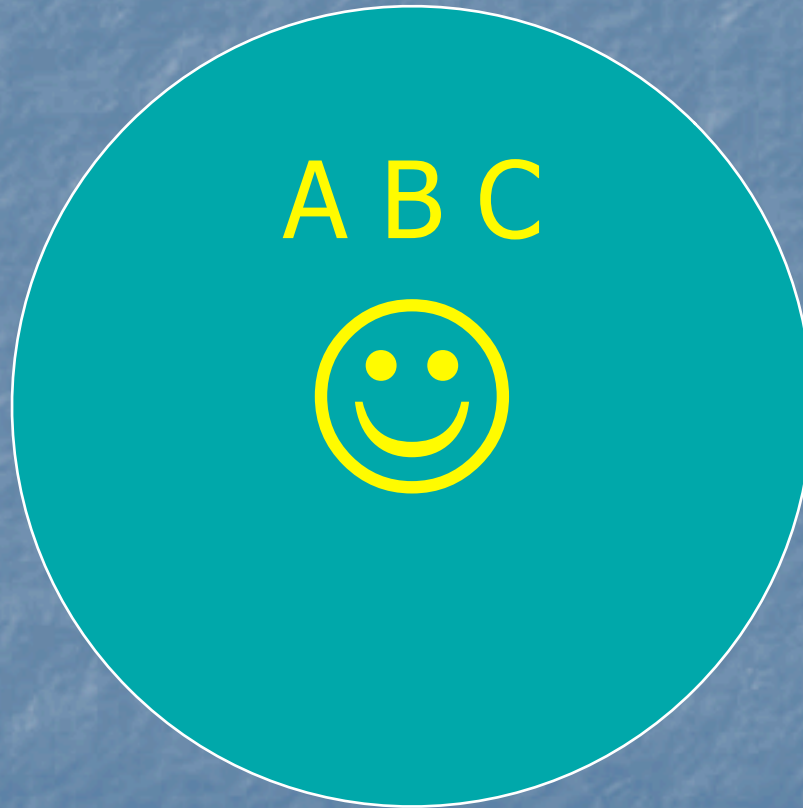
A successful animal program requires working relationships with three key stakeholders:

- **Regulatory** – The City of Calgary, The Province of Alberta
- **Humane** – Calgary Humane Society (SPCA), Animal Rescue Foundation, MEOW Foundation
- **Medical/Service Providers** – Calgary Vets, AVMA, breeders, trainers, behavior experts, stores selling pet supplies



# Understanding Collaboration

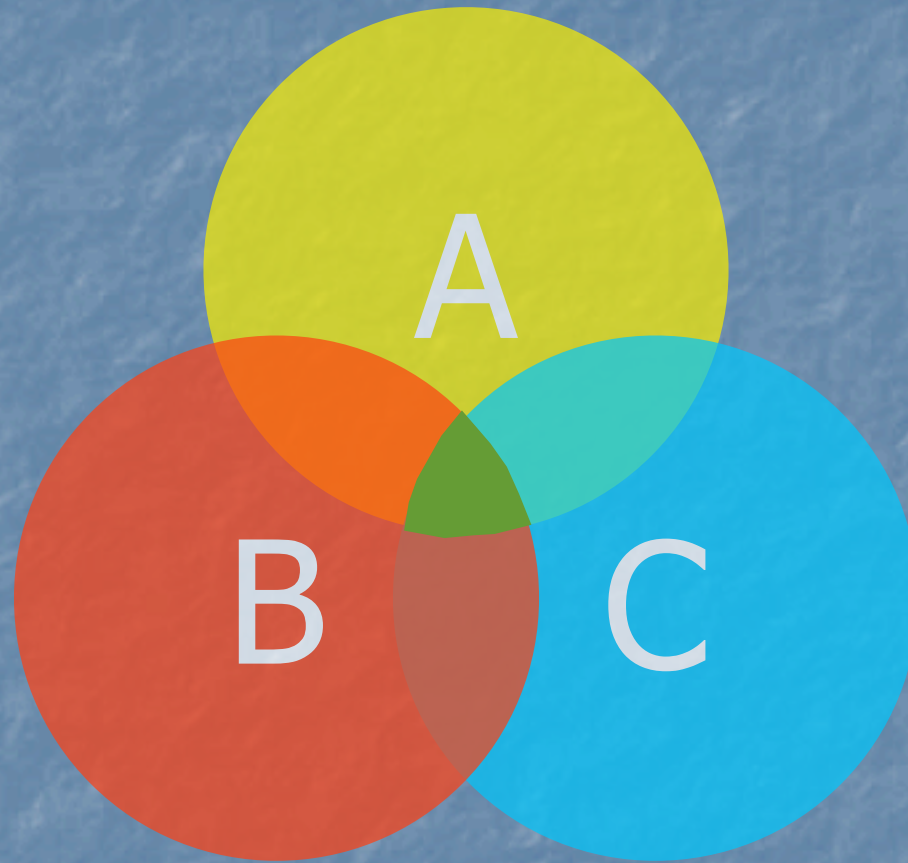
## What we Expect





# Understanding Collaboration

## How it Really Works



# Shifting from Animal Control to Responsible Pet Ownership

- Regulating the right end of the leash
- If we change the human behaviors to being responsible for their companion animal, the animal issues will solve themselves.
- Creating services that people actually want.
- Being more preventative to reduce the responsive, penalizing approach.



# Performance Indicators

(How do we know we are doing a good job)

- Impounded animal numbers ↓
- Return to owner rates ↑
- Aggressive animal incidents ↓
- Euthanasia rate ↓
- Percent of animals licensed ↑
- Number of bylaw infractions charged ↓
- Financial performance ↑

# Remove Barriers

An effective program removes barriers to responsible pet ownership.

- Licensing needs to be market sensitive and convenient.
- Providing a no-cost spay/neuter program removes barriers for low income citizens.
- Public education programs teach citizens how to be responsible pet owners.



# Officer Training

- Officer Field Safety
- Dog Handling
- Lifts, Loading & Transporting
- Leash Techniques
- Capture and Control Tools
- Breeds and Behaviour
- Aggressive Incident
- Investigation

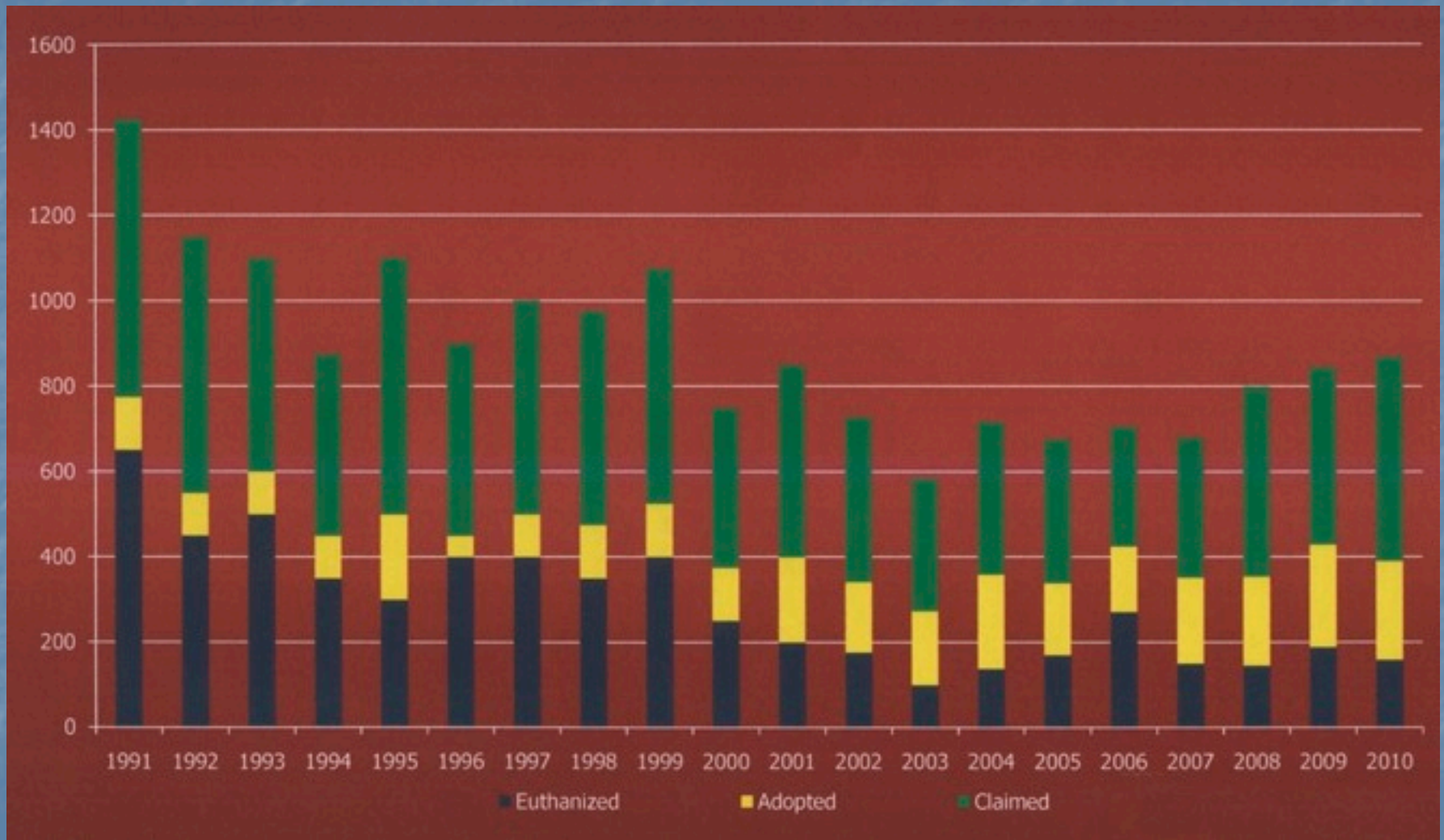


# Behaviour Assessments on Dogs Involved in an Aggressive Incident

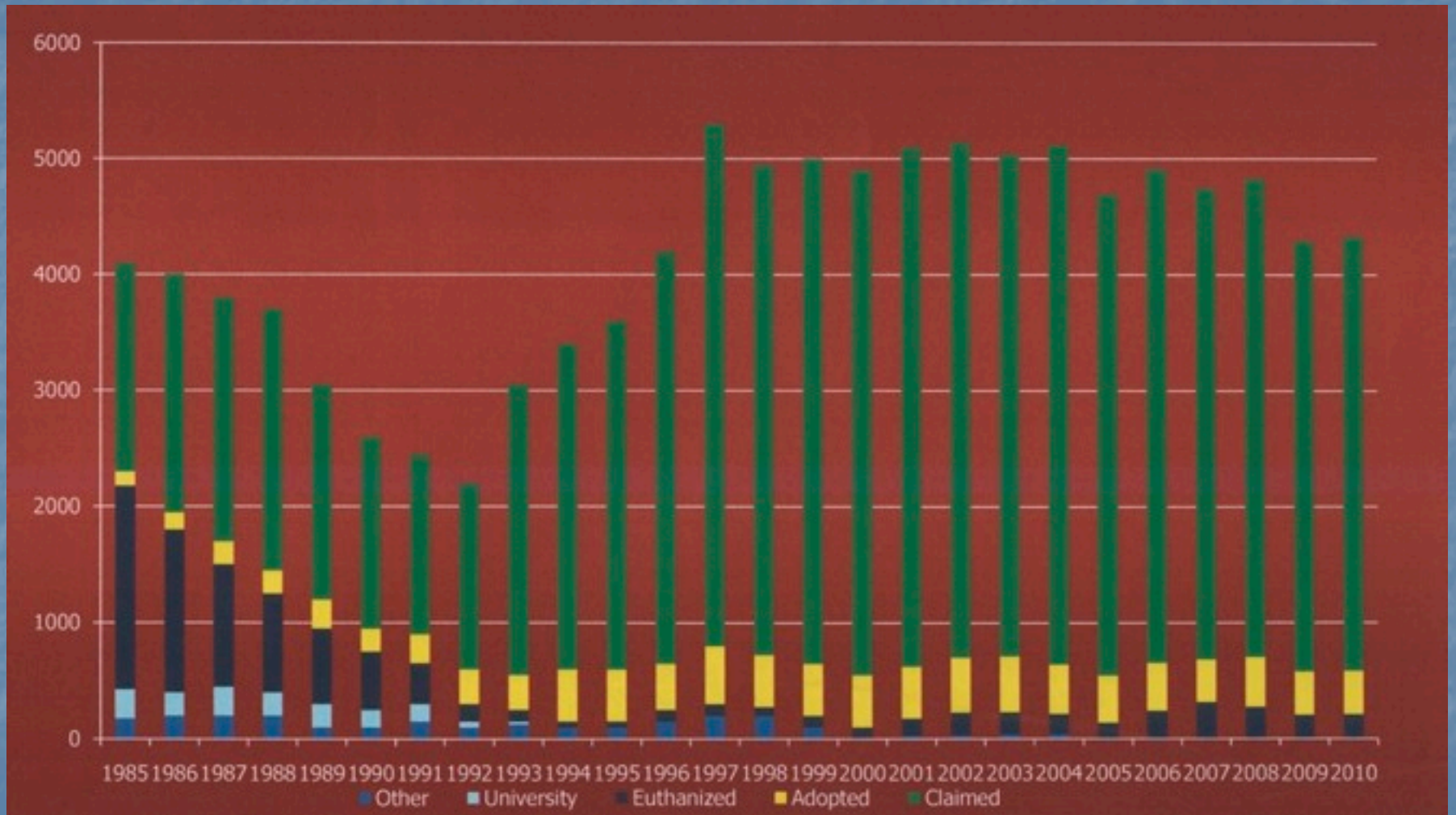
- Determine what may have triggered the behaviour and assess the animal to determine recommendations
  - Charges or Nuisance Order or Vicious Animal Order
- Nuisance Order – Conditions
  - Confinement, control measures and training by a certified pet dog trainer
- Vicious Dog Orders – Conditions
  - Euthanize, confinement, control measures and training by a certified pet dog trainer



# Disposition of Cats

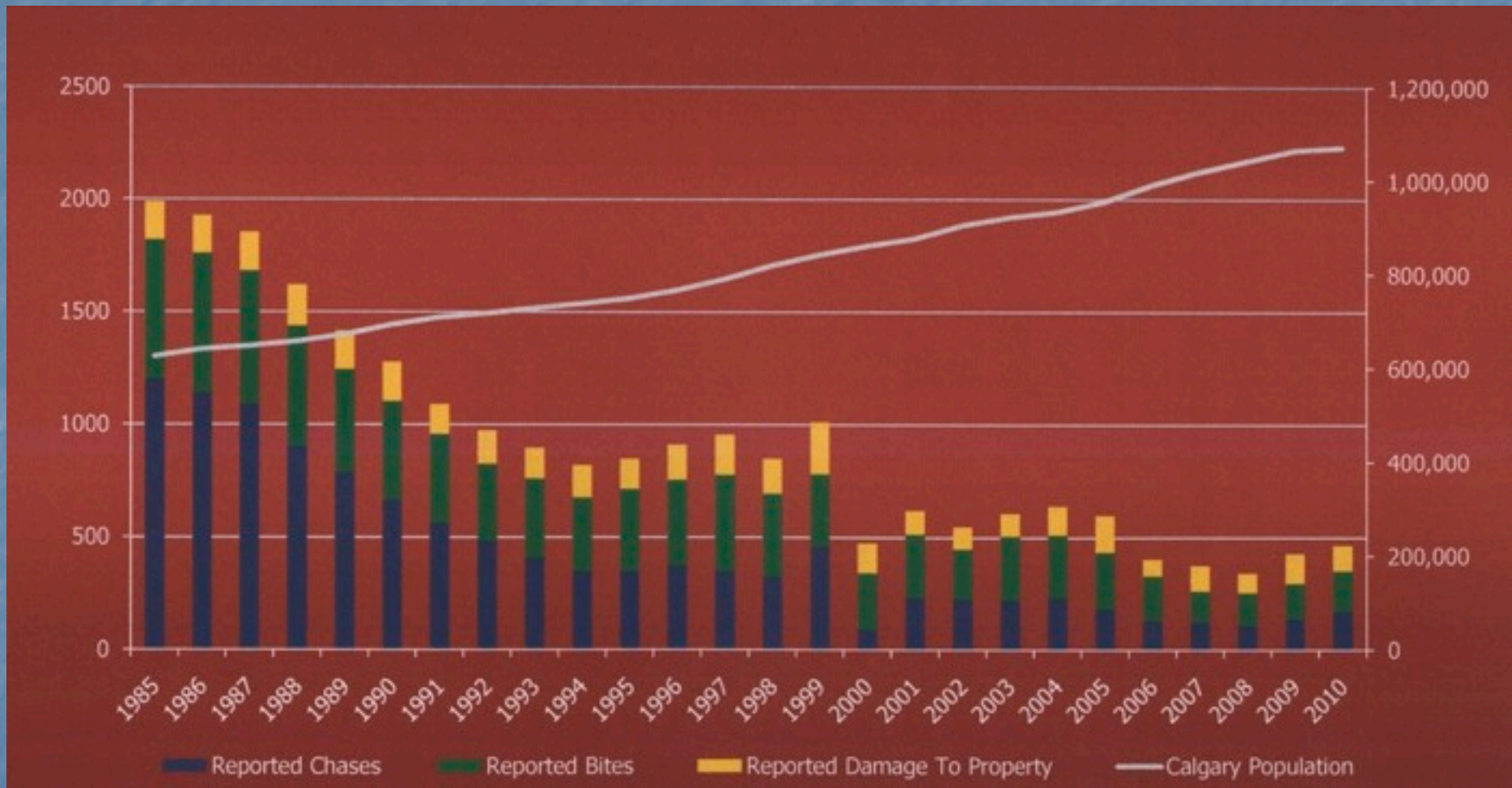


# Disposition of Impounded Dogs





# Aggressive Dog Incidents



# Questions?

