



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

Barks and Mews

April 2020 Newsletter

Expanded Spay/Neuter Assistance Wins in New Mexico in 2020!

For the past 3 years APAS has followed a bill in the New Mexico Legislature that would help low-income New Mexico residents spay or neuter their pets. The bill's sponsors (Jacob Candelaria, D, Bernalillo, and Joanna Ferrary, D, Dona Ana) tried again this year, introducing Senate Bill 57, Pet Food Fee for Neutering and Sheltering. The fourth time was the charm: the bill passed both houses and was signed into law by the Governor.

The bill imposes modest annual fees on each commercial pet food brand or product distributed in New Mexico, starting at \$50 per product in 2021, and increasing to \$100 per product in 2023 and after. Prescription diet pet foods obtained from a veterinarian, and specialty pet foods from small manufacturers, will be exempt. The bill has a 6-year sunset clause, so the Legislature can assess the success of the program in 2027.

Nearly all of the money collected will support pet sterilization for low-income New Mexico residents; a small amount will be used to support administrative costs entailed in enforcing the bill. The Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico (APVNM) estimate the fee will generate more than \$1.3 million for spay/neuter funding each year. This will be a substantial increase on existing funding mecha-

nisms—spay/neuter license plate and a voluntary tax check-off program—that have not raised nearly enough money to meet the needs statewide.

As in previous years, there was strong public lobbying in support of the bill. APAS wants to thank the APVNM who were effective leaders of the lobbying effort, reaching out to encourage animal support organizations (such as APAS) throughout the state

to make their voices heard in Santa Fe in support of SB 57.

How will this bill affect APAS's efforts to subsidize spay/neuter for low-income families in Socorro? We won't know in detail until the New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine meets in 2021, or later, and decides how to distribute the money to non-profit organizations, animal shelters, and euthanasia

agencies around the state. We can, however, make a rough estimate. With about 45 animal shelters in the state, and a similar number of other spay/neuter organizations, each group might expect around \$15,000 per year. For comparison, APAS typically spends about \$25,000 each year to subsidize spay/neuter procedures. Thus, the new money from the pet food fee will be a welcome addition to our program to help needy animals in Socorro.

—Jean Eilek



Increased funding for spay/neuter programs will reduce the numbers of dogs and cats in the state's shelters and thus reduce euthanasias. Photo courtesy of APVNM.

Dogs visit Cottonwood Valley Charter School

Six therapy dogs and their handlers, volunteers from Animal Protection of New Mexico, visited Cottonwood Valley School last December to talk with children in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes about how to safely approach an unfamiliar dog, what behavior might provoke a dog to snap, and how to protect themselves from a loose, aggressive dog. First, what markers identify a possibly dangerous dog?

- 1) The dog may be with a pack of other dogs.
- 2) It may appear nervous or skittish.
- 3) It may growl and/or raise its lip.
- 4) The fur on its back may stand up or bristle.
- 5) The dog may rush toward you.

Even when you see your friends and their dog, always ask permission to pet their dog before approaching.

- 1) Make your hand into a fist.
- 2) Stand next to (not in front of) the dog so it can sniff your fist, and
- 3) then stroke the dog along its back (rather than on its head or face).



Small children are the most likely to be bitten, so begin early to teach proper etiquette. A dog may be more likely to nip or bite, even your dog or a friend's dog, 1) when the dog is frightened, 2) when the dog is eating, 3) if it's a mother dog with puppies, 4) if the dog is in its crate or on its bed, 5) if the dog is asleep, 6) if the dog is chained. What other behavior might cause a dog to nip? 7) Don't pull on a dog's fur or otherwise tease a dog. 8) Don't try to pet a dog in a car. 9) Don't reach over or through a fence to pet a dog. 10) Don't play tug-o-war.



Photo courtesy of Qing Qing Cui.

If an unknown dog approaches you, 1) don't run; dogs instinctively chase; 2) "make like a tree," stand still, feet together, arms down at your side, and hands in a fist; 3) don't ever stare at a dog; he's likely to consider that a challenge; 4) don't be aggressive; it may incite the dog to be more aggressive.

The students were taught two defensive strategies if they encounter an aggressive dog:

- 1) If you're on your bike, don't kick at the dog; he's likely to become more aggressive. Get off and put the bike between you and the dog.
- 2) If he rushes you, drop to the ground on your knees and "make like a rock," sitting back on your heels with your face toward the ground. Interlace your fingers, with fingertips in, and bring your arms up over your head. Try to keep long hair and hoodie out of the dog's reach.

—Jane Love

Rattlesnake Vaccine in 2020

Springtime in Socorro means the rattlesnakes will be emerging from their sleepy brumation or period of cold weather inactivity and slowed metabolic processes. Although you may encounter a rattlesnake in New Mexico any month of the year, they are most active between April and October. If you hike, run, or walk with your dog in an area where rattlesnakes live, you may wish to consult with your vet about the benefits and risks of canine rattlesnake vaccine.

Both Ark of Socorro and Animal Haven offer the vaccine, at a cost between \$40 and \$65. Initially, a dog should receive two doses about 30 days apart, with vaccination boosters yearly thereafter about 30 days before the start of “snake season.” Protection peaks about 30 to 45 days after the booster and lasts about six months. As the antibodies are short-lived and the vaccine typically only provides protection for six months, a booster shot should be administered each year.

Canine rattlesnake vaccine works by stimulating the dog’s immune system to produce antibodies against rattlesnake toxin. These protective antibodies start neutralizing venom immediately in the event of a snake bite. The reported benefits of vaccination include a delay in onset of symptoms, fewer and less severe symptoms, a decrease in mortality, faster recovery time, and little or no tissue necrosis. In addition, veterinarians observed less pain in dogs that suffered bites, less lethargy, less swelling, with swelling progression typically reversing within the first 1 to 2 hours, and recovery in about 24 to 48 hours. Antibody levels in recently vaccinated dogs are reportedly comparable to treatment with three vials of antivenin. Antivenin in Socorro currently costs around \$500 per vial.

Dogs are most likely to be bitten on the head or front leg. They will experience pain, swelling, difficulty breathing, and a rapid heartbeat. If your dog is bitten, do what you can to keep him calm and carry him to your car if possible, and take him immediately to a vet. Treatment will likely include antibiotics and pain medication. Intravenous fluids and antivenin may also be needed. Antivenin is very



helpful in the inactivation of snake venom, but there is a narrow window in which it must be used. After about 4 hours post-bite, antivenin is less effective in countering the effects of snake venom. The severity and lasting damage of a rattlesnake bite depends on many factors, including your dog’s size and age, the location and number of bites, the amount of venom injected, and the amount of protection the dog developed from the vaccine.

In sum, a rattlesnake bite is always an emergency. Even if your dog has had the rattlesnake vaccine, get him to a veterinarian as soon as possible following a bite. The vaccine is not meant as a sole means of protection, but as a prophylactic to buy more time to get your dog to a veterinary hospital, reduce pain and swelling, speed recovery, and increase his odds of survival.

Sources

Animal Medical Center of Southern California, “Prevention and Treatment of Rattlesnake Bite in Dogs,” <https://animalmedcenter.com/treatment-rattlesnake-bite/>
Jane Love, “Rattlesnake Vaccine,” APAS newsletter, July 2014.

—*Connie Robnett*



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

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Supplement

Upcoming APAS Events

Spring Yard Sale. Our spring yard sale, typically scheduled for late April, has been postponed until later this year, the date not yet decided.

July 4. APAS plans to have a table in the vendors' tent at New Mexico Tech's Fourth of July celebration. We will distribute information about the benefits of spaying and neutering pets and about programs available to low-income residents.

Hot August Community Yard Sale. Saturday, August 22, 8:00–12:00 at the plaza.

Socorro County Fair & Rodeo. Thursday through Saturday, September 3–5, APAS volunteers will give out information about its low-income spay/neuter program.

Puerto Seguro Safe Harbor

Puerto Seguro, in its fight against poverty and homelessness in Socorro County, faces greater challenges as county residents experience growing economic hardship.

Donations can be dropped off at Puerto Seguro, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 10 am and 2 pm. Anyone who is willing to donate but feels unsafe going to Puerto Seguro due to social distancing issues may contact Kumar Golap (505-307-5078 or kgolap@gmail.com), and the dropoff can be made at Kumar's porch, or he can pick up your donation at your front door.

The list of needed items is regularly updated on the donation web page of Puerto Seguro, <https://www.psisafeharbor.org/donate>

Right now, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the list of urgent needs includes face masks, nitrile gloves, bleach, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, Lysol spray, and isopropyl alcohol.

Quilt Raffle

Jean Pody, a member of the Socorro Fiber Arts Guild, made this quilt expressly for APAS to raffle. Tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00, and may be purchased from Connie Robnett or at an APAS event. The drawing will be during the Socorro County Fair.



Other needs include paper plates, paper bags, instant tea, ready-to-eat-meals, spaghetti, noodles, pasta in general, rice, beans, peanut butter & jelly, cans of mixed vegetables, green beans, carrots, or peas, cereal, oatmeal, crackers, cookies, granola bars, pop-top ravioli, soup, and fruit, tuna packets, Vienna sausages, canned chicken, pudding cups and applesauce cups, juice boxes, enchilada sauce, pasta sauce, ranch dressing, evaporated milk, white and brown sugar, sweet and dill relish, shredded cheese and Velveeta cheese, and coffee.