



## A view of the dog problem in Chile through the eyes of an international NGO

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## Overview

- Veterinarian's Without Borders-in Canada and in Chile
- The global dog problem
- Unique challenges of free-roaming dogs
- Taking a critical look at "solutions" for Chile
- Getting on the same page
- Moving forward



## Our beginnings



Bishnumati River, Kathmandu 1992

- Epidemiologist team
- Overwhelming situation
- Pure research
- Participatory approach
- Community presented solutions
- Beginnings of ECOHEALTH



## Veterinarians Without Borders – Canada


Non-governmental organization November 2004  
Permanent branch in Southeast Asia 2007

### Our Global Mission...





*"...is to work with those in need to foster the health of animals, people and the environments that sustain us."*

Our programs are delivered with an Ecohealth approach





## The Context for our Work

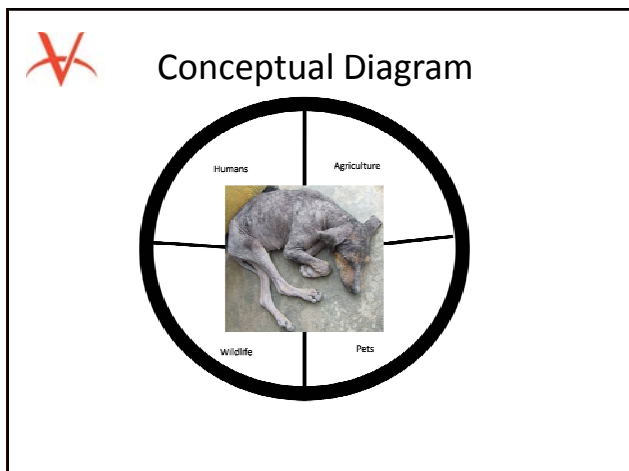
- Human animal interactions
- Poverty and gender inequality
- Water quality
- Animal welfare



## VWB in Latin America

*"Our goal is to build capacity in local people by giving them the tools they require to understand the importance of health, with a particular emphasis on domestic dogs"*

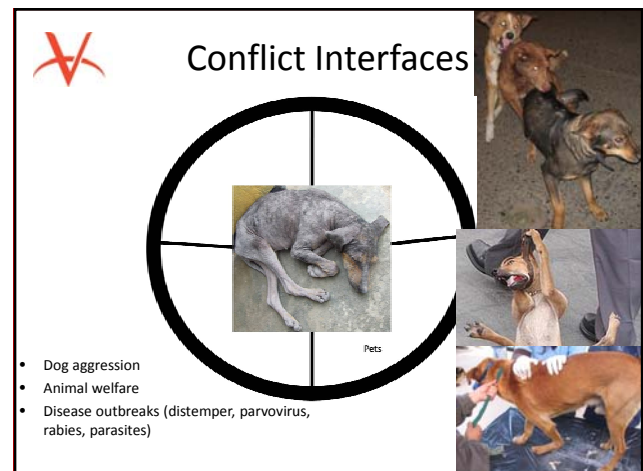
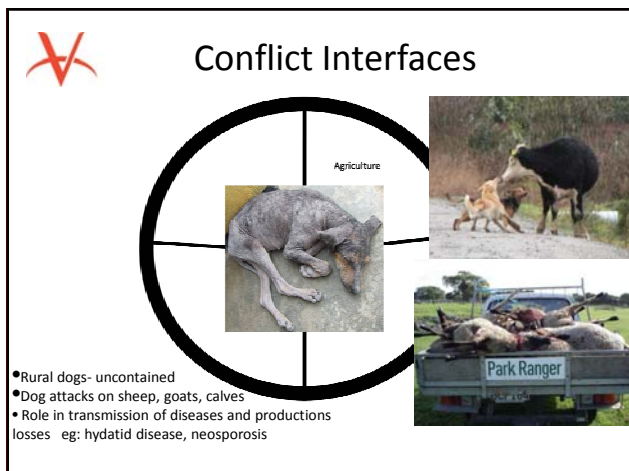
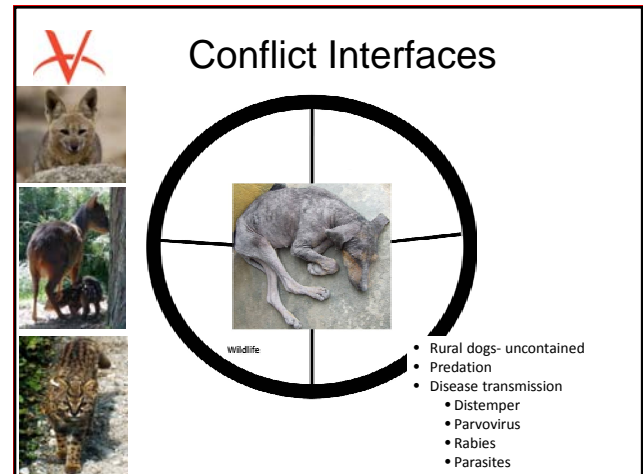
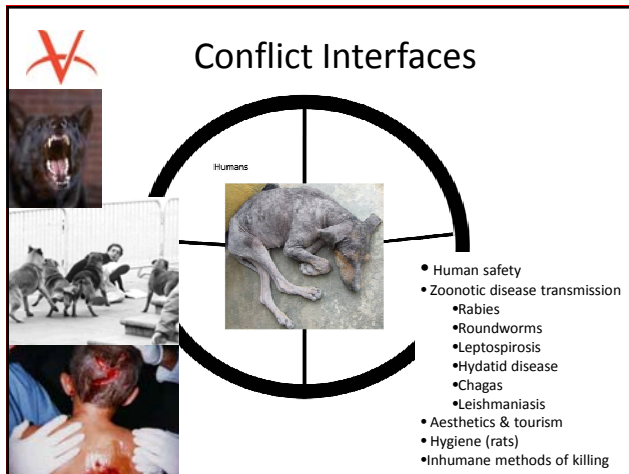






## The global dog problem







## The unique challenges of managing free-roaming dogs

Most abundant carnivore in the world

Humans have extremely high tolerance to them at abnormally high densities

Not wildlife....  
Free-roaming pets



## Artificial resources

- Subsidized
- Creates an unnatural carrying capacity
- Street dogs in relatively good body condition



## Population dynamics

- Healthy females produce healthy litters
- Reproductive biology of free roaming dogs
- Social hierarchies
- Artificial immigration and emigration



## Developed Countries



November 23, 2009

## HSUS Pet Overpopulation Estimates

The Humane Society of the United States



Estimated number of cats and dogs entering shelters each year:  
6-8 million (HSUS estimate)

Estimated number of cats and dogs euthanized by shelters each year:  
3-4 million (HSUS estimate)

Estimated number of cats and dogs adopted from shelters each year:  
2-4 million (HSUS estimate)

Estimated number of cats and dogs reclaimed by owners from shelters each year:  
30 percent of dogs and 2-5 percent of cats entering shelters (HSUS estimate)

Estimated number of animal shelters in the United States:  
3,500 (HSUS estimate)

Estimated percent of dogs in shelters who are purebred:  
25 percent (HSUS estimate)



**3-4 million**

dogs and cats are euthanized in shelters  
every year in the United States

No dogs in the street anymore

Public health problem to an ethical  
problem

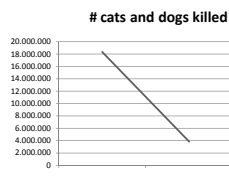
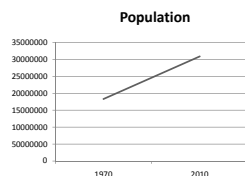
Is this what we are aspiring toward?

Is it improving or worsening?



## Euthanasia and the USA

- Pre-1970's:
  - 100 cats and dogs killed annually per 1,000 people
- Today:
  - 12.5 cats and dogs killed annually per 1,000 people



## Developing countries

- Fewer resources
- Cultural differences
- Aversion to euthanasia
- Lower priority
- Other issues





## What about Chile?

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** On average, dogs bite 650 humans in Valdivia and half are from owned animals

**DISTEMPER:** the canine disease affecting sea lions

## Diarioaustro

REGIÓN DE LOS RÍOS

REPORTAJES DOMINGO UN TEMA QUE SE HA HECHO INELUDIBLE

## En Valdivia hay 10 mil perros callejeros

**DATOS:** En la comuna viven más de 25 mil perros. Los propietarios recurren al alto porcentaje de la mitad de ellos por animales con amor.

**DISTEMPER:** La enfermedad canina tiene un peligro a los felinos marinos.



**EL MERCURIO NACIONAL**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE, LUEVES 29 DE ABRIL DE 2011

**PLAGA.** Los dueños dicen que tienen que disponer de recursos extra para controlar a los perros vagos. Los cuidan por miedo a los accidentes, pero no hay una ley que los obligue a tenerlos.

Pese a último dictamen de la Contraloría que ratifica facultades a municipios para la vigilancia de estos canes:

## Alcaldes aseguran que no tienen herramientas para el control de los perros vagos



## Current dog population control measures

Microchips

Sterilization

Kennels

Vaccination

Education

Euthanasia

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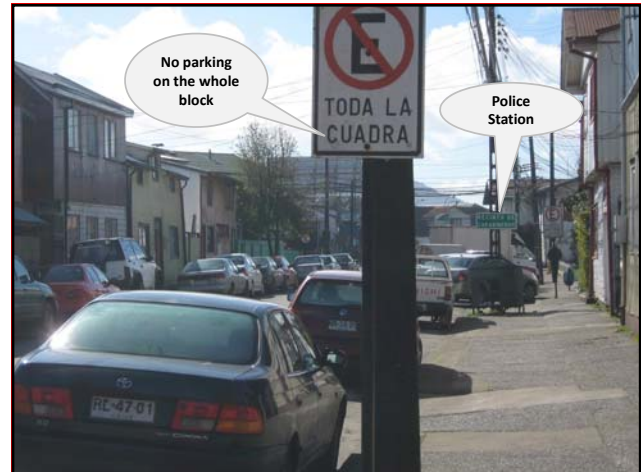

## Taking a critical look at solutions....






## Microchips


Benefits		Realities
• Microchip provides a permanent method of animal identification	<b>Microchips</b>	• Not useful alone...
• Ties the dog permanently to its owner	Sterilization	• Laws and by-laws take time to pass
• National traceability program	Kennels	• Owner compliance
– Baseline demographic information	Vaccination	– Have their dogs chipped
– Contact owners of dogs roaming in streets	Education	– Pay the penalty if dog is captured
	Euthanasia	• Human resources
		– Catch dogs
		– Enforcing the law

## Registration



- 94% respondents recommended registration laws
- 0% said that they would be willing to register their dogs!



## Sterilization campaigns

Benefits		Realities
• Removes the ability of individuals to reproduce	<b>Sterilization</b>	• What is the goal?
• Reduces the numbers of fertile animals in a population	Microchips	• Measuring success?
	Kennels	• How many?
	Vaccination	• Who?
	Education	• Female or male?
	Euthanasia	• By what means?
		• Consider male social hierarchies
		• Cultural acceptance
		• Owner affordability
		• Sustainability



## Sterilization Campaigns



Owner accountability



## Kennels

### Benefits

- Provide a location for unwanted or captured dogs



Microchips

Sterilization

**Kennels**

Vaccination

Education

Euthanasia

### Realities

- Financial sink-holes
- Physical building
  - Biosecurity
  - Quarantine
  - Indoor and outdoor pens
- Ongoing resources
  - Food
  - Preventive care
  - Treatments, outbreaks
  - Staff
- Trained personnel
  - Dog catchers
  - Veterinarians
  - Kennel staff
- Protocols
  - Adoption
  - Euthanasia



## Vaccination

### Benefits

- Animal welfare (distemper, parvovirus)
- Prevention of zoonoses (rabies)

Microchips

Sterilization

Kennels

**Vaccination**

Education

Euthanasia

### Realities

- Population control??????
- Higher rates of survival
- Larger dog population



## Education

### Benefits

- Teach people about responsible pet ownership
- Long term strategy for changing human behaviours

Microchips

Sterilization

Kennels

Vaccination

**Education**

Euthanasia

### Realities

- Is there a coordinated approach or plan?
- Who is the target population?
- What is the message?
- Is it making an impact?
- What is education?
  - Pamphlets
  - Posters
  - Radio
  - Television
- What about the school system?
- Teaching the teachers





## Owners and their dogs

- Dogs blood is red
- Dogs get the same diseases as people (diabetes etc)
- Male dogs can be sterilized
- Any injection is a vaccination



## Euthanasia

### Benefits

- Humane
- Cost effective
- Animal welfare cases
- Temporary reduction of free-roaming dogs
- Strategy *in combination* with other means for control may be an interim means of coping

Microchips

Sterilization

Kennels

Vaccination

Education

Euthanasia

### Realities

- Unsustainable as a sole technique
- **Social, cultural and religious acceptance**
- Controversial- holding up the approval of laws and by-laws



## Solutions

- Whose responsibility is this?
- Resource dependent
- Linear rather than in parallel
- Uncoordinated
- Root problem
- Holistic...ecohealth

Microchips

Sterilization

Kennels

Vaccination

Education

Euthanasia



Getting on the same page before moving forward





## Human or dog problem?

### Dog

- Vaccination
- Sterilization
- Kennels
- Euthanasia

### Human

- Education
- Laws
- Penalties
- Registration



Or is it a human problem that results in a dog problem?

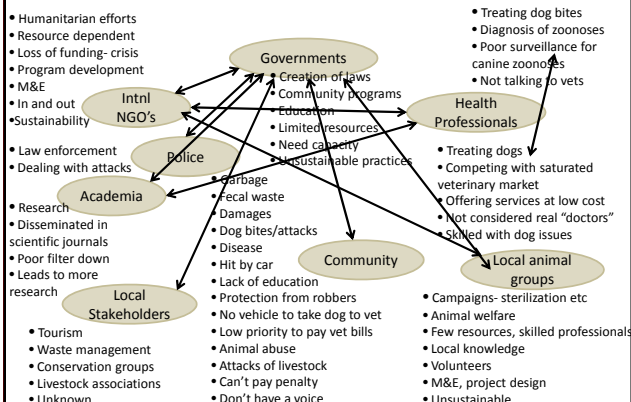


## Resource Limitations

- Sustainable, can't draw on municipal pockets forever
- Responsible dog ownership means paying for the needs of their own dogs
  - Food
  - Sterilization
  - Preventive and emergency care
  - Fencing
  - Registration
- Creative and economically feasible programs



## Disconnect between players



## Moving forward





## What is the goal?

- Community education
- Conservation

### Integrative EcoHealth Approach

- Sterilization
- Containment
- Healthy states
- Animal welfare
- Public health and poverty
- Healthy economies
- Health
  - Human
  - Animal
  - Environment

## National Working Group on Free-roaming Dog Management

**National Strategy – 5 year plan**

- Collaborative
  - National and international expertise
  - Local stakeholders
  - Community
- Not the solution- steps toward solution
- Identification of the problem
- Resources available
- Objectives and goals
- Research needs
  - Questions to answer
  - Data collection
  - Pilot projects
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Locally driven and sustainable

A Surveillance and Response Plan for Chronic Wasting Disease in British Columbia

## Changing the focus from dog control to human control

- Human problem
- Educational programs designed for children
- Implementation in school curricula – national and ongoing dissemination of information
- In Spanish
- Culturally relevant and appropriate
- Responsible pet ownership
- Dog behaviour and human safety
- Hygiene, health and disease prevention for humans and their dogs
- Building an appreciation in people for their local flora and fauna and the natural environment that sustains us all



## Back to our beginnings



- Integrated approach
- Creative and grassroots ideas
- Programs that reflect the communities needs and local priorities
- Multiple disciplines
- Sharing of knowledge



VETERINARIANS  
WITHOUT BORDERS  
VÉTÉRINAIRES  
SANS FRONTIÈRES



## Veterinarians Without Borders – Canada

- Non-governmental humanitarian organization
- Created by veterinary professionals
- November 2004

Oone



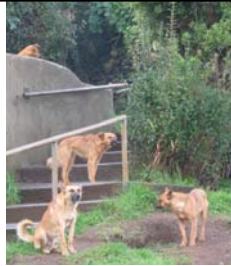
## Perceptions and behaviour





## A Human Survey in Máfil, Chile

n=145 households (10%)  
4000 inhabitants  
1000 free roaming dogs

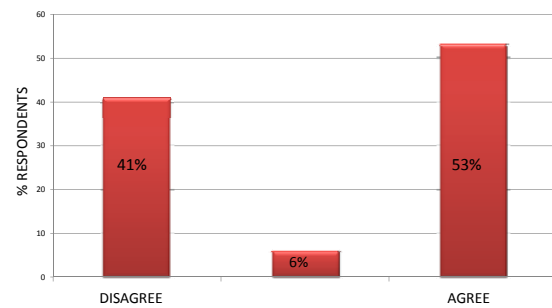


### Quantify the dog problem from the perspective of the community:

- 60% were afraid of dogs
- 80% believed that dogs are dangerous
- 90% are aware that dogs transmit diseases to humans

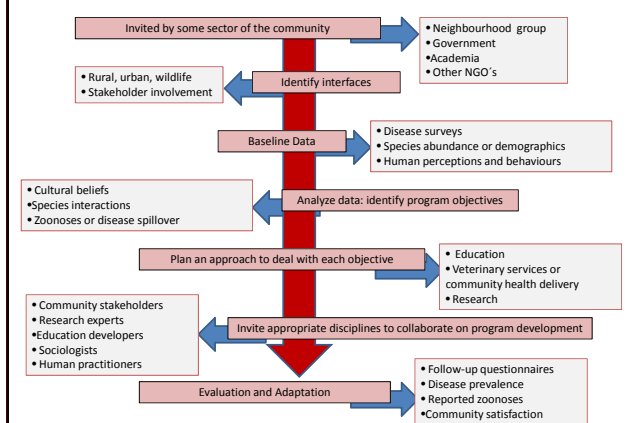


## Are dogs a problem in your community?



n=145

### DEFINING THE PROBLEM, before DESIGNING THE PROGRAM



## Barriers to resolution





