

Stray Dogs in Kuwait

PRESENTATION BY ADOPT A STREET PRINCESS SHELTER (AASP)



The Issues



Pet Abandonment

Kuwait is suffering from high levels of pet abandonment, with the purchase of dogs being seen as “toys”. Once the pet grows up or the kids lose interest, or the family leaves Kuwait for their 2 month summer vacation, the pet is thrown out into the street or the front door is “accidentally” left open.

Multiplication with Self-Breeding

We guesstimate that over 50% of current street dogs in Kuwait, are second generation strays, meaning they were born to abandoned dogs already on the street which multiplied due to the lack of contraception control. Official figures from the Public Authority for Agriculture & Fisheries estimate they are over 20,000 stray dogs in Kuwait, a number we believe to be much higher.

Desperation

With a lack of local support and the harsh weather conditions of Kuwait, desperation is a common theme among street dogs here. The dogs become very desperate for food, water, protection from the sun and tend to congregate in industrial areas, agriculture and farm areas and construction sites, where they can benefit from abandoned food and rubbish. This feeling of desperation, although very sad, does have one reward of creating a very humble and loving animal once it is rescued and receives love, care and attention. Animal shelters in Germany & USA where we have sent many dogs in the past years have commented how exceptionally caring and emotionally connected Kuwaiti stray dogs are compared to other countries.



THE ISSUES... CONTINUED

Human Safety

As stray dog numbers increase and the lack of basic needs are not met, like food and water, the dogs animal instinct is to form "gangs", where they can feel protected in numbers. This presents a new danger in Kuwait, as similar to human gangs acting in desperation, they can behave irrationally and irresponsibly, causing harm to others. In Kuwait there have already been reports of kids, adults and other animals being attacked by stray dog gangs.

Health & Spread of Disease

With no control or immunisation treatment from birth, street dogs provide the perfect breeding ground for diseases.

The most common diseases in Kuwait are:

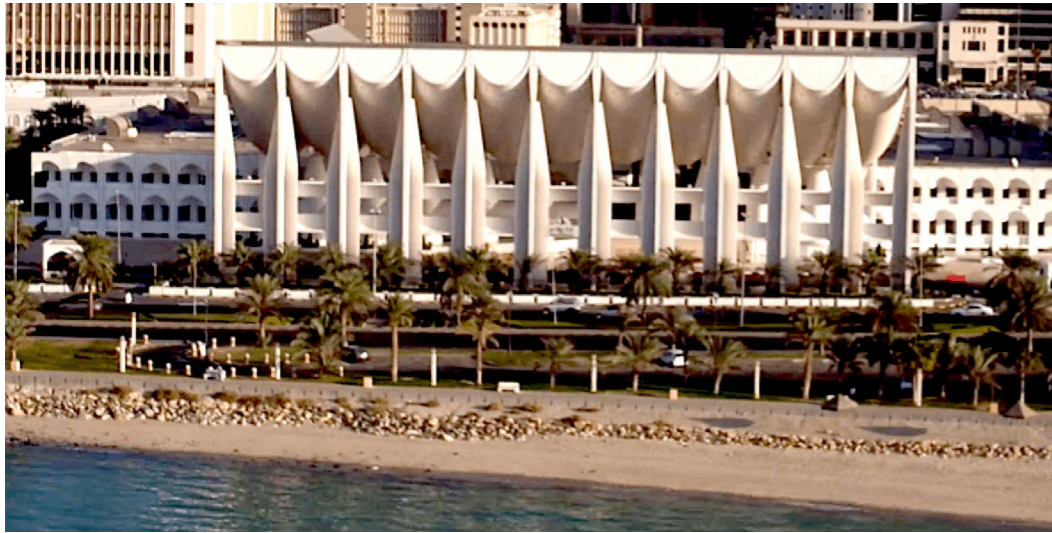
- Parvo virus
- Distemper
- Mange
- Fungus
- Ringworm



And much more...

The list of issues related to the increase of stray dogs in Kuwait are much more vast than those briefly mentioned here. This report however will now focus on what can be done and changes we suggest for the improvement of animal care in Kuwait.

Changes: 1. Legislation



Animal Classification by Law

Currently under Kuwaiti law street dogs are classified as vermin, similar to cockroaches and rats. Lobbying should be done to change the classification and legally protect the rights of animals in Kuwait.

The UAE recently introduced a new law to reduce stray dogs and protect animals by making it a criminal offence to throw away your pet and introduced penalties, including jail time for people caught throwing their pets away inhumanely.

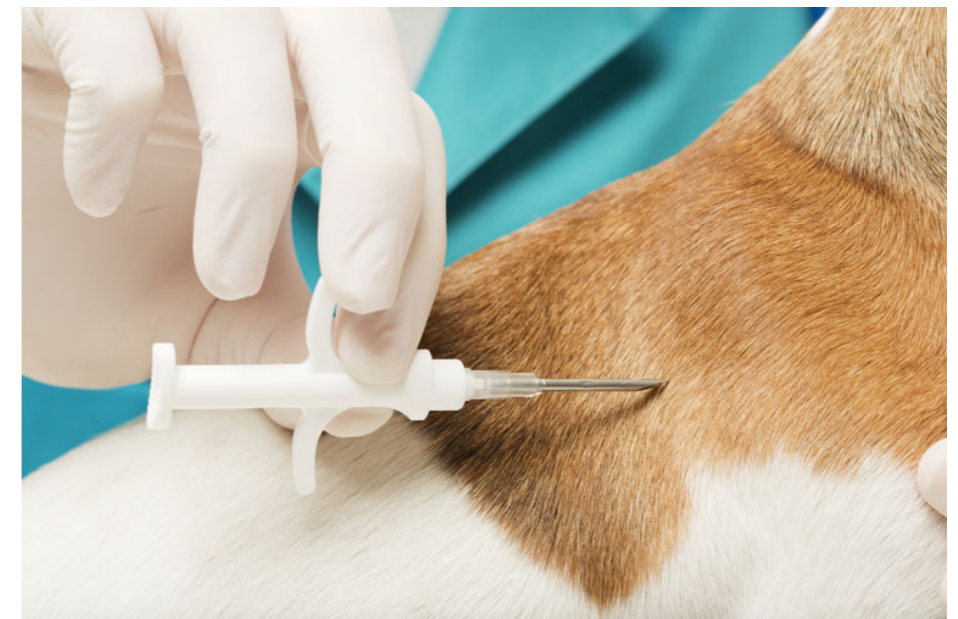
Microchipping & Registration

Already a basic standard introduced at the Adopt A Street Princess Shelter in Kuwait, we suggest making it compulsory for all dogs to be microchipped and for the creation of a local database that matches pets with their owners. This helps to ensure accountability of pets. Enforceability can be achieved through vets, shelters, dog hotels and pet shops.

Adopt A Street Princess already started this process in 2016 by partnering with the Tasso Worldwide Registration Database, a German company that manages the largest database of microchip registrations in Europe. This process has already helped reduce stray dogs in Kuwait, with careless owners being reminded that their dog is registered under their name and that they are responsible for the pet they adopted.



Tasso collar tags provided to every registered dog



Changes: 2. Humane Treatment



Catching Stray Dogs

We have personally witnessed the inhumane and deplorable methods used by the local government for the catching of street dogs in Kuwait. This often involves beating, strangling and killing the animals as they are being caught, using sticks, hooks and metal spikes. We are suggesting a better recruitment of staff that know how to deal with animals and proper training needs to be implemented in the government catching stations or alternatively it could be outsourced to the private sector, a service AASP recently started offering due to growing needs of institutions wanting to deal with stray dogs humanely.

Killing Humanely

We do not advocate or condone the unnecessary killing of dogs and upon catching a street dog we believe it is very important to firstly identify what can be done to make it healthy and socialised. On occasion however, this is not possible and the dog may be too sick or have irreversible anger and aggression issues. On this occasion, we are suggesting that international standards for euthanasia be applied, with the use of injections in the vein. Currently Kuwait is using very harmful poisons that have been banned internationally due to the extreme pain and length of suffering the dog is put through.

Spay & Neuter

Another method for controlling the large number of stray dogs is to castrate the dogs. It must be noted however that the most effective method to prevent street breeding is to spay the females. A fact is however that spaying is more complicated in terms of the medical operation, the recovery time and also it is more costly than neutering males. Just to provide an example, if there are 10 males and 10 female on a street and you neuter 9 males, the 10 females can all still get pregnant from the 1 remaining male. If you spay however 9 females, only 1 female can get pregnant from the 10 males, showcasing how much more effective spaying females is than neutering males.

Changes: 3. Shelters

Providing a safe environment

We need further investments into Shelters in Kuwait, in order to provide a safe transition for dogs to be collected from the streets, and where possible get them rehomed to a loving family. AASP is a privately run shelter that was established in 2015 and now has 48 kennels with full AC, providing a maximum capacity of 100 dogs. Greater investments are needed into AASP and other shelters for them to continue playing this vital role.

Vaccinations

Shelters have the perfect infrastructure to provide vaccinations and help control the spread of diseases. At AASP all dogs are quarantined upon arrival and given vaccinations against Parvo, Distemper, Parainfluenza, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Laryngotracheitis, Rabies and given deworming and anti-parasite treatment.

Nutrition & Hydration

An important job of shelters is to provide stray dogs with the basic necessities of life, which are food, water and a safe comfortable habitat, allowing them to be healthy and fit.

Adoptions

One of the most important and active jobs of a shelter is to find loving new homes for the dogs. Shelters are not ideal homes for dogs but a necessary half-way house. The ideal situation is for the dog to find a loving family that will take it in and make it a part of their family, for life. AASP is proud to have adopted thousands of dogs in the past years both to families in Kuwait and abroad.



One of the kennels at Adopt A Street Princess Shelter in Kuwait



AASP tries where possible to provide "home comforts" like sofas

Socialisation

Stray dogs often go a long time or even a lifetime without human interaction and a large role of the Shelter is to socialise and humanise the dog so that they can co-exist in peace and harmony with humans again.

Changes: 4. Education



Awareness Campaigns

In order to really tackle the issue of pet abandonment and animal rights in Kuwait there needs to be more grass-roots social awareness campaigns. AASP and its founder Nathalie Veys have over the past years taken part in many events, given speeches and engaged through thousands of posts on social medias. With funding we can increase these efforts to educate and bring awareness to the cause.

Schools & Universities

Engagement with young students is the best solution for long term change in the community. We advocate creating partnerships with Schools & Universities for education and awareness campaigns to help make long lasting effects.

Pet Management Support

One of the reasons for the high success rate of long term adoptions at Adopt A Street Princess has been due to the on-going support we provide adopters after they take their dog home. Adopting a dog for the first time can be a daunting process and having the extra support of what to do, not only creates a better dog owner, but a better pet also.



Conclusion: Financing & Support

Financial Contributions

All the above mentioned changes require dedication, expertise and importantly financial support. Immediate contributions can help shelters like Adopt A Street Princess, which needs an average of 2500 KWD per month in order to survive and continue providing their charitable work. Investments and land to create a bigger and better shelter is also advisable, preferably closer to Kuwait City to be more efficient. Of course this is a remedial humane solution and long term planning is required to fully reduce and eliminate the stray dog situation in Kuwait.

Local Ambassadors

Having high profile champions of the cause is a great way to encourage understanding, awareness and also motivate greater financial support from others. Encouraging leaders in Kuwait to be spokespersons for animal rights would be significant for the country and a positive step towards creating long lasting effects.

Global Partnership

Identifying and partnering with international organisation will also be a key for success that should be pursued for Kuwait to raise its standards and be in-line with the international community and best practices.

Management

Nathalie Veys, founder of AASP is willing to dedicate her full attention to helping fix the stray dog situation in Kuwait and if the opportunity is presented under the right infrastructure, she can do so full time with greater power and results.

