

# Toward a No-Kill Nation

► By Michael Mountain

“Everybody knows it's wrong to be killing homeless pets.”

Some people still think it will be impossible ever to bring an end to the killing of homeless animals in this country.

Among them are some of the nation's largest, oldest, and most well-known – and well-funded – animal rights organizations and humane societies.

They may be right. It may indeed be impossible. Then again, lots of perfectly honorable and decent people, 150 years ago, believed it would be impossible ever to bring an end to slavery, however much they disapproved of it.

Fifty years later, child labor was still considered by most people to be another of those “necessary evils” in life. They argued that it was more constructive simply to try to improve the conditions in the factories. (It was the Women's Humane Society of Philadelphia who led the charge to end that kind of negative thinking and abolish child labor altogether.)

Today, we all look back at those and other social evils of the past as bizarre anomalies. Yet in our own time, many people, including even the large humane and animal rights groups, still acquiesce to the daily carnage of abandoned four-legged family members in “shelters” all across the country.

The bottom line is that as long as people believe that killing homeless pets is one of those “necessary evils” that can never be stopped, then it *will* never be stopped.

The resources, the talent, and the know-how to bring an end to this horror within this decade are now with us. All that's required at this point is the ongoing commitment to get the job done.

Everybody knows it's wrong to be killing homeless pets. We all know, too, that



none of us can turn this thing around single-handed. To bring an end to the killing, we all have to work together – humane societies, SPCA's, private shelters, and spay/neuter, foster, and adoption groups. We have to shed old notions of what cannot be done, find common ground, and always put the needs of the animals first.

The general public needs to be on board, too. They're ready. Millions of people now understand the need to adopt their pets from shelters, rather than patronize pet stores and puppy mills; to have their animals fixed; and to care for them like any other family member.

In our own home state of Utah, a statewide coalition of humane groups shares an upscale new adoption center, a spay/neuter voucher program, and many other resources and facilities. (At the most recent adoption festival, people came in droves to adopt animals, despite a freak snowstorm, and the shelters actually ran out of animals to be adopted!)

Dozens of other communities across the country are setting up similar cooperative programs. Some have already reached their goal of saving every adoptable animal and are now working to save the so-called unadoptables, too. Others need help and funding, which are now available, to save their homeless pets.

Organizations that believe we all have no choice but to go on killing homeless dogs and cats forever should tell their members this right upfront. For the rest of us, and for the animals whose lives are in our hands, there is certainly a long way to go. But the goal is clearly in sight.

How wonderful it will be when there are finally No More Homeless Pets. 🐾