

The welfare of dogs – what's the problem?

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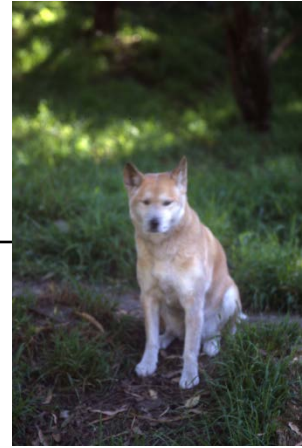
Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Canine Welfare

- Conflict
- Ignorance
- Difficulty



Conflict



- The Dog

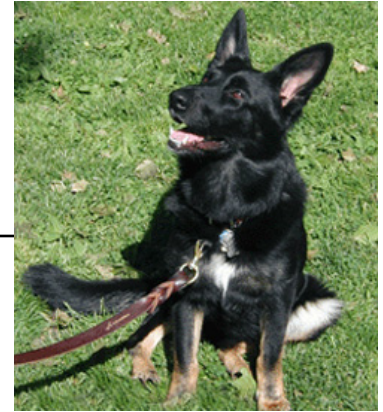
- Street animal for 15,000 years.
- Social, mob, scavenger/hunter, omnivore, promiscuous, defaecates freely, barks, fight, bites.

- Society

- Dogs off the street, in house, silent, clean streets and playing fields, safe



Not a new conflict



- Dog control programmes not new
- Rabies Control in England in 1900s
 - Dog owners versus Chief Veterinary Officer
 - CVO wanted dogs muzzled in public
- Dog attacks forced legislation tightening. In NZ the 1996 Dog Control Act amended 3 times

Local Authority Palmerston North (Figures for 2011-12)

- Registered Dogs 7471
- **Barking dog complaints 1044**
- Roaming dogs 1844
- Dog attacks 117
- Dogs euthanased in pound 189
- Human Population 75000
- 48% believe dogs should be muzzled when in public places — Local Paper Survey 2014

Barking

- **35% of complaints against dogs in Auckland are for barking**
- 42% of cases at a Behaviour Clinic in Auckland presented for problem barking?
- **40% separation anxiety**; 51% territorial
- Barking is particularly irritating to human (worse than lawnmowers, skill saws and babies)

Flint 2012

Department of Internal Affairs

2009/10

- ACC 9.855 new dog bite claims
- 10,699 ongoing claims previous years
- 24,500 infringements over 30 months – offences against Dog Control Act
- 30 infringements per 100 dogs in Auckland!

Negative impact of dogs

- Social nuisance

- SPCA Shelters
- Dog control officers and pounds
- Dog often cause of complaints to councils (second after rates, traffic)
- Barking – Biting – Defaecation – Lunging – attacks on dogs/cats/rabbits
- Killing Kiwis



Why do people have dogs?

- NZ 29% households (Maori 33%, Pakeha 29%)
- Low - Australia 36%, USA 39%, UK 23%
- Average number 1.2 dogs
- 700,000

- Mackay, 2011



Who owns dogs?

- Age group

- **18-24** **36%**
- 25-34 29%
- 35-44 36%
- 45-54 37%
- 55-64 26%
- **65-74** **19%**
- >75 0%

- Flint et al., 2010



Reason for having a dog

- Companionship 53%
- For children 16%
- Security 8%
- Relaxation 3%
- Exercise 4%
- Breed/compete/hobby 3%
- Other (work etc) 12%

- Mackay, 2011



Companionship?

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Companionship – really

- We need a better understanding of why people have a dog?



Companionship

- Utility (children, work, sport, exercise, security)



Companionship

- Market (\$1.5 billion in NZ) – dogs are good for you; get one now.
- Dogs need you (SPCA advertisements)
- Normal to have one (family is not complete without dog)
- Company for lonely
- Pairing behaviour





21th century – urbanisation

- The dog as companion?
- The dog as family and support?
- The street dog (Chile)
- Dogs for hire (Japan)

- The dog as economically important



companion animals

- Reduce loneliness
- Facilitate social interaction
- Health benefits
- Strengthen relationships
- Help those with mental problems
- Protection



People are alone ---- NZ figures

25% of people live alone

44% of households childless

4% women and 5% men lonely all the
time,

26% report being lonely in the last 12
months

Can dogs cure this?

Sunday Star Times 11/6/7

Pet Dogs-- Family members

- Wilbur survey of 350 owners
 - 27% family member
 - 17% enjoyed dog not close involved
 - 24% attached but worried about behaviour
 - 19% object – value dogs a nuisance

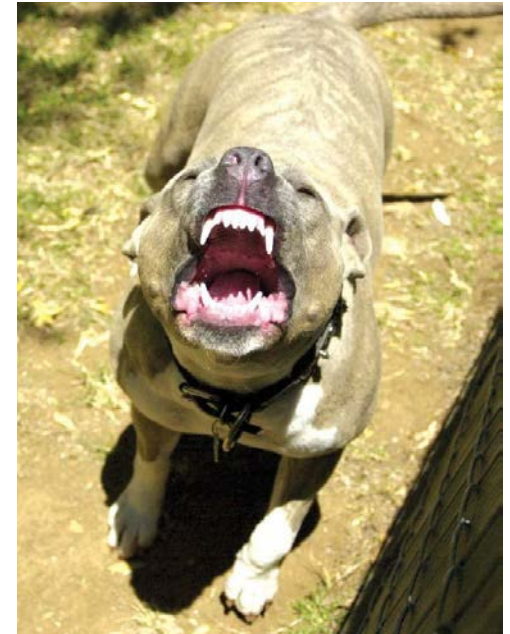


Companionship – really

- Why own

- English Bulldog
- Irish Wolfhound
- American Pit Bull Terrier

- A mongrel is just as good



Dogs are company!!

Some people identify the dog as more important than a partner (husband, wife)

NZ data 40% very fond of dogs, 7% afraid of dogs , 4% dislike dogs, 8% dogs a threat (Flint 2012)



Companionship



- In Palmerston North 10% are walked daily
- Dog aloneness is a problem
- Are we good for dogs?



Labradors in suburban Melbourne

- 52% walked for half to one hour per day
- **30% less than that or never walked**
- **Mean time in yard 15.3 hours (3.6 – 24)**
- Mean time with person 7.2 hours (0.5-21)
 - (Kobelt 2004)

Separation anxiety

- In North America SA diagnosed in 20–40% of dogs referred to animal behavioural practices
- 14% of dogs presented at veterinary clinics show signs of it



Social Environment

- >4 hours anxiety starts to develop
- 70% dogs live in one dog houses
- One person households risk factor for separation anxiety
- Barking (time alone and no morning walk)



Behaviour problems

- In the USA, 87% of veterinary clients stated that their dog had a behaviour problem (Campbell, 1986)
- In Australia (Melbourne) 65% of dog owners in Melbourne stated that their dog had a behaviour problem (Kobelt, 2004)



Dogs in Melbourne

- 63% too excitable
- 56% jumped on people
- 38% rushed at people
- **32% excessive barking**
- 29% constantly running
- **28% digging**
- 23% chewing
- **22% nervous**
- **18% obsessive lickers**
 - Kobelt 2004



Thunderstorm Phobia

- In one survey, 40% of dogs suffering from thunderstorm phobia were under one year of age when they first showed signs such as shaking, salivation, loss of bladder and bowel control.
- Many sought humans, became destructive, vocalised, self-mutilated or hid, all indicators of poor welfare



Compulsive disorders

- Tail chasing
- Fly catching
- Flank sucking
- Acral granuloma lick
- Staring
- % affected – severity?



Human-dog relationship

- Behavioural problems may cause the human-dog relationship to deteriorate
 - Increase the likelihood of the dog being abused or killed or surrendered to a shelter or pound
 - Affect the social milieu in which dog lives – ignored, chained up, never meet visitors, other dogs



Are we good for dogs?

- 30% obese
- 60% overweight
- Breed (labradors, beagles)
- Age (older), sex (neutered)
- Feed (once daily, treats)
- Lack of exercise
- Exacerbate arthritis, hip dysplasia, respiratory
- Predispose to diabetes
- **If dieting – constantly hungry**



Osteoarthritis etc

- In UK 1.3 million dogs affected
- Population 6 million
- 500,000 treated
- 800,000 (13%) in chronic pain
 - Ignorance / poverty

- Cancer in 50% of dogs over 10 years of age





Health – disease

- Hereditary conditions
 - Breed standards
 - English bulldog
 - Pug
- Hip dysplasia
 - Genes
 - Rearing



Human responsibility for animal suffering

- Ignorance - not knowing what to do
- Inexperience – knowing what but not how
- Incompetence – inability to do
- Inconsideration – not caring
- Does poverty feature here?

Ignorance



- How valuable is human versus dog company?



Ignorance

- How dogs experience street life
 - Anxiety, fear, fun
 - Short harsh and brutal but 'free'
 - Chile, Yemen, Zambia
- Have breeds changed from street dogs
 - What do they need?



Difficulty

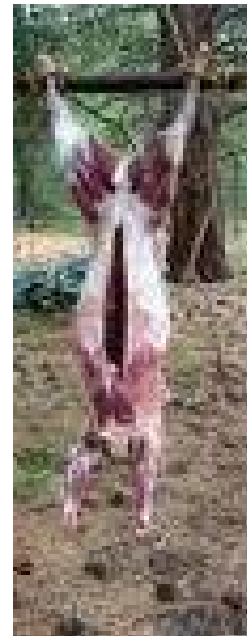
- Management of dogs
 - Varied
 - Intrusive research
 - Working dogs NZ
 - Pet dogs



Difficulty



- To assess what a dog needs
 - Exercise
 - Exploration
 - Food experience
 - Social life
 - Predictability
- Motivation



Difficulty

- Can we assess what a specific dog breed needs?



Do dogs need to have fun?

- Assess anxiety – fear – pain
- How happy is Rex?
- Optimism – Pessimism



Animal welfare – 2 basic tenets

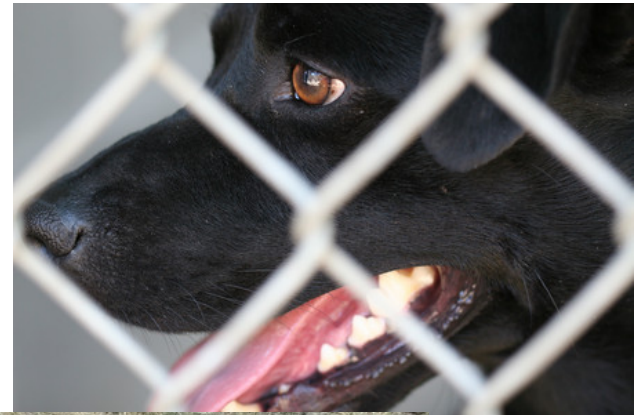
- An animal should be free to engage in normal behaviours
- An animal should be free of pain, fear and anxiety.



Many normal dog behaviours are unacceptable to human society.

If allowed to roam dogs will

- Scavenge
- Form packs
- Defaecate freely
- Bark
- Reproduce freely
- Predate
- Fight



Do we really need dogs?

- Silent
- Sweet smelling
- Clean and tidy
- Small faeces
- Loving



- **Get a cat**



The dog

- An anachronism in modern life
- A cultural issue reinforced by business and the media – cultures change – Asia
- Do families without dogs function better than those with animals?
- Stop advocating dog ownership
- Virtual dogs and farms



Human animal relations

“When you love children and dogs too much, you love them instead of adults” Jean- Paul Sartre

Thank you

