

# A School That Teaches Humane Methods of Euthanasia

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Since 1985, Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine has offered a unique school to animal shelter personnel, animal health technicians, administrators, police officers, veterinarians, and veterinary students. This unique school is a course in... euthanasia. ISU has become the leader in euthanasia instruction for animal shelters. In fact, Iowa State is one of only a few veterinary schools to offer this much needed program.

The present three day curriculum includes lectures, films, and rubber molded IV injection models. Hands on work in a laboratory, techniques for handling wildlife and a workshop on stress management round out the curriculum.

Dr. Ron Grier, Professor of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at ISU, publishes a monograph that is used in the course. This monograph has been adopted by over 2000 shelters and animal control units across the United States. The booklet provides chapters on trends in euthanasia, methods of euthanasia (and the mechanisms of the drugs), considerations in euthanasia, safety, legal and training considerations, and dealing with human stress factors. Dr. Grier also is a leader in the euthanasia program. Lois Kopecky, a former animal control officer in Iowa City, Iowa and long time advocate for the humane treatment of animals, is the originator and prime driving force behind the training program. Besides Dr. Grier and Mrs. Kopecky, other instructors and leaders in the school since its inception are: Dr. Dean H. Riedesel, ISU; Tom L. Colvin, director of the Des Moines Rescue League; and Paula Sunday, also of the Animal Rescue League. Dr. P. T. Pearson, the Dean of the College, at the time of inception, can be credited for encouraging the training school's development. The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, the Veterinarian's Examining Board, the Pharmacy

Board and the Division of Animal Industry are organizations that helped in the development of the program.

The school not only teaches the most humane way to euthanize an animal, it is now working more for other means of controlling pet overpopulation. Veterinarians can have a major impact in attacking the problem. Spaying and neutering must be affordable. Owners need to be convinced that spaying and neutering is the best choice for the animals. Iowa State will be offering a short course, April 16, 1993, on early spay/neuter techniques. ISU has also introduced microchips, which are implanted in the dog, to assist animal shelters identify a lost pet.

Along with educating owners on spaying and neutering, veterinarians should become proactive in pre-pet acquisition education and obedience classes before behavior problems develop. Almost 30% of animals surrendered to animal shelters are brought in for behavior problems. Most of these animals are unadoptable because of their bad behavior and must be euthanized.

Regardless of what is attempted, the pet population problem, like many other societal issues, will probably remain to some degree. The 1993 euthanasia school will be held May 20-22. For more information, please contact Dr. Grier at (515) 294-4900 or write him at:

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