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Governor

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GOVERNOR'S STRAY DOG CONTROL TASK FORCE  
*Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799*

## **Stray Dog Control Program Plan**

### Introduction

On August 5, 2005 Togiola T.A. Tulafono, Governor of American Samoa created the Task Force on Stray Animal Prevention and Remediation (*General Memorandum no. 148-2005*), and appointed members from seven American Samoa Government (ASG) departments. The group was tasked with the duty of “reviewing the stray animal problem in the territory”, and recommending strategies to “effectively address and remedy the problem of stray animals” in American Samoa.

The first meeting of the Governor's Stray Dog Task Force took place on Friday September 2, 2005 in the Department of Health (DOH) conference room. The *Stray Dog Control Program Plan* is a result of strategic planning by task force members in addition to data collected from sources such as DOH dog bite-related injuries statistics (attached), and in accordance with Title 25 of the *American Samoa Code Annotated (25.1601-.1610)* on domestic animals (attached).

Task Force members represent ASG departments appointed by Governor Tulafono, and include:

- Petelo Lafaele, American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA)
- Peter Gurr, Dept. of Agriculture (DOA)
- Dr. Leo Leituala, Dept. of Agriculture (DOA)
- Uto'ofili A. Maga, Dept. of Health (DOH)
- Pili Gaoteote, Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR)
- Sili Sea, Dept. of Public Safety (DPS)

- Lalotoa Leovao, Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
- Maugaoteaga Savane, Office of Samoan Affairs (SA)
- Cheryl Morales Polataivao, American Samoa Humane Society (ASHS)

*In addition to the ASG departments named by Governor Tulafono, the group is working with other ASG departments and community organizations, and has established a direct partnership with the American Samoa Humane Society (ASHS).*

### Needs Statement

American Samoa currently has an overpopulation of stray dogs, which can be associated with adversely affecting the quality of life in the territory.

- Medical personnel at the Lyndon B Johnson Tropical Medical center report treating dog bite-related injuries on a frequent basis, many involving small children.
- There are daily occurrences of rubbish being spread from receptacles by malnourished dogs, resulting in an eyesore.
- People often “dump” unwanted puppies and sick adult dogs in public parks, on government land, and in remote locations to escape the responsibility of caring for their animals.
- Links between Leptospirosis, stray dogs, and humans in American Samoa endanger public health.
- Other health issues of concern include, but are not limited to: parasites such as hookworms, mange and fleas. All are diseases or afflictions that are present in the dog population and are transmissible to humans.
- Eyesores and dangers to public health as stated above hinder the territory’s ability to develop a thriving tourist industry.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the *Stray Dog Control Program* is to greatly reduce the stray dog population through a variety of sustainable programs including public awareness and education, population and disease control, eradication of sick and viscous stray dogs, and revising existing legislation to include stricter control of all dogs. Results of this program will include a measurable decrease in the stray dog population, dog bite-injuries, and spread of diseases from dogs to humans; an obvious visual enhancement of our island’s beauty; and an increase in public awareness in regards to the responsible management and care of pets.

## **Goal 1: Educate**

### **Objectives:**

- Design and implement an aggressive public awareness campaign using all local media sources (television, radio, newspaper) to inform the community of the *Stray Dog Control Program* activities, the prevention/control of pet diseases and parasites, and benefits to the public in regards to the responsible care of pets. *Responsibility: Task Force, ASHS*
- Develop and maintain an outreach program to include visits to schools and community groups to promote healthy attitudes towards the maintenance and care of pets. *Responsibility: ASHS*
- Inform the community of the *Stray Dog Control Program* activities, and benefits to the public in regards to the responsible care of pets on a village level via village mayors. *Responsibility: Samoan Affairs*

## **Goal 2: Operate and Vaccinate**

### **Objectives:**

- Utilize existing Veterinarian services to provide twice-weekly spay/neuter clinics for pets (resulting in an estimated 40 surgeries per month).  
*Responsibility: DOA*
- Organize and support a month-long, annual spay/neuter clinic with off-island Veterinarian teams (resulting in an estimated 1,500 surgeries per month). *Responsibility: Task Force, ASHS*
- Continuously provide and administer medications for surgeries, and dog vaccinations for disease control (parvo, distemper and leptospirosis).  
*Responsibility: DOA, DOH*

## **Goal 3: Eradicate**

### **Objectives:**

- Issue licenses for dogs to be worn at all times on dog's collar. Maintain a computer database of all licensed dogs and their owners. *Responsibility: DOA*
- Capture unlicensed stray dogs after public notification. Unlicensed stray dogs will be trapped in locally designed and constructed traps. In cases when unlicensed stray dogs will not enter traps an experienced official while adhering to strict guidelines may use a tranquilizer gun. *Responsibility: ASCC, DOA, DPW*

- Allow a 48-hour reclamation/adoption period for pet owners to reclaim their dogs, and potential pet owners to adopt dogs. Dogs will be held in DOA holding area in a humane manner. Sick and viscous stray dogs will be destroyed immediately. *Responsibility: DOA, ASHS*
- Destroy unlicensed stray dogs after 48-hour reclamation/adoption period by administering solution intravenously. *Responsibility: DOA, DOH*
- Dispose of dead dogs in Futiga village landfill site. *Responsibility: ASPA, DOA, DPW*
- Maintain detailed records of each trapped dog, including trapping location, condition of animal, license status, and eventual outcome. *Responsibility: DOA*

#### **Goal 4: Legislate**

##### **Objectives:**

- Request revisions in existing legislation. Inform the public after legislation is amended. *Responsibility: Task Force*