

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

780



FROM: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

SUBMITTAL DATE: July 29, 2003

SUBJECT: Grand Jury Report: Department of Animal Services

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1) Approve with or without modifications, the attached response to the Grand Jury's recommendations regarding the Department of Animal Services.

2) Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized response to the Grand Jury, to the Presiding Judge, and to the County Clerk-Recorder (for mandatory filing with the State).

BACKGROUND: On June 10, 2003 the Board directed staff to prepare a draft of the Board's response to the Grand Jury's report regarding the Department of Animal Services.

Section 933(c) of the Penal Code requires that the Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the Board, and that a response be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days.

TONY CARSTENS
Deputy County Executive Officer

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FINANCIAL DATA: N/A

CURRENT YEAR COST \$

ANNUAL COST: \$

NET COUNTY COST \$

IN CURRENT YEAR BUDGET: Yes/ No/

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FY: Yes/ No/

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE.

County Executive Officer Signature

Consent Policy
 Consent Policy

Department Recommendation:
Per Executive Office:

Prev. Agn. ref.

Dist. ALL

AGENDA NO.

3 . 4

SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES

FINDINGS:

Finding Number 1:

In late 2002, more than 70 horses were seized from one location because of allegations that the animals were suffering severe neglect. The horses were turned over to DAS for care at a temporary animal shelter in Nuevo. The unexpected and unbudgeted cost to DAS is estimated to be \$100,000 before the horses may be available for adoption or moved in a legal manner.

Response:

-X- Respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding Number 2:

The DAS must cope with situations involving groups of large animals (such as horses or cattle) on an average of four to five times per month. This includes cattle that stray onto a highway or horses that are malnourished and suffering from neglect. Training is sporadic as incidents occur.

-X- Respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

The Department conducts training annually, or as needed, when new Animal Control Officers are hired.

Finding Number 3:

The DAS owns four stock trailers that can transport large animals. Parts of this equipment (such as loading ramps) have not always been in safe operating condition.

-X- Respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding Number 4:

According to the Director of the Center for Equine Health at U.C. Davis, "West Nile Virus is expected to be a threat throughout the state this summer." The virus may be lethal to horses and is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. The cost for vaccinating a horse for West Nile Virus is between \$75-\$100 for the set of two shots.

-X- Respondent agrees with the finding.

The Department cannot confirm the pricing for the West Nile Vaccination mentioned in the findings; however, after consultation with the State Veterinarian, it is recommended that this be up to the individual animal owners to consult with their attending Veterinarian.

Finding Number 5:

The DAS states that informing students (K-12) about the responsibility of caring for animals often aids in reducing problems of animal abuse and over population.

-X- Respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding Number 6:

Each year taxpayer money is spent to cope with pet over-population problems. Increased public awareness for the spay-neutering of pets will result in fewer unwanted animals and eliminate the need to euthanize.

-X- Respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation Number 1:

Provide permanent training to the schedule for Animal Control Officers (ACO's) in the handling of multi-animal incidents involving large animals (such as cattle and horses) and ensure that stock trailers are always maintained in proper operating condition.

-X- The recommendation has been implemented.

Livestock training for Animal Control Officers is currently provided on an annual basis and the condition of the stock trailers is being monitored.

Recommendation Number 2:

Inform the horse owners in Riverside County of the serious dangers of West Nile Virus, provide information on the need for vaccinating, and be prepared to participate in control or eradication programs with other county and state agencies. Information should be provided on the DAS website and/or newspaper articles.

-X- The recommendation has been implemented.

The Department participates in all meetings and activities with the State in regard to West Nile Virus.

-X- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Department plans to put information and/or a link on our website to the State's website for West Nile Virus

Recommendation Number 3:

Vaccinate all horses and mules under the control and care of the DAS for West Nile Virus.

-X- The recommendation has been implemented.

The Department has contacted the State of California regarding West Nile vaccinations and they did not recommend that the department vaccinate. Dr. Patton, the attending Veterinarian, was contacted and he did recommend the vaccinations, which will be administered in July 2003.