

ANIMAL CRUELTY IN UTAH - 2008 THROUGH 2017

Utah animal welfare organizations have existed since 1888. They were originally organized to protect overworked or abused livestock. The Humane Society of Utah has investigated animal abuse since it began as a branch of The Humane Society of the United States in 1960-1961, and has continued these efforts once it became an independent organization in 1972.

From 1888 until 1998 Utah's cruelty investigators were Special Function Peace Officers and Special Deputy sheriffs in many Utah counties. In May of 1998, Utah's Legislature repealed the section of the Utah State Code which authorized such legal authority. Many animal control agencies also investigate animal abuse.

Most complaints originate from the public, although we receive referrals from animal control / law enforcement agencies, utility employees, mail carriers, and others. Most complaints concern lack of food, water and shelter for domestic animals, i.e., dogs, cats and horses; however, we help a variety of species. We also investigate reports of animals being beaten, shot, stabbed, and poisoned, lack of medical attention, severely-matted coats, uncontrolled internal and external parasites, inadequate space, unsanitary conditions, transporting animals inhumanely, physical assaults, and other inhumane acts or omissions.

People are cruel to animals for a variety of reasons. It may be done:

- . to control or retaliate against an animal
- . to retaliate against the animal's owner
- . out of fear or prejudice against a species or breed of animal
- . to express aggression by making an animal violent or aggressive
- . to enhance a person's own aggressiveness
- . to shock others for amusement or for a person's own pleasure
- . as displacement of hostility from a person to an animal
- . as simply not caring or thinking about an animal's feelings or needs
- . to fit in with a person's peer group
- . for financial gain (animal fighting)

These following statistics summarize the years from **2008** through **2017**, and detail activities of the Humane Society of Utah's Investigation department:

YEAR	CRUELTY/ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS	ANIMAL FACILITY INSPECTIONS
2008	285	779
2009	240	839
2010	197	870
2011	229	822
2012	235	814
2013	279	702
2014	234	818
2015	224	846
2016	189	716
2017	177	603

Most investigations are resolved by working with owners to teach them about legal requirements, alternative methods of care, and general animal husbandry. Following the Legislature's 1998 deletion of the law enforcement authority section of the Utah State Code. HSU and all other animal protection groups can no longer directly initiate neither adult court cases, nor juvenile referrals.

During **2017** cruelty convictions resulted in sentences which included fines, restitution, probation, mental / psychiatric health evaluations, alcohol and/or drug testing, mental health and/or anger management classes, jail or prison time, supervised probation or probation to the court, orders to surrender their animals, prohibitions against owning or possessing or having contact with any animals or juveniles during their probation period, orders to write letters of apology, and community service.

YEAR	INVESTIGATION-RELATED BUDGET COSTS, INCLUDING SALARIES	
2008		\$43,552.22
	(Purchase of 2008 Chevrolet Colorado + Bed Cover)	\$22,379.50
2009		\$44,501.52
2010		\$47,098.52
2011		\$48,003.88
2012		\$48,872.54
2013		\$48,740.40
2014		\$49,956.41
2015		\$51,764.93
2016		\$53,610.01
2017		\$52,383.74

We received complaints from the following sources:

YEAR	FEMALE	MALE	IN-HOUSE	ANIMAL CONTROL	OTHER
2008	75.8	21.1	1.0	.4	1.7
2009	72.5	25.8	0.4	0.9	0.4
2010	71.1	25.4	0.0	1.5	2.0
2011	76.4	21.0	0.0	0.4	2.2
2012	76.2	22.1	0.0	0.0	1.7
2013	79.2	19.0	0.4	0.0	1.4
2014	71.8	24.8	2.6	0.4	0.4
2015	77.2	19.6	1.3	0.0	1.9
2016	77.2	22.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
2017	79.7	18.6	0.6	0.0	1.1

Investigations were conducted in 56 cities and towns in **2008**, 58 in **2009**, 59 in **2010**, 63 in **2012**, 60 in **2013**, 69 in **2014**, 52 in **2014**, 52 in **2015**, 55 in **2016**, and 46 in **2017**. These are summarized, by county, and by percentage of total complaints received, in the following table:

YEAR	SALT LAKE	UTAH	DAVIS	TOOELE	WEBER	OTHER
2008	73.0	11.9	2.8	3.9	2.5	5.9
2009	69.3	12.1	4.6	5.4	5.0	4.6
2010	64.0	13.2	5.6	4.6	3.6	9.0
2011	61.1	14.0	5.2	4.4	3.5	11.8
2012	64.3	16.6	4.7	0.9	5.5	8.0
2013	61.7	19.4	3.6	4.3	5.7	5.3
2014	66.2	15.0	4.7	1.3	3.9	8.9
2015	62.5	19.2	6.7	2.7	3.6	5.3
2016	65.1	13.8	6.9	2.7	3.7	7.8
2017	59.9	22.6	7.4	2.8	4.5	2.8

During **2008**, 60.7% of our complaints involved lack of feed, water, and shelter. In **2009** it was 57.1%, in **2010** it was 49.2, in **2011** it was 55.9%, in **2012** it was 61.7%, in **2013** it was 66.7%, in **2014** it was 60.7%, in **2015** it was 64.3%, in **2016** it was 61.4%, and in **2017** it was 56.5.

The table below breaks down our complaints, by percentage of animal species or animal establishment involved in investigations for each year:

YEAR	DOGS	CATS	HORSES	BIRDS	COMMERCIAL	MISC.
2008	57.9	4.2	21.8	0.7	6.0	9.4
2009	57.9	5.0	23.3	0.8	7.9	5.1
2010	58.9	3.1	19.8	0.5	11.7	6.0
2011	50.7	2.2	28.4	1.3	8.7	8.7
2012	65.5	1.3	22.1	0.4	5.1	5.6
2013	57.7	2.5	24.4	2.2	6.1	7.1
2014	61.1	3.4	20.9	1.3	5.6	7.7
2015	60.3	3.1	27.7	1.8	4.5	2.6
2016	61.4	2.1	23.8	0.5	2.7	9.5
2017	65.0	0.6	20.3	0.0	6.8	7.3

Total number of animals involved in total investigations each year.

285 investigations in **2008** involved 804 animals; 240 investigations in **2009** involved 807 animals; 197 investigations in **2010** involved 881 animals, 229 investigations in **2011** involved 1,396 animals, 235 investigations in **2012** involved 561 animals, 279 investigations in **2013** involved 969 animals, 234 investigations in **2014** involved 573 animals, 224 investigations in **2015** involved 472 animals, 189 investigations in **2016** involved 461 animals, and 177 investigations in **2017** involved 725 animals.

These investigations included, in addition to dogs, cats and horses; an alligator, bison, burros, caimans, cattle, chickens, deer, donkeys, doves, ducks, ferrets, finches, foxes, geese, goats, Guinea pigs, hamsters, hedgehogs, koi, llamas, macaws, miniature horses, parakeets, parrots, peafowl, pigeons, pigs, ponies, rabbits, rats, reindeer, snakes, Sulcata tortoises, sheep, tropical fish and turtles.

In addition to cruelty investigations, we inspected animal control shelters, pet stores, petting zoo, zoos, aviaries, and other animal-related businesses and institutions.

During **2008** we performed 2 animal rescues/assists, 0 in **2009**, 0 in **2010**, 1 in **2011**, 1 in **2012**, 0 in **2013**, 1 in **2014**, 0 in **2015**, 0 in **2016**, and 3 in **2017**. These included: injured ducklings or kittens in storm drains, a pigeon shot with a blowgun dart, abandoned domestic pigeons, a pigeon hanging upside down and entangled in twine on bushes, and a stray rabbit in a Salt Lake City neighborhood, etc.

During **2008-2017**, investigators participated in reviews of animal and wilderness environmental impact statements, AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2013 Edition, PETA's The Final Nail - Number Four - Destroying the Fur Industry, HSUS's handbook on the investigation of animal fighting, World SPCA "Methods for the euthanasia of dogs and cats: comparison and recommendations," creation of new animal care handouts on "Pets and Fire," "Crating," and "Stray and Feral Cats in Utah Communities" and website articles, and sponsoring anti-cruelty legislation.

With the donated assistance of a private, local organization, we were able to have fifteen animal care handouts on Vehicle Heat, Avoid Injuries by Animals, Chaining Dogs, Food for Thought, Grooming, Old Dog Care, Exercise, Disaster Care, High-Density Pet Ownership, Older Horses, Spring / Summer Horse Care, Winter Horse Care, Hoof Care, Burrs, and Hay There, in addition to four earlier handouts, translated into Spanish.

We proposed a state-wide "Humane Shelter Definition" bill to the Utah Legislature and reviewed a proposed bill strengthening protections for law enforcement service animals.

We responded to a multitude of requests for information concerning the torture and death of a Clearfield cat, named "Sage", from all over Utah and the U.S. The Humane Society and its members and contributors were able to establish a reward fund offering over \$60,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible.

We assisted the Humane Society of Utah's Board President and General Counsel, Craig S. Cook; and Executive Director, Gene Baierschmidt, in legal research related to the court-ordered death of a Santaquin dog which had caused what appeared to be a small scratch on a child's leg and helped research and prepare a new dangerous and vicious dog ordinance for Santaquin City. The order to euthanize the dog was subsequently lifted by the court after Craig S. Cook filed legal briefs in the District Court and the City agreed to dismiss the vicious dog charge. The dog's owner then pled guilty to three associated misdemeanor charges involving the dog getting loose and being unlicensed.

We researched and documented the history of the Humane Society of Utah's legislative and reward efforts from 1960-61 to the present. We also researched the animal control and court charges related to the long-term impoundment of a dog in West Jordan. We later wrote a letter to Panguitch City concerning the unsuitability of their community animal shelter following complaints from the owner of another long-term impounded dog.

We reviewed new research proposal forms and protocols as part of Tracy Aviary's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Unfortunately, Utah cruelty investigations and animal protection work will continue to be required into the foreseeable future. Factors contributing to animal abuse include lack of education about basic feed, shelter, and care; inadequate socialization within homes and schools concerning the need to respect the other life forms with which we share this planet; fluctuations in population movement and financial conditions; and, finally, the indifference shown to commercially-exploited animals, whether in animal fighting, rodeos, hunting, factory farming, or horse buyer-killer sales.

If you witness animal abuse in your neighborhood, at your place of employment, or while traveling through Utah, please contact The Humane Society of Utah or a local animal control department or law enforcement agency.

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