



The NATIONAL FEDERATION of HUMANE SOCIETIES

2020 VISION

Strategic Plan for the Achievement of the Federation's Vision

Approved by the Board of Directors

September 29, 2009

I. Background

The National Federation of Humane Societies (NFHS) has committed to a powerful direction for the future called the "2020 Vision." The Board of Directors of NFHS adopted the 2020 Vision and appointed the Strategic Planning / 2020 Vision Committee to prepare a strategic plan that would provide the road map for how the organization would pursue the realization of the vision and how it would work with other organizations, both on a national and a local level, to achieve the goal of the plan. That goal is *"To unite the animal welfare industry and engage communities in homing every healthy and treatable animal entering an animal care facility on a nationwide basis by the year 2020"*.

This goal is similar to efforts articulated by other national organizations. There are minor differences among them, but several national organizations have embraced this same fundamental concept. We see that as a great strength since it should encourage positive collaboration between NFHS and those other organizations to ensure that the shared goal is realized. We are committed to doing all we can as an organization to promote that collaboration and believe that it is not significant who gets the credit only that healthy and treatable animals no longer die for the lack of a home.

II. Realization of the Vision

We separated the challenge of planning for the realization of this vision down into several identified parts, each of which we believe is essential to success. These are not all inclusive, as we recognize there are many additional aspects to be promoted and implemented that can have a significant impact on achieving the Vision. Additional key elements and refinements will be added over time as the plan evolves and progresses.

We began with some key broad topics, they are as follows: A. Acceptance and Use of Uniform Asilomar Definitions; B. Modeling of Effective Programs; C. Encouragement of Reporting Transparency; D. Resource Guide for Public Messages; E. Creation of a National Mentoring Program; and F. Identification and Addressing of Potential Barriers to Success and Possible Solutions.. The significance of each of these areas is summarized below and more fully treated in the attachments to this plan.

A. Establishment of Uniform Asilomar Definitions

A commitment to transparency in every community is essential to the achievement of the 2020 Vision as discussed above. Use of Asilomar reporting by all public and private agencies of any significant size in a community is a substantial aid in achieving such transparency. NFHS should provide a resource to aid organizations and communities in determining how best to implement the use of Asilomar to fit their circumstances. A standard reporting format is crucial to measuring nationwide progress in achieving the Vision

Asilomar is a defined process for gathering and sharing statistical data about animal flow. It was developed by a broad group of individuals representing varying viewpoints of the animal welfare community. Asilomar provides a structure and broad definitions that allow all organizations to speak a similar language when sharing statistical information. It is the first widely accepted means of gathering and tracking data. It has set categories but also provides flexibility to accommodate organization and community differences.

The broad Asilomar definitions require communities to come to consensus on the detail within the four main categories. The detail can differ in small or significant ways from community to community when determining which medical and behavioral issues fall under which category. Ten of the original twenty one Founders of the Asilomar Accords are current Federation members.

More than any other national organization, The Federation should, as an organization, have a more full and complete understanding of the intent and value of the Asilomar Accords as a result of this member representation. The assistance that NFHS can provide in achieving these consensuses is described fully in Attachment A and an Evaluation Matrix Comparison Table has already been created.

B. Modeling of Effective Programs

The 2020 Vision is achievable while ambitious. There are communities throughout the country that have achieved and sustained very high live release rates in the range of 80% and higher. However, there are also many for whom a live release rate in the 80% range currently seems to be overwhelmingly difficult to attain, if not impossible. We must provide those communities with encouragement and support along with practical guidance in changing their status quo to achieve greater life saving success for all companion animals nationwide. A major asset of the Federation is the knowledge and experience of our member organizations, a number of which have pioneered successful programs to end pet overpopulation in their communities.

NFHS has a crucial role in passing along to other communities the necessary understanding of the key elements that have produced life saving success in those communities where a commitment has been made and programs implemented and results have been achieved. We as a Federation, through our members, can provide the support to make these needed changes.

To do this, we will provide several programs of practical support including a “how to” guide that will be based upon the successful programs, services and operating systems of the model high live release rate communities. The communities that are attaining high live release rates have succeeded through a variety of routes, but there are common themes and elements that helped achieve positive results. The guidebook will relate closely to the mentoring program which is another of the identified elements of success. For more in depth discussion of the modeling element and the planned guidebook, please see Attachment B.

Here it should be noted that the Federation recognizes there is tremendous diversity in communities and regions of our nation and that there is not one plan

or one method that will achieve the goal of the 2020 Vision in all communities, nor will the end results be the same for everyone. The broad diversity from community to community in public attitudes toward animals, financial resources, ethnic cultures, public policy and regulation and even climate will create substantial differences in what is pragmatically achievable for each organization, coalition and community. This diversity of likely results in no way detracts from the goal to home every healthy and treatable animal. Regardless of resources, climate or social mores, this goal must be universal if we are to significantly improve the lives of companion animals.

C. Importance of Reporting Transparency

Essential to the achievement of the 2020 Vision is the encouragement of transparent reporting of financial and operating statistics. This may be accomplished by:

- encouraging the voluntary collection of operating data by providing guidelines, templates and support documents to animal welfare organization,
- demonstrating the value of such data as organizations seek to improve effectiveness and efficiency,
- emphasizing the importance of transparency and public reporting of operational and financial statistics as we believe that transparency will allow local communities to track progress and support positive results in ending pet homelessness.
- benchmarking to identify top animal welfare organization and community performers and using these model organizations to assist other Federation members.
- Encouragement of the use of the Asilomar reporting format and help communities in making this transition (see next topic below)

These elements of reporting transparency are discussed in greater detail in Attachment C.

D. Conveyance of Key Public Messages & Resource Guide

In order for communities across the nation to embrace this vision and do what is necessary locally to make it a reality, we must have clearly articulated messages

that we convey effectively. Those messages must be regularly expressed in a way that will be heard and absorbed. They are as follows:

- The only meaningful success with regard to life saving is success that is shared community wide.
- Always choose adoption of a pet rather than buying from a pet store or breeder.
- Responsible pet owners must have their pets spayed or neutered.
- Every community should make free or low cost spaying and neutering easily and widely accessible.
- Mutually supportive public/private collaborations that share the goal of ending the loss of life of healthy and treatable animals are essential to saving lives.
- Effective pet retention programs must be made widely available and relinquishment at a shelter must be made the last option.
- Trap, neuter and return programs are the only effective and compassionate way of addressing feral cat colonies and must be made widely available.
- Responsible pet owners must provide their pets with routine veterinary care and training and ensure that pets have reliable ID.
- Each public and private agency should be transparent to the public with regard to its operations, statistics, financial results and needs.

Resource Guide. The Federation will develop an online Resource Guide to easily access information that has been created and used successfully by other organizations to boost effectiveness, effectively convey the communities' role in achieving the Vision and building community support. While there is a wealth of information that has been developed by a myriad of local and national organizations, there is no single point of reference for organizations to find this body of work. The Federation's Resource Guide will provide this central collection point. A sample of this Resource Guide is attached as Attachment D.

Shelter Pet Project – national marketing campaign. Additionally, the Federation will encourage members and local sheltering groups to promote and use the

adoption messages created by the Shelter Pet Project as a means of leveraging the tremendous exposure being created by this multi-party effort over the coming three years and providing consistent public messaging.

The Federation has already been invited by the Shelter Pet Project founders to be an active national partner in the promotion of this initiative. The role of this partnership is currently being formulated and will be announced shortly.

Collaborative Partnerships. The Federation will continue to develop collaborative relationships with other organizations to foster better communication, avoid duplicative effort and expand resources. Maddie's Fund has a well established Asilomar statistical reporting database with hundreds of current participants. The Federation is partnering with Maddie's to promote Asilomar compliant reporting and participation of compliant agencies in this national statistical database. SAWA has led the industry in executive networking and developing a professional certification program for organizational leadership. The Federation is committed to developing a partnership with SAWA to promote educational conferences, networking and the CAWA certification program to raise the professionalism and effectiveness of our industry. The NFHS is also partnering with Humane Society University to promote their accredited degree programs in Non-Profit management with emphasis on humane organizations and HSU on-line training courses to make them more readily available to a broad segment of our industry. We believe each of these efforts will build more effective leaders and organizations which enhance the success of our industry achieving the goals of the 2020 Vision.

E. Creation of a National Mentoring Program

To assist communities in achieving the 2020 Vision, we should provide organizations whose communities may be further away from achieving the goal of no healthy or treatable animal deaths with the practical tools, knowledge and support to be able to do so and also with the confidence that it can be accomplished. Along with the guidebook, a mentoring program where those members whose communities are further along the continuum to success provide support and guidance to those who would like to have help will be a very effective way of making this happen. While a mentoring program is a large undertaking for NFHS, it is an important way for the organization to make a real practical impact in the achievement of the Vision.

Attachment E. provides a thorough discussion of the sort of mentoring program that is envisioned for the organization and how we believe it could be implemented.

F. Identification and Addressing of Potential Barriers to Success

There are certain identifiable potential barriers to the successful realization of the 2020 Vision and they are set forth below. We believe that each of these barriers may be successfully overcome. For a fuller explanation of these possible barriers and the means that we believe could be used to successfully overcome them, please see Attachment F.

- Trying to coordinate and carry out a national project via phone and email using a volunteer effort and volunteer time may be cumbersome and time consuming.
- Lack of financial resources from the Federation will require careful consideration of implementation plans as we seek to expand the 2020 Vision and gain participation from the broad sheltering community.
- The scope of the 2020 Vision is extremely large and bold and, therefore, we must continually seek the means of breaking the large tasks down into smaller more manageable deliverables.
- Multiple national stakeholders are engaged in this effort in some manner or another across the country.
- There are some agencies who undoubtedly believe the 2020 Vision is unattainable.
- We will face resistance to changing the moral imperatives. The public's perception of animals must be raised and the Federation will have to promote a higher moral imperative that does not accept healthy or treatable animals being euthanized.

III. Measurement

Critical to any plan is the ability to set milestones, monitor progress and measure productivity/effectiveness. The 2020 Vision committee will begin work on identifying milestones for progress assessment and establish a reporting system to post these milestone reports on a quarterly basis in the 2020 Vision section of the NFHS website.

The first step in assessing progress is to establish a current status baseline. As an initial baseline, the committee will conduct interviews to determine the current status of all

members of the NFHS in terms of; a.) statistical data collection, b.) reporting process and format, c.) use of data collected and d.) transparency. Additionally, we will collect operational data from all member agencies willing to voluntarily share their data.

Phase 2 will be to begin to analyze NFHS member data and establish baselines on the common metrics in five to ten categories and look to evaluate data on region/state/national basis, looking for trends or missing data points. From this analysis, the committee will then develop milestones for measuring progress appropriate to the data that has been identified. Ideally, we will be able to begin reporting national statistics (albeit on a limited sampling initially) of key metrics such as intake numbers, save rates, etc.

Lastly the committee will devise reports that can accurately provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the Federation’s ability to engage participation in and show progress towards achieving the 2020 Vision goal.

IV. Deliverables (Outputs) and Delivery Timeline Dates

The following deliverables will be made available to any organization or coalition through the NFHS website in the 2020 Vision section.

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| 1. Assilomar consistent Definitions | Q 4-2009 |
| 2. Animal Evaluations Matrix Comparison | Q4-2009 |
| 3. Common Elements of Effective Organizations, a “How To” Guide | Q2-2010 |
| 4. Sample Asilomar compliant Annual Report form and sample completed reports | Q4-2009 |
| 5. Statistical Data Repository for non-Asilomar compliant agency reports | Q1-2010 |
| 6. Mentoring Application form | Q4-2009 |
| 7. Mentoring Progress reports | 90 days after program launches |
| 8. Listing of 2020 Vision Participants (Visionaries) | |
| a. Phase 1 – NFHS Members | Q4-2009 |
| b. Phase 2 – All Participants | Q1-2010 |
| 9. Milestone achievement and Effectiveness Metrics Report | Q1-2010 |

V. Conclusion

The adoption of this plan constitutes a commitment on the part of the National Federation of Humane Societies to prioritize, in terms of the use its resources and its efforts, the fulfillment of the 2020 Vision through an end to the loss of life by healthy and treatable homeless companion animals nationally no later than the year 2020. This Board believes this goal to be ambitious but achievable by 2020 and perhaps earlier.

In adopting this plan, the organization recognizes that this goal will be achieved through the combined efforts and dedication of many national and local organizations nationwide and it is committed to working cooperatively with such other organizations to achieve this goal. We believe that, while the goal will be achieved by no single organization, the commitment of the NFHS to the 2020 Vision will bring significant strength and focus to the effort as we are the organization that unites local and regional humane organizations nationwide.

The Board of Directors will support this plan and will work to make each element of the plan a reality within a reasonable time period. It will use its best efforts to seek to obtain for the NFHS the resources that it needs to realize the elements of the plan and to achieve the goal of the 2020 Vision.