



## Spaying and neutering Do the right thing!

### For your community, for you and for your dog

There are far too many dogs in Belize that are not being cared for. If you are reading this, yours isn't one of them because you care about your dog and your community.

Dogs are domestic animals and because of this, they are entirely dependent on humans to care for them. When anyone takes on the responsibility of a dog they are making a commitment to that dog, to care for it properly and to their community, not to allow the dog to become a nuisance.

In return, dogs guard our property, protect and play with our children and are loyal companions.

Right now, in Belize, neutering and spaying are the most important things any dog owner can do for their dog and their community, but some owners are reluctant. They have heard stories or myths that stop them from doing the right thing.

This leaflet will help you, as a dog owner, to be better informed about spaying and neutering so that you can make the best decision possible.

#### What is neutering and spaying?

Neutering and spaying are small operations done on male and female dogs, which removes their reproductive organs.

#### But I want my dog to have puppies?

Why? There is medical evidence that female dogs spayed before their first heat are healthier and have fewer medical problems. Having a litter of puppies is hard work and expensive if you do it right – and of course, as a responsible dog owner you'll want to do it right. You'll need to buy more food for the mother dog while she is pregnant and even more when she is feeding her puppies. Think about the cost. Not only that, but if you care about your

neighbour's children, you'll need to make sure all of those puppies are seen by a veterinarian and given proper worming tablets. Did you know that all puppies are born with worms and that those worms can cause illness in children? You'll also have to buy extra food for those puppies until you find them good homes. Did you know that every one of those puppies can have their own puppies 7 months after they are born? Does your neighbourhood need that many new dogs?

#### But don't male dogs lose their personality if they are neutered?

Strangely, people have no problem neutering horses, cattle or pigs – but when it comes to dogs, they get very uncomfortable. Dogs are domestic animals just like cows and horses and just like you wouldn't want a bull or a stallion running around your neighbourhood, you don't really want to have entire male dogs doing that either. Most dogs that bite children are unneutered male dogs. Unneutered male dogs like to urinate everywhere, marking everything. They often stray, and cause dog fights, which is a nuisance to everyone that lives near them. In other words, they are a big responsibility. Neutered male dogs live longer, they are healthier and they won't catch deadly sexually transmitted

diseases, which are very painful and very expensive to treat. If you put all the time, money and effort into feeding and raising a dog, wouldn't you want it to be healthy and live a longer life?

**I don't want to hurt my dog. I'm afraid it will be painful?**

Did you know that veterinarians study even longer than human doctors do? They are very skilled and they know exactly how to perform these simple operations without causing your dog any suffering. The dogs are completely under anaesthetic and can't feel a thing. Male dogs recover by the next day and hardly notice anything. Female dogs take a few days to recover completely, but they do not suffer – they just need to be kept calm for a couple of days until everything heals up.

The other thing to think about is all the pain and suffering caused by not neutering or spaying your dog. Let's look at the facts:

- One of the major causes of sickness and death for dogs in Belize is a horrible sexually transmitted disease called TVT. Neutering and spaying your dog will stop it from being sexually active and catching this disease.
- Another major cause of death and injury is road traffic accidents.

Un neutered and un spayed dogs will roam more often, leading them to be hit by cars and run over.

Neutered male dogs are more likely to stay at home and protect their property than go out looking for mates.

- Female dogs that are not spayed have a very high risk of getting breast cancer, just like humans. This is a painful and deadly disease and is very expensive to treat. Spaying can eliminate this risk.
- Male dogs that are not neutered can suffer from testicular and prostate cancers. No man would want to put his dog through that sort of torture. Neutering your dog will eliminate these risks.
- Male dogs that are not neutered can become very frustrated and unhappy. They are more likely to fight with other dogs. Male dogs can smell a female on heat for up to 6 miles and will travel to find them. They can form groups that become a major nuisance at this time. Also, the frustration can lead to behaviour problems such as aggression, destructive behaviour and excessive barking.

**I want to be a good owner but I don't want my neighbours and friends to laugh at me because I've had my dog neutered?**

Your neighbours and friends won't be laughing when you have a healthy, obedient and loyal dog that doesn't cause a nuisance, turn over garbage cans, fight with other dogs and bite children. Your dog will look better, behave better, cost you less to care for and live a lot longer.

**Do the right thing. Get your dog neutered or spayed.**