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6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overpopulation of Cats and Dogs

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Overpopulation of cats and dogs is a big problem for most. Many ecosystems across the nation have this problem. An area gets too crowded with cats and dogs, and it is hard for people to live with them. Many animals are killed when this happens, and sometimes an animal can cause a human's life to end. Overpopulation is a very unfortunate problem to have in an ecosystem.

A way to prevent overpopulation is to spay and neuter pets, but many irresponsible pet owners neglect that responsibility. The dogs or cats breed, and usually the pet owner does not notice. There are many people that do not spay and neuter their pets, so too many new puppies and kittens are born, causing overpopulation. Overpopulation in an ecosystem can be bad for the animals and also for the local people. For example, if a cat or dog runs across the street, it causes a traffic jam and also could cause wrecks. The animal could also get run over, severely injuring or killing it.

Overpopulation can hurt the ecosystem in many other ways, too. It costs the city to pay animal control to take care of the animals. Animals can carry diseases and infect people. They could especially carry rabies, which is very dangerous. If a person is bitten by an unidentified dog or cat, he or she would have to have rabies shots. Most homeless animals do not have happy lives on the streets. Some get sick and die, while others are shot, and the city has to pick up the dead. Other animals are caught by

animal control and put in a shelter. Many animals are euthanized in shelters because most people buy or breed their pets instead of adopt them from a shelter.

Overpopulation is a real problem today. Approximately 8 million animals are in shelters across the nation, and 3.7 million of them, almost half, are euthanized.

Euthanasia in shelters is the leading cause of death for dogs and cats alike. This must happen, even though it is unfavorable, because if these animals were kept alive, they would breed and cause overpopulation to become worse. Most animals in the shelter will never be adopted by a family, because most families gain their pets from a pet store, breeding, or buying from their friends. If more animals were adopted from shelters, overpopulation might not be so much of a problem today.

Websites I used: <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/issues-information/pet-overpopulation.html>