

**Manager of Animal Protection Services' Report**  
**Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**  
**September 29, 2012**

The 2011/2012 year was another interesting one for the Saskatchewan SPCA's Investigative Services. After a difficult winter in 2011, the number of new cases per month continued to be higher than in previous years until October; throughout the unusually mild fall and winter, our new cases per month fell dramatically. Overall, there was a roughly 9% decrease in the total number of cases, from 730 cases in 2010/2011 to 666 cases in 2011/2012. Approximately 152 (23%) of our cases were classified unfounded in 2011/2012, meaning that the APO did not find a significant problem, and another 27% were inconclusive; however these cases still require time and attention from our staff.

Our APOs worked hard to correct as many cases as possible through education of the animal's owners, and were successful in resolving the majority of our cases through these methods. Additionally, 14 search warrants were executed, 24 cases involved the seizure of animals, and 31 cases had animals surrendered to our officers.

Nine new prosecutions were started in 2011/2012; 5 of those were the result of 2010/2011 files. We also had three 2010 cases conclude with convictions during this fiscal year. One significant challenge to our resources has been the April Irving trials, relating to the seizure of more than 80 dogs from her property in June of 2010; the costs for witnesses and other SSPCA staff to attend the extraordinary 24 days of trial in Wynyard, SK. are \$9,694.25 as of March 31, 2012.

Staffing and resource challenges continue. Our APOs drove a combined total of nearly 225,600 km attending to complaints this year, and two of our full time officers banked in excess of 300 hours of overtime - each - in an effort to respond to new complaints, conduct timely follow-up inspections for their ongoing files, keep up with required paper work, and present materials to the courts. This workload is simply not sustainable in the long term, and causes me to worry for the personal well-being of our dedicated and caring APOs. We must find a way to add at least one more full time APO to our team in order to have manageable work, and stress, loads, as well as response times that are both acceptable to the public and that provide reasonable protection of the welfare of the animals concerned.

I have been working to ensure that our APOs have the training they need to conduct inspections and investigations in a matter that is consistent, efficient and fully respects issues such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Our March training session included information about the Charter and how it affects our operations, preparation of search warrants, gathering and storage of evidence and what to expect in a court room. Following the correct procedures is vital to our ability to present cases to the courts for prosecution; therefore it is absolutely essential that all of our staff are a well-trained and comfortable with these complex topics. An ongoing project

is the redevelopment of our Investigative Services manual, which I hope will also serve as a staff training manual when it is completed.

Another ongoing concern that I would like to address in the coming year is the proliferation of independent animal rescue groups. While there is certainly a need for these groups, I am concerned that there are no formal guidelines in place, or any way to monitor their practices. There are already several groups in the province which I feel are taking in more animals than they can handle, have questionable quarantine and animal housing practices, and which I feel could easily become overwhelmed to the point where the animals in their care are distressed. I feel that guidelines for rescue operations – similar to the CVMA Code of Practice for Kennel Operations – should be developed so that there are accepted minimum standards that rescue organizations must adhere to. I would also like to have sufficient resources to enable our APO to perform routine inspections in rescues with the aim of preventing them from degrading into “hoarding” situations and potential large scale animal seizures.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaley Pugh  
Manager of Animal Protection Services