



## #1: In It Together

The non-profit Vincentian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has a massive job: to help SVG's animals – alongside Government and private veterinarians, and individuals. Each has specific responsibilities. The Veterinary Department at the Ministry of Agriculture (493-17490) handles questions and health issues involving livestock. For other sick or injured animals, surgeries, check-ups, worming and vaccinations, contact Dr Audain (431-6461 or 528-8638); Dr Boyle (456-4981) or Dr Phillips (458-7387).

For low-income families, VSPCA provides dog and cat “pay-what-you-can” spaying and neutering (tie-offs) in your communities. VSPCA also provides humane education in schools, churches and community centres. And if you have proof of animal abuse (names, photos, etc.), VSPCA assists in resolving the case.

However, at present VSPCA **does not** have the resources (financial or in volunteer support) to pick up and shelter stray/sick/injured animals. Nor does the Society “replace” older dogs and cats with younger ones. This is just one example in which individuals need to act responsibly and care for any living being under their “dominion”.

VSPCA's focus on sterilisations and education are the two long-term solutions in preventing overpopulation and animal cruelty in all its forms – abuse, neglect and abandonment. And, by extension, these solutions help with many human health, economic and social issues. How? Why? What are the connections? Find out in **SEARCHLIGHT's** monthly columns of “VSPCA, Animals and You”.



## #2: Everyone Benefits!

The non-profit Vincentian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals brings dog and cat spaying and neutering clinics into communities to assist low-income families with their pet's health care.

First, our dog and cat companion animals: males can impregnate unlimited females; females have 2-3 litters per year, 4-10 births on average per litter. That's a lot, and there aren't enough homes. Thousands end up stray, feral, neglected and abandoned. You can help us to stop this.

Pets appear more content after being sterilised, though they still do their "duties" as guards or mousers. Without the urge to mate they are generally healthier; have reduced risks of contracting and passing on many cancers, tumours and infections; and females don't deteriorate as quickly from repeated, multiple births. With less urge to roam, there are fewer injuries from fights and from being hit by vehicles.

On the human side: there's relief from the howling, growling, agitation and messiness associated with the heat cycle. There are no extra mouths to feed, no homes to find. One or two "wanted" pets are more easily cared for and enjoyed.

There would be fewer sick, desperate, starving animals roaming our yards, ruining crops, killing livestock and spreading diseases. Economic, health and social issues of Vincentians, which are linked to overpopulations of dogs and cats, will be discussed in the next "VSPCA, Animals and You".



### #3: Why All the Hoopla?

Why should you be concerned with preventing animal cruelty, which comes in the forms of neglect, abandonment and abuse? Morality and humanity aside, let's talk economics.

The VSPCA assists low-income families with tie-offs for their dogs and cats. Un-neutered dogs roam, usually in packs. They can attack livestock and destroy plants, gardens and crops – food and livelihood for many Vincentians.

Caribbean tourism studies indicate that many visitors are leaving this country very upset. Seeing the poor condition of its animals, they may be apt to share their negative impression with others via social networking and review sites. Not good for the Nation's economy, nor for the many involved in the tourism industry.

Let's talk human health. Un-neutered, roaming dogs and cats spread diseases to each other within their species. Some diseases are also transmitted to humans, usually through infected animals' urine and faeces seeping into the ground, into water supplies, onto plants and vegetables. Fewer roaming, sick animals means fewer incidents of worms, and fungal/protozoan /and bacterial illnesses in humans.

Another reason to be concerned: animal abusers. Countless research indicates that intentional cruelty to animals is a psychological and conduct disorder, which all too frequently starts (or continues) a pattern of violent crimes against people and property. It would be wise to take all reports of animal abuse seriously, as a warning sign.

More eye-openers in next month's column.