
PAWS QUARTERLY REPORT

With Covid-19 restrictions finally easing in March, we felt like it was the perfect time to get our PAWS Mobile Clinic up and running! We had set up the mobile clinic at the end of 2019, thanks to a grant from the [Summerlee Foundation](#), to provide veterinary care and neutering services where they are most needed. We have also received funding for medicines & supplies, and project costs from the [Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust](#), [Animal Friends Pet Insurance](#) and an additional grant from the Summerlee Foundation.



APRIL TO JULY 2021

At the end of March 2021, we employed our [veterinary clinic team](#), made some improvements to the vehicle and purchased supplies and medicines. We started working in the villages around Cusco in April, exploring which ones need our help; we have come up with a list of 12 so far. These villages are all northeast of Cusco, between the city and the area known as the Sacred Valley. None of the villages have veterinary clinics in them, but they all have many roaming dogs.

We found out roughly how many families live in most villages, so have been able to estimate the number of pet dogs. We have also conducted street surveys, to get a feel for the number of roaming dogs.

Where time has permitted, we have conducted household surveys too, to try to understand people's current attitudes around animal care and welfare.

When registering dogs, we have recorded varied information, such as if they are already neutered or vaccinated, if they are confined or left to roam free, and how old they are. During initial meetings, we administered anti-parasite medications & vaccines and treated for illnesses and injuries. We have also been scheduling follow-up appointments for boosters, routine check ups and neutering surgeries.

This was the first quarter that we have been able to operate as intended, so there was a big learning curve!

ACHIEVEMENTS

During our first full quarter of operations, we have been able to:

1) Set Baselines

We collected data that will give us a baseline to compare our progress to over future months and years. In this way, we can see how well our program is working and make adjustments if necessary.

2) Register and treat 1,376 animals

We have registered over 1,000 dogs and nearly 350 cats in our database, meaning that we can keep track of their progress and ensure that they receive quarterly anti-parasite medications as well as any routine vaccinations and their boosters.

3) Neuter 133 Animals

After spending the first two months getting to know the communities and the animals, we started our neutering program in May. Within the first 6 weeks, we neutered nearly 100 dogs and 45 cats.

4) Form relationships

We have not only met the pet owners, but the presidents of the communities and officers of government agencies too. Through relationships, we can make more meaningful connections with the communities and pet owners, to better promote long-term, positive change for the animals.

Baselines



98 % of cats
96 % of dogs
were UN-NEUTERED



100 % of cats
93 % of dogs
were UN-VACCINATED



78 % of dogs
Roam free in the villages



35 % of dogs are PUPPIES
(under 1 year old)
Only 15% of dogs
live for 5 years or more

Progress so Far



1,376 animals
Treated and registered for
regular health checks



Over 1,300 anti-parasite
treatments administered



180 vaccine doses
administered



98 dogs & 45 cats
neutered

CHALLENGES

Nutrition

Village dogs generally eat whatever the human family members eat. Most people don't realise that [dogs and humans have very different dietary needs](#) and that the food they eat, doesn't have the right nutritional profile to keep their canine friends healthy. Joel, our head vet commented that many of the dogs they're seeing are anaemic and we saw at least one litter of puppies perish, most likely because their undernourished mother wasn't able to provide them the nutrients they needed. However, most people can't afford to buy commercial dog food and cooking separate food for dogs is a completely foreign concept.

Neutering Males

For now, we are focusing on neutering as many females as possible, especially where populations are small, as this is the quickest way to stop unwanted births in the short term. We do plan to neuter males as well though, but conversations with pet owners have highlighted that people are [not as interested in neutering male dogs](#). Since males can't get pregnant, owners see no reason to take on the expense of surgery. However, we're finding that owners still might not get their male dogs castrated, even if the operation is free, as there is a pervasive attitude in Peru that male animals have the right to stay intact and to breed.

Population Control in the Communities' Hands

It is very common to see far more male dogs on the streets than females. Since only females can get pregnant, people are much more likely to kill or abandon females in a litter than males. We have seen first-hand that [the population problem is such an issue](#), that some communities feel they have had to come up with drastic solutions, for example stipulating that residents can own only male dogs, or culling whole populations.

WHY THE PROJECT IS NEEDED

THE QUISPE FAMILY'S STORY

During our second week, we met the Quispe family in a small rural village just outside Cusco. Juan, his wife and 7 children live in an improvised three-room structure, made from bits of timber, plastic sheeting and corrugated tin. The rest of the property is occupied by 20-30 farm animals (sheep, pigs, goats, chickens), the family's only source of income, as well as their 12 dogs and 6 cats. Juan tells us that they initially got a couple of dogs to protect the house and the farm animals, and cats to keep the vermin at bay. But, because they can't afford to neuter their animals, they end up with new litters of puppies and kittens every few months. Feeding so many mouths is a challenge, let alone trying to find funds for veterinary care.

Juan and his family were glad to see their animals receiving veterinary treatment for the first time and are really excited for the opportunity to get all their dogs and cats neutered! Helping families like Juan's is just the start to help reduce the numbers of unwanted and abandoned animals in the area.

The names used are not their real names.



PUPPY RESCUE

At the end of June, we received a call letting us know that a community had found a litter of puppies, born to stray dogs that live at the local rubbish dump. There were 13 in total, 9 of them female. The community leader reached out to us to see if there was an alternative to their normal "solution" for unwanted puppies. After some visits to our vets and a couple of weeks at Jim's house, we found homes for all the puppies, mostly in the communities we work in. With the promise of veterinary care and spaying, we easily managed to find homes for all the females too! We are looking at ways that we can better support the communities to take charge of the fostering and adoption of any future litters. In turn, this should help highlight how neutering - which we continue to do - will prevent unwanted puppies in the first place.



FUTURE PLANS

Whilst we've been planning this project for more than a year and a half, this has been the first period that we've really been able to run it in this format. As with anything new, there has been a lot of learning involved! Now that we are starting to return to villages for the animals' second quarterly treatments, we are working on improving our systems to make sure we see all the animals we have registered so far, as well as start treating any we missed in the first round. Moving forward, we expect to carry out an average of 15 healthcare-focused days per month and to neuter around 40 animals per month.



Thank you so much, for helping to improve animal health & welfare in rural Cusco. We can't do it without you!