

# NGOs, Officials in Blame Game over Stray Dogs

by Rajeshwari Ganesan Iyer

**Coimbatore:** Despite the increasing number of NGOs working for animal welfare in the city, the number of stray dogs has not come down, statistics indicate.

A census in 2006 found that there were 6,500 stray dogs in Coimbatore, but the number has now crossed 50,000, according to an official source. This has also led to a sharp increase in the number of rabies cases in the city.

NGOs, however, claim to have performed scores of animal birth control (ABC) operations. Speaking at the Animal Welfare and Conservation symposium in the city on Tuesday, Leena Karir, secretary of Humane Animal Society (HAS), claimed that HAS performed over 2,000 ABC operations in 2011. It has set a target of at least 4,000 ABC operations and plans to divide the city into four zones (North, South, East and West) for its convenience.

However, an official, on condition of anonymity, denied the claim.

"We have records showing that they have performed only 9,000 ABC operations



**Leena Karir, secretary, Humane Animal Society, addressing the symposium in Coimbatore on Tuesday | Express**

since 2006. MoUs have been signed with these NGOs including People for Animals (PFA) and HAS. According to the MoU, the equipment to catch the dogs, including the vehicles, are provided by the corporation. The NGOs are paid ₹445 for every dog operated upon and the cost is shared by the government and corporation."

Another allegation against the NGOs is that they are not prompt while attending to calls. "We tried calling PFA to remove dogs straying into the milk factory my father works for. Though they answered the calls, they did not

come to the site. The dogs were a nuisance in the food processing unit. We also called them umpteen times to rehabilitate stray horses," said a young animal enthusiast on condition of anonymity. Asked why she did not call the SPCA, she said the NGOs were more popular and their phone numbers were accessible due to extensive advertising. "No one knows about SPCA," she said.

Kalpana Vasudevan of PFA-II denies the allegations. "We are not inactive. But we do not have enough funds to carry out all the



work. Where do we accommodate horses if we rescue them? Who will provide us the vehicles to catch the dogs? Will the government grant us enough space for a proper shelter?" she asks.

On the charges about the ABC operation, she blames the officials. "The corporation officials are supposed to be with us during the entire dog capture operation and sign a notebook with details of the dogs captured and neutered. However, nowadays we have to send the duly filled notebook to the sub-inspector and he signs it in his office. The ward councillor should also be present with us, according to the guidelines prescribed for ABC. However, no one comes," she said.

With the blame game between the officials and the NGOs continuing, the dogs in the city seem to be suffering the most.