

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY**  
**ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM**

28 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0028

**PAUL R. LePAGE**  
GOVERNOR

**WALTER E. WHITCOMB**  
COMMISSIONER

## **Maine's Animal Welfare Program review for 2015**

**Our Mission:** The Animal Welfare Program ensures the humane treatment of animals through communication, education, and enforcement of animal welfare laws.

**What we do:** Animal Welfare develops and implements policies and programs to effectively address complaints of animal cruelty, inspect and license animal shelters, pet stores, kennels, animal research facilities, and enforce the licensing of dogs.

**Staff:**

Director: Liam Hughes  
District Humane Agent Aroostook County: Chrissy MacFarland  
District Humane Agent Washington, Hancock Counties: Douglas Radziewicz  
District Humane Agent Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset Counties: Rachel Croce  
District Humane Agent Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Kennebec Counties: Rae- Ann Demos  
District Humane Agent Franklin Oxford Androscoggin Counties: Angela Young  
District Humane Agent York, Cumberland Counties: Danielle Jersey  
Office Staff: Lynn Fortin, Sara Thompson

Vacant Position: Veterinarian  
Vacant position: State Humane Agent

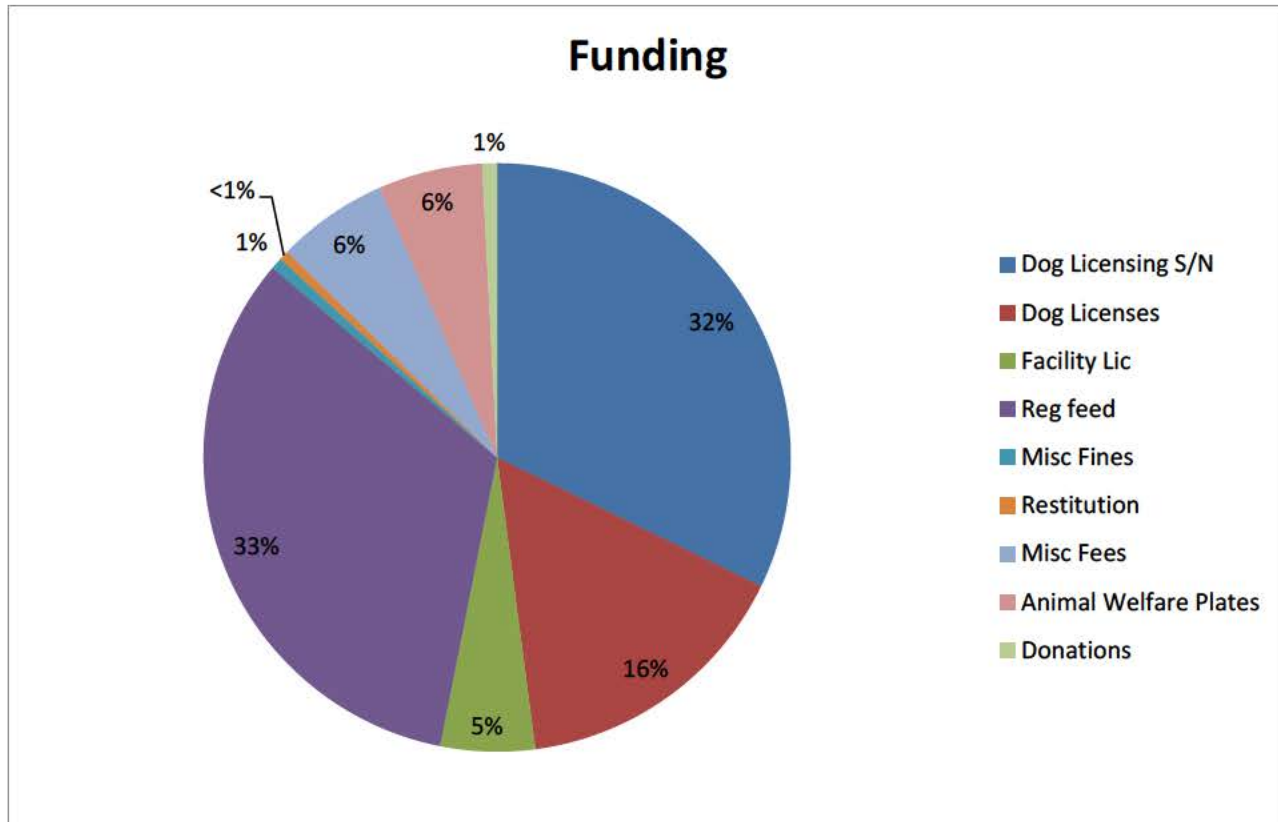
**LIAM HUGHES, DIRECTOR**  
ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM  
90 BLOSSOM LANE, DEERING BUILDING



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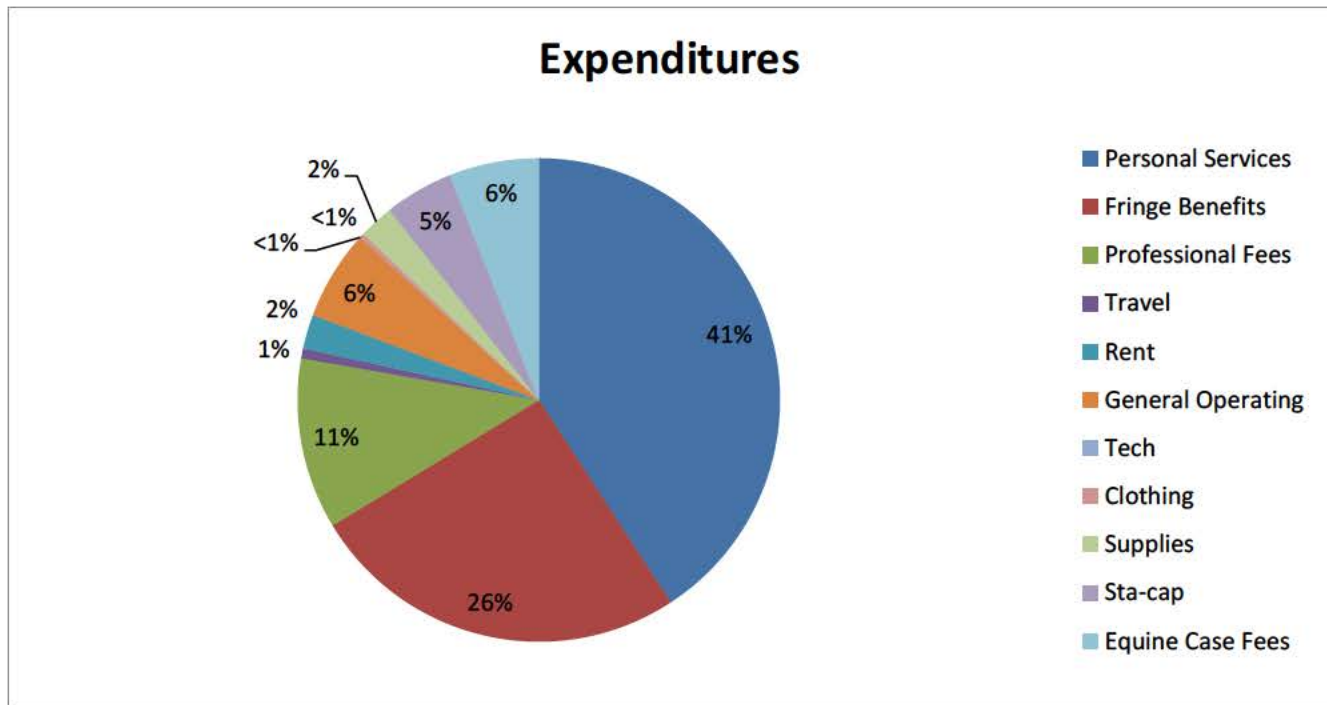
## Income 2015

A majority of the income for Animal Welfare comes from dog licensing and pet food surcharges. In the fiscal year for 2015, Animal Welfare received the following funding.



33% Registered feed	\$454,270.00
32% Dog License spayed and neutered	\$443,096.00
16% Dog License	\$216,021.00
6% Misc. Fees	\$84,320.00
6% Animal Welfare Plates	\$78,825.00
5% Facility License	\$71,565.00
1% Donations	\$11,148.00
1% Misc. Fines	\$8,899.00
<1% Restitution	\$7,340.00

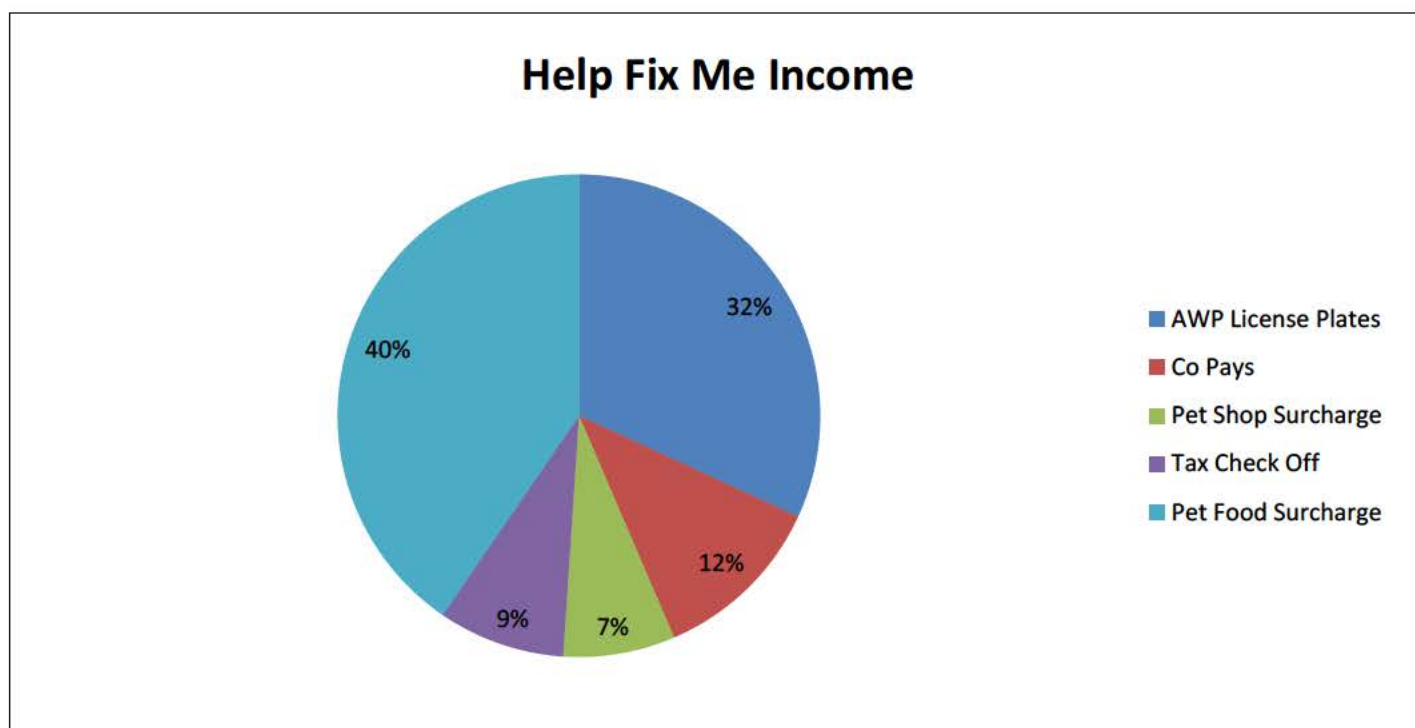
## Expenditures 2015



41% Personal Services	\$350,503.00
26% Fringe Benefits	\$219,352.00
11% Professional Fees	\$98,366.00
6% General Operating	\$51,688.00
6% Equine Case Fees	\$51,625.00
5% State-cap administrative	\$39,573.00
2% Supplies	\$20,139.00
2% Rent	\$19,613.00
1% Travel	\$5,755.00
<1% Clothing	\$2,518.00
<1% Tech	\$181.00

## Companion Animal Sterilization (Help Fix ME)

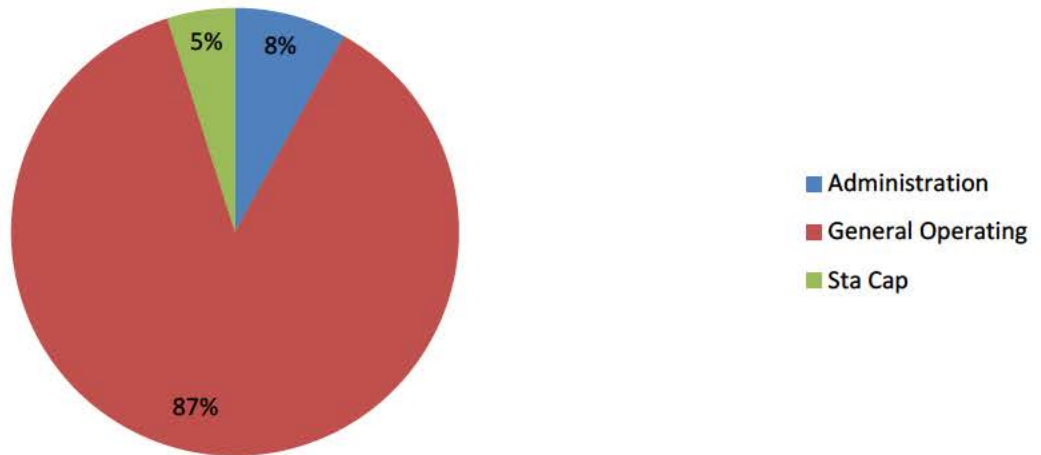
Also known as **Help Fix ME** the program has been in operation since 2005 and has helped thousands of dogs and cats across the State of Maine. The Goals of the Help Fix me program are to assist responsible pet owners with keeping their pets and help reduce the numbers of unwanted pets euthanized in the animal shelters. It is designed to help people on Government assistance or those that meet the income criteria. Thanks to a growing movement in responsible pet ownership and spay and neuter programs from many of the animal shelters and humane groups across the state, pet spay and neutering is more available to the public and the number of unwanted pets in the animal shelters is down to record lows. Below is the income for fiscal year 2015.



40% Pet Food Surcharge	\$100,000.00
32% AWP License Plates	\$78,825.00
12% Co Pays	\$28,863.00
9% Tax Check Off	\$21,033.00
7% Pet Shop Surcharge	\$18,525.00



## Help Fix ME Expenditures



87% General Operating	\$201,155.00
8% Administration	\$18,740.00
5% State-Cap	\$11,298.00

During the calendar year of 2015 Help Fix ME issued 2778 vouchers for spay and neutering. Animal shelter surveys that this department does annually have shown a majority of animals in the shelters are cats. Dogs that are being altered are predominantly large mix breed dogs such as huskies, labs, and hounds that are commonly found in the shelters of Maine.

- 1961 Cats altered
- 436 Dogs altered

Help Fix Me vouchers can be used all over the State of Maine. The list below shows how many vouchers were sent to each county in Maine.

### Vouchers by County

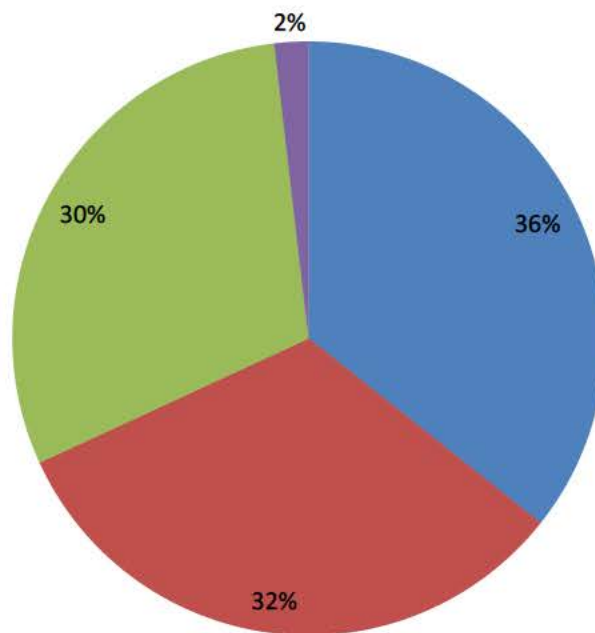
Androscoggin – 74  
 Aroostook – 323  
 Cumberland – 114  
 Franklin – 90  
 Hancock – 125  
 Kennebec – 279  
 Knox – 102  
 Lincoln – 66  
 Oxford – 101  
 Penobscot – 313  
 Piscataquis – 104  
 Sagadahoc – 44  
 Somerset – 413  
 Waldo – 127  
 Washington – 57  
 York – 55

## Animal Shelter Survey

Since 2011, Animal Welfare has been conducting surveys of the animal shelters to find out how many animals are being euthanized and how many are adding to the live release rate each year. During the time we have been doing the survey we found that the live release rate has gone up and the euthanasia rate decreased dramatically. This is in part due to the hard work of the animal shelters and animal control officers throughout the state that help animal welfare educate pet owners and share information about spay and neuter programs.

The live release rate refers to the animals that are not being euthanized and these number shows that Maine is doing great work preventing the euthanasia of unwanted animals and finding ways to place animals in forever homes.

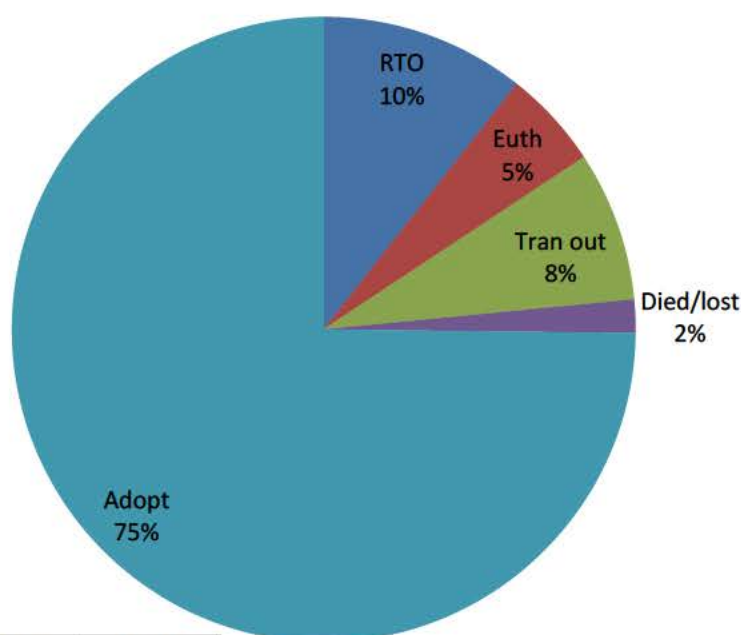
**Dog and Cat Intake**



	Dog & Cat	Dog	Cat
Stray	11,279	3,065	8,214
Surrendered	9,203	2,602	6,601
Transferred in	7,644	4,302	3,342
Born in shelter	578	30	544

Stray and surrendered Intake numbers for animal shelters are trending down again compared to years past. Animals transferred into shelters reflect dogs being imported from shelters in the southern United States and cats being transferred from shelters in northern Maine. This may be the result of the Spay Neuter efforts that have been done throughout Maine over the past decade.

## Dog and Cat Outcome



	Dog & Cat	Dog	Cat
<b>Returned To Owner</b>	<b>2,875</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>629</b>
<b>Euthanized</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1,105</b>
<b>Transferred out</b>	<b>2,099</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>1,858</b>
<b>Died/Lost in shelter care</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>440</b>
<b>Adopted</b>	<b>20,240</b>	<b>7,075</b>	<b>14,358</b>

The live release rates for the past four years are

2011	72%
2012	80%
2013	88%
2014	90%
2015	93%

Animal Welfare has noticed that many of the animal shelters in the State of Maine have begun to partner up and work together on certain issues. Many shelters in southern Maine with high cat adoption rates have started transferring cats from Aroostook County where cat adoption rates are much lower. This cooperation among animal shelters has led to fewer animals being euthanized and more forever homes found for Maine's animals.



## **Feral Cat/ Community Cat management**

At the beginning of 2015, Animal Welfare mailed a **"Managing Community Cats Guide"** for municipalities to help deal with feral cat issues in their communities to all of the towns and cities in Maine. These guides were donated to Animal Welfare from the Humane Society of the United States and provided information on how municipalities can work with non-governmental groups **to better manage town's cat feral cat issues without costing the municipalities extra funding.** This guide shows examples of what has worked with dealing with cat issues and what has not. Not all towns have the same issues with cats and we hope that the information provided in this guide can assist the towns that do have a problem and those that can prevent any problem from growing in the first place.

## **Legislation**

In 2015 Animal welfare introduced law changes that:

- Required all animal rescues to licenses as animal shelters since many of them were doing the same functions
- Clarified small animal disposal
- Clarified who is responsible for the costs of seized animals
- Made a correction to licensing costs
- Created a penalty for improperly disposing of a domesticated animal

These law changes went into effect October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## **Licensed Facilities**

Animal Welfare is responsible for the licensing and inspection of all Animal Shelters, Pet Stores, Boarding Kennels, Breeding Kennels, and research facilities in the State of Maine. There are over 550 of these facilities in the state and humane agents are working with these facilities to maintain compliance and prevent disease outbreaks. Inspections completed in a timely manner are very important to the Animal Welfare Program but staffing, scheduling issues and cruelty cases have slowed the response time for inspections.

## **Animal Complaints in 2015**

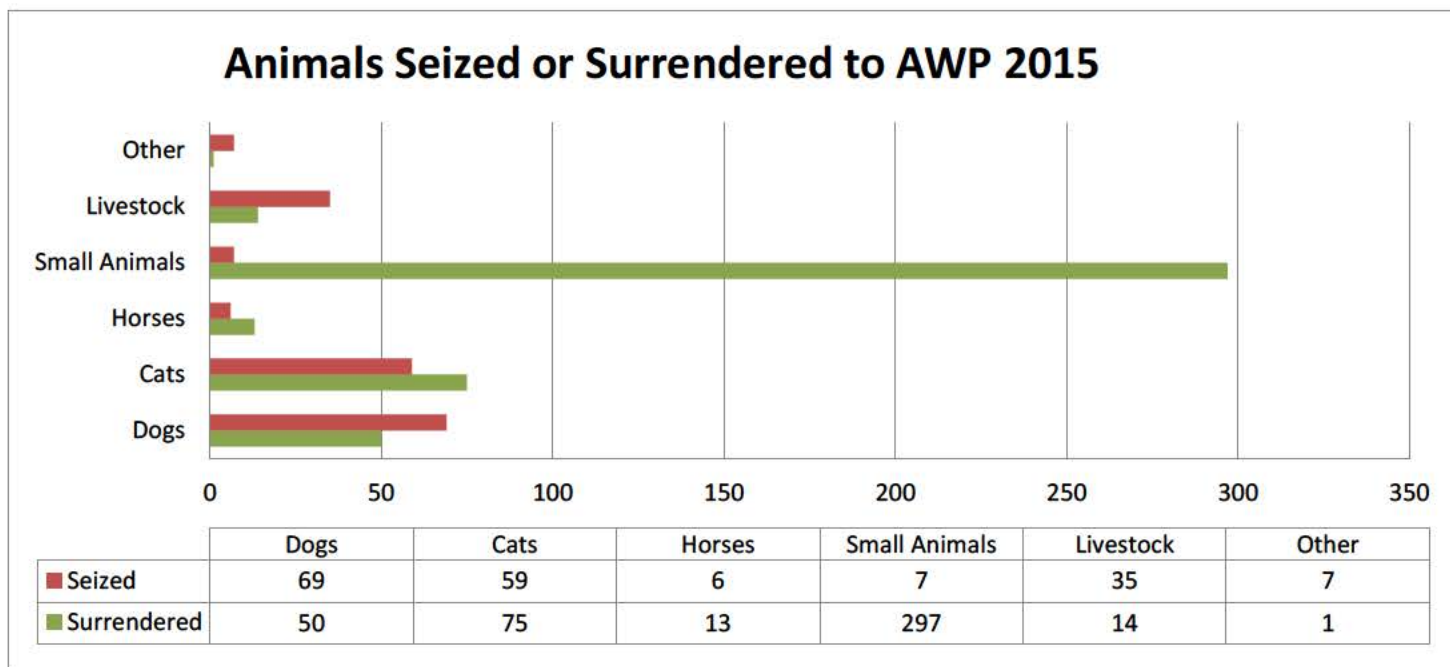
Animal Welfare received 4488 calls in 2015 and 285 animal complaints were taken and **dispatched out to the Humane Agents and Local ACO's.** Animal Welfare staff has been working with the public and local Animal Control Officers to help resolve complaints of neglect, abuse, and animal/human conflicts throughout the year. Through our efforts to educate the public on **what the pet owner's responsibilities are and what resources are available to them we have been** able to reduce the number of animals seized by the state and improve the quality of life for the people and animals we encounter. This method of enforcement is part of our community policing strategy that is showing positive results in reducing the number of repeat offenders that Animal Welfare deals with.

In 2015 Animal Welfare has re-evaluated how it receives and documents complaints. Multiple complaints on an address during the same time are now tied into one complaint and information is now added to the complaint rather than starting a new complaint report.

In 2015, 633 animals that were surrendered by owners that found themselves unable to care for them appropriately or where overwhelmed by the costs of the animal's care were quickly placed into local animal shelters and rescues where most have been able to be rehomed.

In some cases, owners cannot accept the fact that what they are doing is causing harm to the animals or is a violation of the Maine State Laws. After every attempt to communicate to the owner of the animals what they need to do to improve has failed, or there is probable cause of deliberate abuse, Humane Agents will begin working with the local District Attorney's office to file for an ex parte order or a search warrant to get custody of the animals and gather evidence.

183 animals were seized by Humane Agents across the State of Maine. Once the animals that have been seized by the state have been awarded to the Animal Welfare Program by the court, we work with our shelter and rescue partners to quickly rehome the animals just like they would be if they were surrendered to the animal shelters.



This past year the Animal Welfare Program had two separate cases involving the unchecked breeding of rabbits and Guinea pigs. Agents intervened and worked with local animal shelters to spay and neuter as many as possible and rehome them.

### Animal Control Officer Trainings and improvements

Another responsibility of Animal Welfare is to provide the Basic Animal Control Officers (ACO) Training and to help encourage them to seek additional trainings wherever possible. Every spring and fall our office conducts a training that helps instruct the ACO in their responsibilities, the animal laws, dangerous dogs and bite cases, rabies, and officer safety. A wide variety of professionals in their fields such as District Attorneys, Veterinarians, Police Officers, and other Certified ACO's come to serve as instructors to share their experiences and knowledge to help new ACO's prepare for the job ahead of them. Trainings were held in Augusta this past year.

**In conclusion**

The Animal Welfare Program has faced many challenging and difficult cases over the years and many members of the public have strong opinions on **how animals should and shouldn't be** treated. The State of Maine has been ranked once again in the top 5 by the Animal Legal Defense Fund for having the strongest animal welfare laws in the country. Maine has been a leader in the animal welfare world for many years and it is our intention to continue those efforts using education and enforcement.