

## *Facts about Animal Abuse & Domestic Violence*

- 71% of pet-owning women entering women's shelters reported that their batterer had injured, maimed, killed or threatened family pets for revenge or to psychologically control victims; 32% reported their children had hurt or killed animals.
- Between 25% and 40% of battered women are unable to escape abusive situations because they worry about what will happen to their pets or livestock should they leave.
- Pets may suffer unexplained injuries, health problems, permanent disabilities at the hands of abusers, or disappear from home.
- Abusers kill, harm, or threaten children's pets to coerce them into sexual abuse or to force them to remain silent about abuse. Disturbed children kill or harm animals to emulate their parents' conduct, to prevent the abuser from killing the pet, or to take out their aggressions on another victim.
- In one study, 70% of animal abusers also had records for other crimes. Domestic violence victims whose animals were abused saw the animal cruelty as one more violent episode in a long history of indiscriminate violence aimed at them and their vulnerability.
- Investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of social services intervention for a family in trouble.
- For many battered women, pets are sources of comfort providing strong emotional support: 98% of Americans consider pets to be companions or members of the family.
- Animal cruelty problems are people problems. When animals are abused, people are at risk.