

Greyhound Goals

Colorado State University Vows "No More Killing"

For the past three years, CSU has accepted donations of 2,652 unwanted greyhounds from the racing industry. About half of these dogs (450/year) were used in terminal anesthesia and surgery laboratories. The other half were killed as surplus.

Why this unethical alliance? First, greyhounds are easy for students to work with; these dogs usually have docile temperaments, almost no body fat, and easily accessible organs. Second, this alliance was financially beneficial for CSU (for whom the cost of obtaining greyhounds was approximately \$120 per dog compared with a purchase price of up to \$400 per purpose-bred dog) and for the racing industry (who saved approximately \$50,000/3 years in dog destruction fees).

As of this fall, the killing will end. Following a *Rocky Mountain News* exposé on June 7 and subsequent public outcry, CSU has agreed to halt this practice. On June 18, CSU and Colorado greyhound breeders, trainers, and racetrack officials agreed on what the school will do with greyhound donations in the future. "We will spay and neuter these dogs, clean their teeth, vaccinate them, and then return them within 24-48 hours to the central agency for adoption," says Dr. James Voss, Dean of the Veterinary College. In addition, approximately 12-15 greyhounds will be housed at the school as blood donors and adopted by students when the dogs are rotated out of the program.

Dr. Voss explains that this agreement is not a reaction to criticism but rather a plan that has been in the works for at least two years. "We've been concerned about the increasing number of greyhounds euthanatized," he says, adding, "Our new policy aims to minimize killing not just of greyhounds but ultimately of all species."

Specific changes implemented for CSU's 1998 fall semester include:

- Surgery, anatomy, and continuing education cadavers will be animals killed by humane societies for reasons other than teaching.

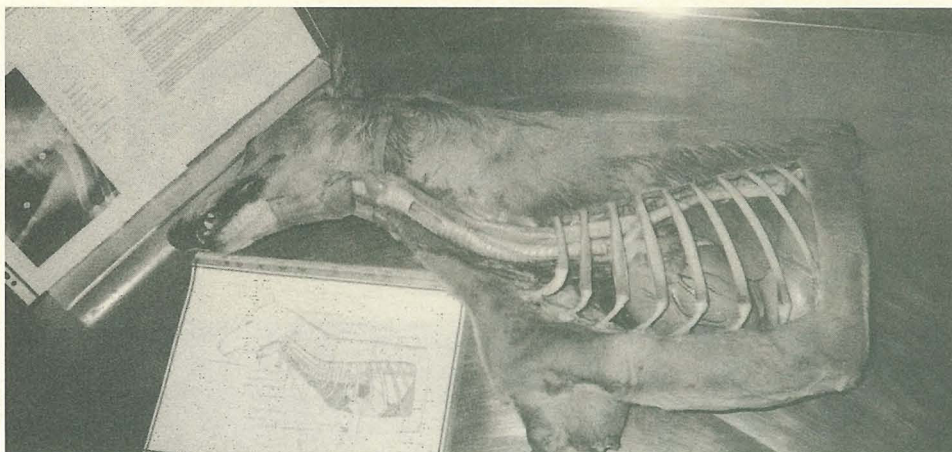


Photo from Murdoch University

- Small Animal Surgery Teaching Laboratories will now use cadavers (previously killed 1 dog/4 students).
- Senior Surgery Laboratory now uses cadavers (previously killed 3 dogs/2 students).
- Small Animal Anatomy embalming of humane society dogs now occurs after killing by the humane society (kills 1 dog/4 students).
- Students will not perform terminal procedures on dogs or cats.

In addition to changes within the school,

the greyhound controversy has sparked plans for a central adoption agency independent of the school. The agency will assume responsibility for all greyhounds before and after surgery. None will be killed at CSU. "We have decided not to become involved in euthanasia decisions," explains Dr. Voss. Veterinarians in private practice will also participate in spaying and castrating these dogs. According to a June article in *The Coloradoan*, those in the greyhound industry support this central adoption agency concept. "Personally, I'm tickled to death," says one racetrack owner.

Issues Raised

Ethics of Greyhound Racing: Without greyhound racing, disposal of unwanted greyhounds would not even be an issue. The racing industry fosters overbreeding, inhumane treatment of racing dogs, and an oversupply of unwanted racing "culls." It is the AVAR's position that one must consider the negative aspects of working in any way with the racing industry. Providing the industry with an 'out' for their 'problems' tends to 1) perpetuate the exploitation of dogs by the industry and 2) offers them the opportunity to appear to the public as if they are truly concerned about the situation. The AVAR does not support greyhound racing under any circumstances.

Ethics of Obtaining Cadavers from Humane Societies: Although schools do not dictate when and why humane society dogs and cats be killed, accepting the bodies for teaching cadavers encourages this practice. (See "AVAR Funds . . ." article.)

Verification of Guardianship: Some greyhounds were donated without their guardians' knowledge or consent. "We love these dogs, and this just makes me sick," says one guardian. From now on, CSU will deal directly with the central adoption agency rather than "relying on the honesty of trainers and breeders."

Quality of Veterinary Education: "Our goal is to produce the best quality veterinarians we can," says Dr. Voss. Whether or not this can be accomplished without harming nonhuman animals was hotly debated this summer in the *Rocky Mountain News*.