

Stray Dogs in Your Community: *Finding a Solution Together*



We know that stray dogs can be a concern for members of our community. We know they can make unwanted noise and can interfere with refuse by spreading garbage around the neighbourhood. We know that some people are worried about dog bites or about diseases carried by dogs which could be passed on to them. We know that some people are anxious about the wellbeing of dogs living on the streets; as these animals have no access to good nutrition or veterinary care.

We know that all of these things cause concern within our community and so, in order to seek a long-term solution which benefits both people and animals, the Municipality of Tulkarm has been working with the Al Najah Vet School and the Palestinian Animal League (PAL) on a specialised programme which will be implemented in your neighbourhood in the coming weeks.

How has the problem been managed in the past?

In the past, attempts have been made to manage stray dog populations across Palestine using lethal control methods. These include poisoning or shooting with live ammunition. Both of these approaches have resulted in animals dying slow and painful deaths or being seriously maimed or injured, but not killed. In the case of poisoning, family pets have become accidental victims; causing suffering to the animals and great distress to their owners. Importantly, lethal methods have been shown to be ineffective at reducing stray dog numbers as new dogs simply enter the vacant area and begin to breed again. We believe that a new approach, which effectively controls numbers of stray dogs, whilst ensuring that animals are not subjected to unnecessary suffering, is necessary.

What is TNVR and how does it work?

“Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release” (TNVR) is a method of stray dog control which follows these steps:

1. The dogs are trapped from the local area where they are causing a nuisance.
2. The dogs are taken to a local clinic and surgically sterilised so that they can no longer breed.
3. The dogs are health-checked and vaccinated against dangerous diseases, such as rabies.
4. The dogs are given a brightly-coloured plastic ear tag so that members of the community can easily identify which dogs have been treated as part of the programme.
5. The dogs are returned to the place where they were captured and released.



Whilst the dogs will be put back onto the streets, and this means that the numbers of dogs will not decline immediately, the dogs released will no longer have any more puppies. Unlike in relation to the use of lethal methods, the area will not become vacant and thus attract new unsterilised dogs, who simply begin to breed again. Instead, the existing dogs remain in the area but the population stabilises as no new puppies are born. In time, the population begins to fall at a steady rate.

While the population begins to fall over the long-term, your community should see benefits in the short-term. Male dogs who have been sterilised will no longer roam long distances looking for a mate, and female dogs who have been sterilised will no longer attract male dogs when they come into season. This will mean a reduction in fighting between male dogs over territory and females, as well as a reduction in associated noise nuisance from the outset.

Dogs who have been vaccinated are healthier and therefore you do not need to be concerned about dangerous diseases such as rabies when you see a dog with a brightly coloured ear tag. It should also be noted that there has not been a known case of rabies within the West Bank for over twenty years.



As a general rule, dogs are not usually aggressive and will not bite or chase unless provoked. There are a very small number of complaints raised surrounding dog bites attacks each year but these types of attacks are uncommon. Notwithstanding this, a female dog may be more aggressive when protecting her puppies and male dogs who have not been sterilised may be more aggressive than those who have not. By sterilising the dogs, instances of aggression can be reduced from the outset.

In our leaflet “Be Safe With Dogs”, you will also find advice on how to stay safe when near stray (and pet) dogs. A combination of the TNVR programme and a basic knowledge of dog behaviour can help to protect you and your family from concerns about dog aggression.

What you can do to support the programme

The pilot TNVR programme is being carried out in your area in the coming weeks. We would be grateful if you could help us to make it a success by carrying out the following simple steps:

- Please **DO NOT** carry out any lethal control measures yourself in the neighbourhood. This will impact the efficacy of the programme and make measuring its success impossible. If you are concerned about dogs in your community, please contact our team for further advice. Contact details can be found by visiting www.pal.ps.
- If you see stray dogs in your area which **do not** have a brightly-coloured ear tag, please contact our team as soon as possible. Contact details can be found by visiting www.pal.ps. Our team will come out and pick the dogs up as soon as possible.
- If you see an injured or dead stray dog **with** a brightly coloured ear tag, please contact our team as soon as possible. Contact details can be found by visiting www.pal.ps.
- Please help our team when they are working in your area by showing them where dogs normally gather in your neighbourhood.
- Please ensure that your household waste is placed within receptacles available. Waste which is left out in easy reach of stray dogs will help to encourage them to congregate near your home.
- If you have pets, please ensure they are spayed or neutered by a vet. This prevents unwanted animals from being abandoned and contributing to the stray animal problem. Neutering is a simple and inexpensive procedure which will help your pet live a happy and healthy life. Contact the team – visit www.pal.ps for details.
- Please read our “Be Safe With Dogs” leaflet with your family, and particularly your children, to learn how to be safe around stray dogs.
- Please attend one of the Question and Answer sessions being hosted in the community in the coming weeks. The time and date of your next Question and Answer Session is the box below.
- If you have questions about the scheme, please contact our team as soon as possible. Contact details can be found by visiting www.pal.ps.

We are holding a Question and Answer session at:

Location:

Date:

Time: