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FOOD FOR THOUGHT CAMPAIGN UNLEASHES RESULTS OF CALIFORNIA ANIMAL SHELTER SURVEY

29% of California's SPCAs Have a Vegetarian Menu Policy

GRASS VALLEY, CA - Animal Place, one of the largest and oldest sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country, is pleased to report on the recent successes of its *Food for Thought* program. Launched earlier this year, *Food for Thought* is designed to help SPCAs, humane societies, and similar rescue organizations adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for their shelter-sponsored events.

“For some animal rescuers there is a division between the animals they save and the animals they serve as food,” said Animal Place Executive Director Kim Sturla. “Through our outreach efforts, we encourage shelters to see that farmed animals have the same value as companion animals.”

In Phase I of its survey of California animal shelters and rescue groups, Animal Place discovered that -- in addition to accepting dogs and cats -- 29% of animal shelters also accept and re-home chickens, turkeys and other farmed birds. Thirty-two-percent also accept rabbits, goats, pigs, and/or other species of farmed animals. The premise of *Food for Thought* is to acknowledge that it is inconsistent for these humane organizations to serve the meat, dairy, and eggs that are derived from some of the same species they rescue.

As to the larger state of existing policies in California, in Phase II of the survey, Animal Place reached out to 157 shelters and rescue groups in the state and discovered that 29% of the humane societies and SPCAs (Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) had a vegetarian-only policy for their sponsored events, including large metropolitan areas such as San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento, as well as smaller vicinities. In factoring in animal control agencies and other similar groups, the percentage of vegan and vegetarian policy-holding organizations was 18% of the total surveyed. Several of these policies had been in place for multiple decades. A handful of shelters that reported pescetarian menu policies were excluded from the above statistics as fish too are abusively caught or farmed and are considered members of the household by many Americans.

What does the future hold for the *Food for Thought* campaign? According to Phase I results, 49% of shelters were either interested in or had their curiosity piqued to create an animal-friendly menu policy. In other words, a majority of shelters -- 78% -- already have in place an animal-friendly policy or are receptive to creating one. These findings echo a prior poll by Animal Place, where 85% of those polled believe it is ethically inconsistent for an animal shelter that rescues dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, goats, and

other animals to sell or serve animal products at the shelter-sponsored fundraising events. The *Food for Thought* campaign is designed to support shelters in helping to adopt and transition to an animal-friendly menu policy.



The list of organizations endorsing *Food for Thought* continues to increase and currently includes California State Humane Association, Animal Legal Defense Fund, The Marin Humane Society, Ohlone Humane Society, RedRover, The Humane Society of the United States, and many others.

In response to the survey, one humane society director noted, “We have been providing vegetarian dinners at all functions for at least 20 years or more - could be for 25 years.” Lisa Simmons, Director of Pets in Need in Redwood City comments, “You aren't really humane if you assign a sliding scale to life.”

“We have had the policy for 30 years of not benefiting some animals by profiting from the suffering of others. Any organizational event adheres to serving only vegetarian fare and we are increasingly moving to a plant-based menu. For the 18 years that we had our Santa Paws Arts & Crafts show only vegetarian food was sold, and no craft item that included materials made from any part of an animal was permitted in the show. We really try to honor our mission statement. We are not a large organization but we strive to be ethical,” stated Nancy Lyon, Ohlone Humane Society.

On the new *Food for Thought* website, shelters and animal advocates alike can access invaluable resources to help make the transition to an animal-friendly policy, such as sample policies, plant-based menus and recipes, a list of vegan caterers and food trucks in California, and much more. “We would love for community members to get involved in this exciting campaign. All the information and tools are right on the *Food for Thought* website,” said Barbara Schmitz, Animal Place’s coordinator of volunteers and campaigns. “Just a few clicks on the site and you have what you need to encourage your own shelter to align their events with their mission.”

For a complete list of endorsements and more information on the *Food for Thought* campaign please visit www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org.

About Animal Place

Founded in 1989 Animal Place is one of the oldest and largest sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country, operating two facilities in northern California. Nestled on 600-acres in Grass Valley, CA, Animal Place's primary sanctuary provides refuge to hundreds of neglected farmed animals. Animal Place strives to create meaningful change for farmed animals through advocacy and education. Thousands of visitors flock to the sanctuary each year to learn more about the animals and farming. Volunteer classes introduce folks to more ways people can help. Internships are also available. For more information, visit www.animalplace.org or call 530-477-1757.

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