

HSUS Policy on Euthanasia

The euthanasia of animals has been acknowledged by most animal-protection organizations as an acceptable means for alleviating or preventing suffering. However, the euthanasia of any animal involves a difficult choice, requiring that each case be evaluated on an individual basis. The following questions should be carefully addressed in seeking to determine the most appropriate course of action:

1. Is the animal in pain or distress, and is there hope of alleviating this pain to allow for a reasonable quality of life?
2. What are the prospects of providing the animal with a quality of life that fulfills his/her basic physical and psychological needs?
3. If the needs of the individual animal cannot be met fully, are there potential legitimate benefits to other animals, such as species preservation, that might justify keeping that particular animal alive?
4. Does keeping the animal in his/her present condition and circumstances present significant health or safety risks to other animals or people? Can these risk be minimized or avoided while still affording the animal a reasonable quality of life?
5. Given the fiscal and practical limitations faced by the organization or individual charged with the care of the animal, does keeping the animal alive reduce the ability to care humanely for the other animals in need?

The Humane Society of the United States is committed to pursuing a continuing program of investigation, study, and application of acceptable euthanasia methods and to recommending for use only those methods that are painless and rapid and that, to the fullest extent possible, minimize fear and apprehension in the animal. Further, it is our policy to vigorously oppose any euthanasia methods or techniques that do not meet these humane principles.