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THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROMOTING
ANIMAL WELFARE

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR LODI MADDIE'S FUND
COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

**FY2003-04
Summary Report**

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ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR LODI COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Introduction

This analysis looks at the progress to date for the Maddie's Fund Lodi Community Program. The data for this report run through the fourth program year. The Fiscal Year for the program starts in October and ends in September, with the first program year being from 2000 to 2001. Overall, Lodi has made strong progress over the four year program period. The decline in both total animal and healthy animal deaths exceeded their program goals, while adoptions increased just slightly less than the program goal. Funded spay/neuter procedures have already exceeded the five-year program goal. Compared to the baseline period, the live animal release rate, a measure of the portion of shelter animals that are adopted or redeemed, was up 35% in the fourth program year (see Figure 1). Total deaths declined 35%. The deaths of healthy and treatable animals decreased 62%. Adoptions increased 37%.

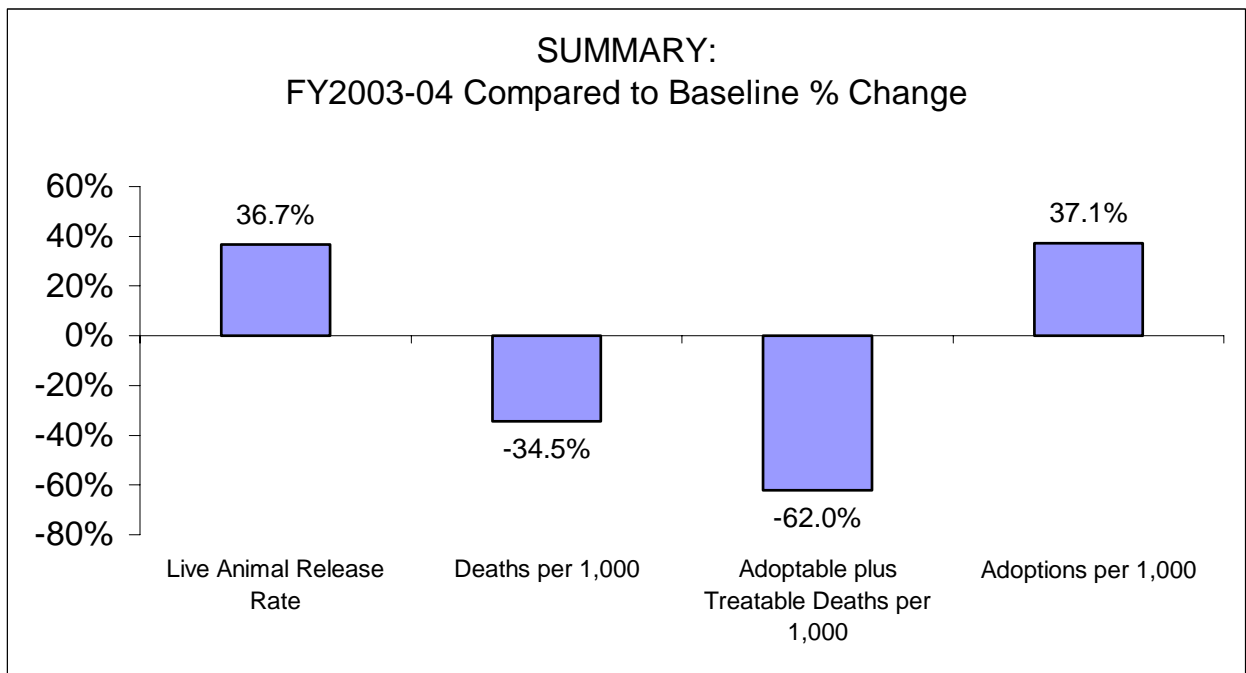


Figure 1

Total Death Rate

Following an unexpected increase in the third program year, total deaths at Lodi shelters decreased 15% to 996 in the fourth program year (see Figure 2). When adjusted for population, deaths were down 16% to 16.8 per thousand people. This is good news since there was some concern regarding the sharp rise in deaths during FY2002-03 compared to FY2001-02. It appears at this point that the jump in deaths was a one-time shift rather than the start of a long-term increasing trend in the death rate. However, deaths are still higher than their lowest known level which occurred in FY2001-02.

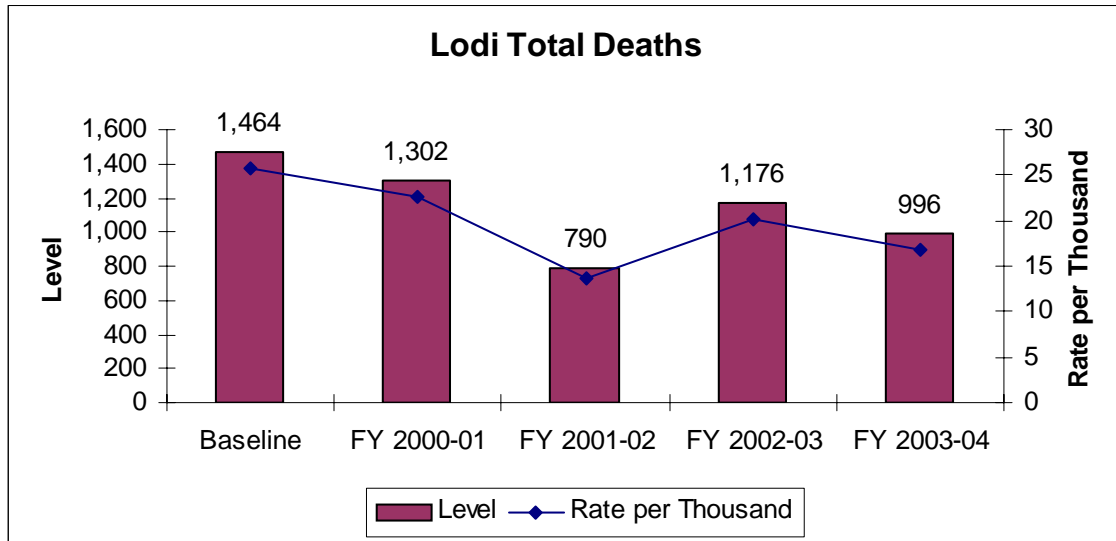


Figure 2

Quarterly data shows a similar trend (see Figure 3). The rise in deaths for the 2002-03 fiscal year was mainly due to a strong jump in deaths in the second and third quarters of 2003. Deaths for both of these quarters are down in 2004. Deaths for these two quarters are still above the levels seen in 2002 although they are below the levels seen in 2001 and the baseline period.

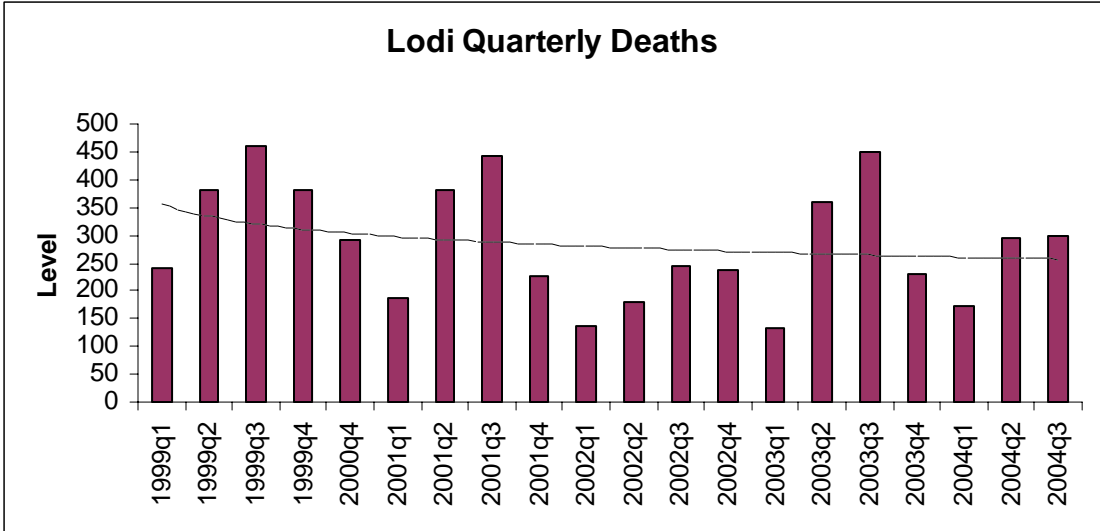


Figure 3

Lodi is on track to meet its five-year goal for reduction in total deaths. In FY2003-04, deaths were slightly better than the program goal for that period (see Figure 4). While there has been some unusual variation in the death rate, in three of the four program years so far, Lodi has exceeded its goal for reducing total deaths.

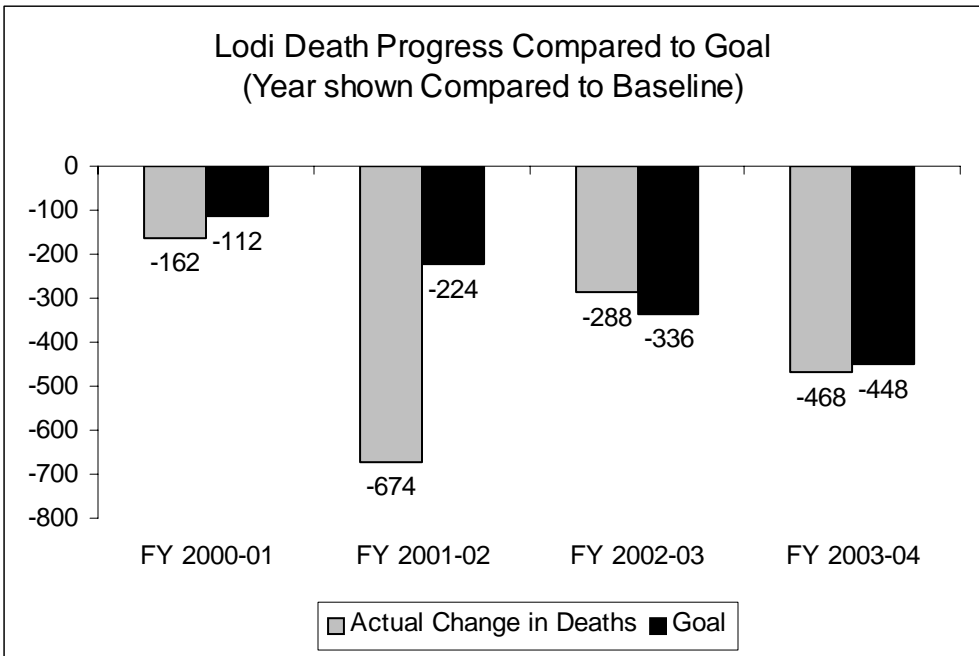


Figure 4

Healthy Animal Deaths

Healthy animal deaths have been reduced by 84% since the start of the program (see Figure 5). The number of healthy animals killed in the baseline period is over five times as large as the number killed in FY2003-04. In the baseline period, 9.8 healthy animals were killed per thousand people. In the latest fiscal year, 1.5 healthy animals were killed per thousand people.

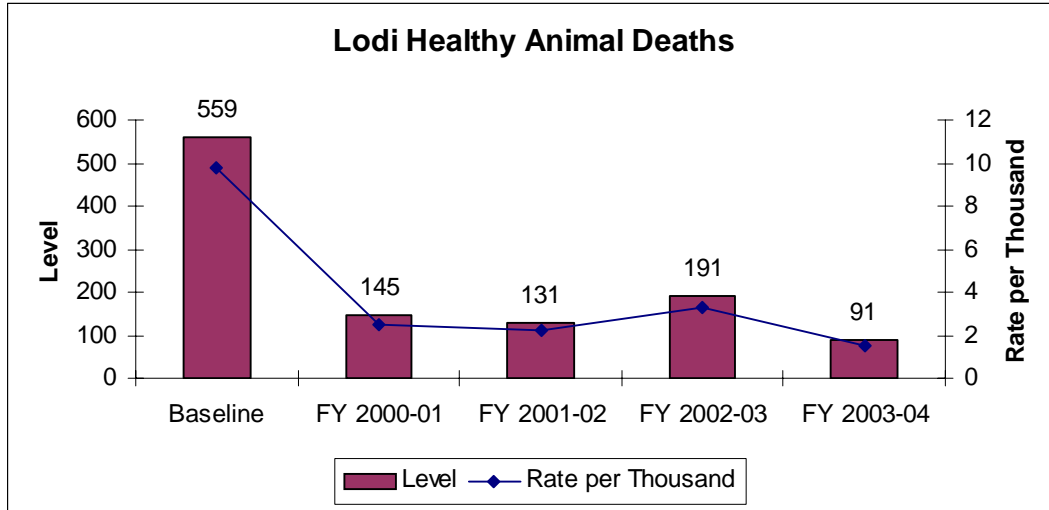


Figure 5

Looking at the quarterly pattern, the majority of the drop in healthy animal deaths occurred immediately after the start of the program (see Figure 6). In FY2002-03, there was an unexpected rise in deaths, particularly during the fourth quarter of 2002 and the third quarter of 2003. However, since that time healthy animal deaths have resumed their decline and the latest quarters (i.e. the second and third quarter of 2004) have the lowest healthy animal death rates of any quarterly periods.

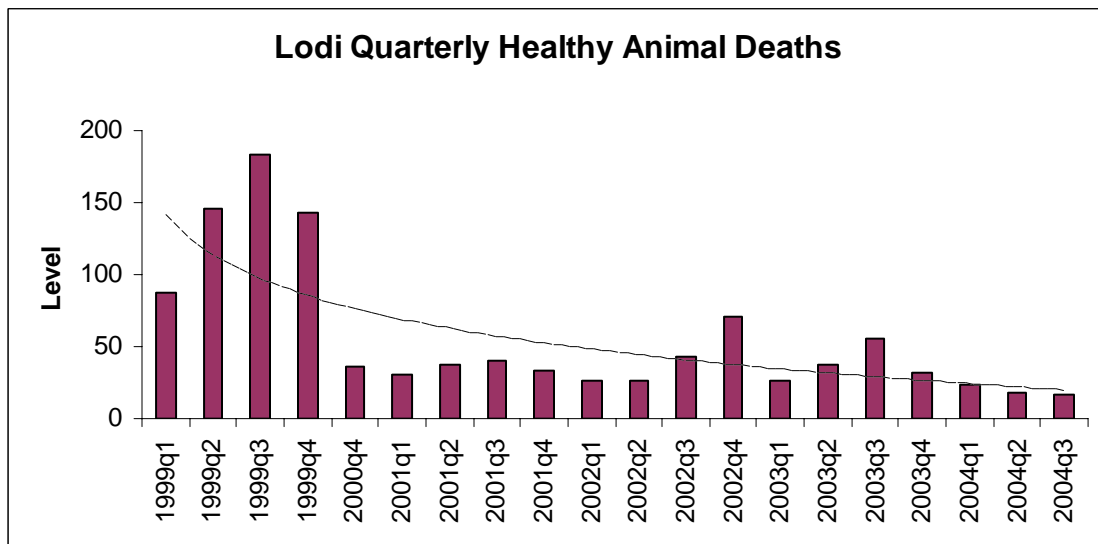


Figure 5

Compared to the baseline period, healthy animal deaths are down by 468, which is slightly more than the goal for that period (see Figure 7).

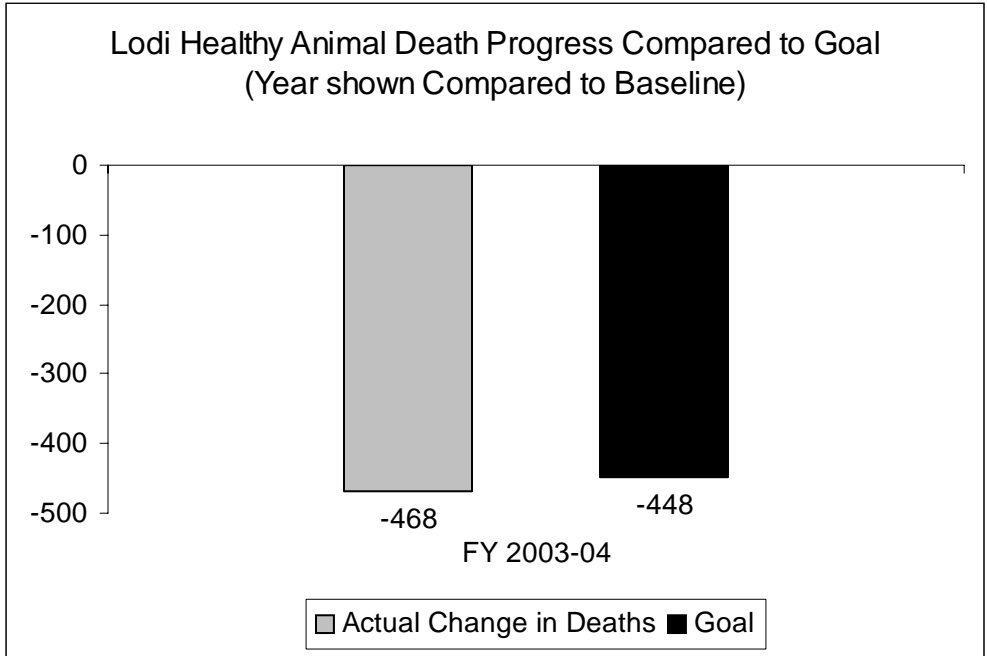


Figure 6

Comparing the actual trend in deaths to the five year goals, the Lodi program appears to be in a good position to eliminate all healthy animal deaths, as planned, by FY2004-05 (see Figure 8).

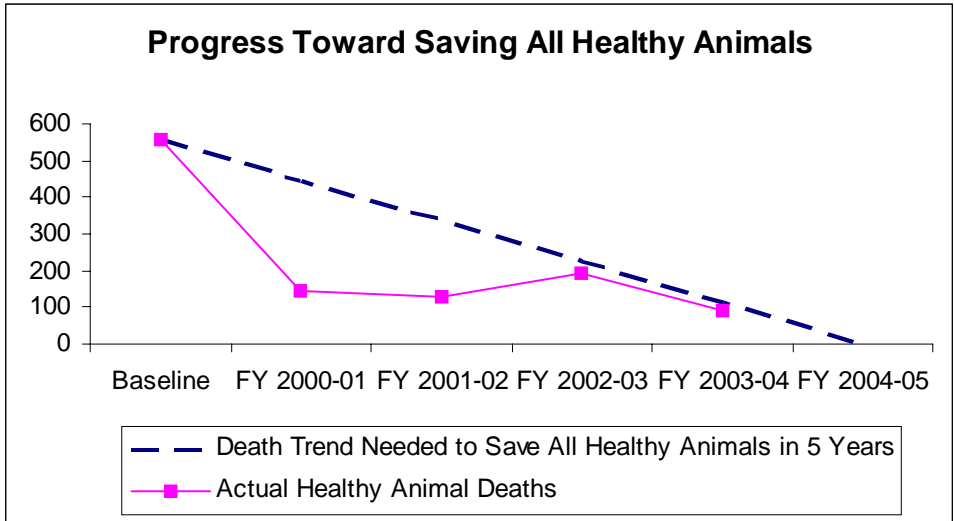


Figure 7

The portion of incoming animals labeled as “healthy” appears to have been fairly consistent over time (see Figure 9). The proportion has remained right around 67% in three of the five years so far, with a high of 75% and a low of 61%. This suggests that the nature of intake and the way animals are labeled have been consistent over time.

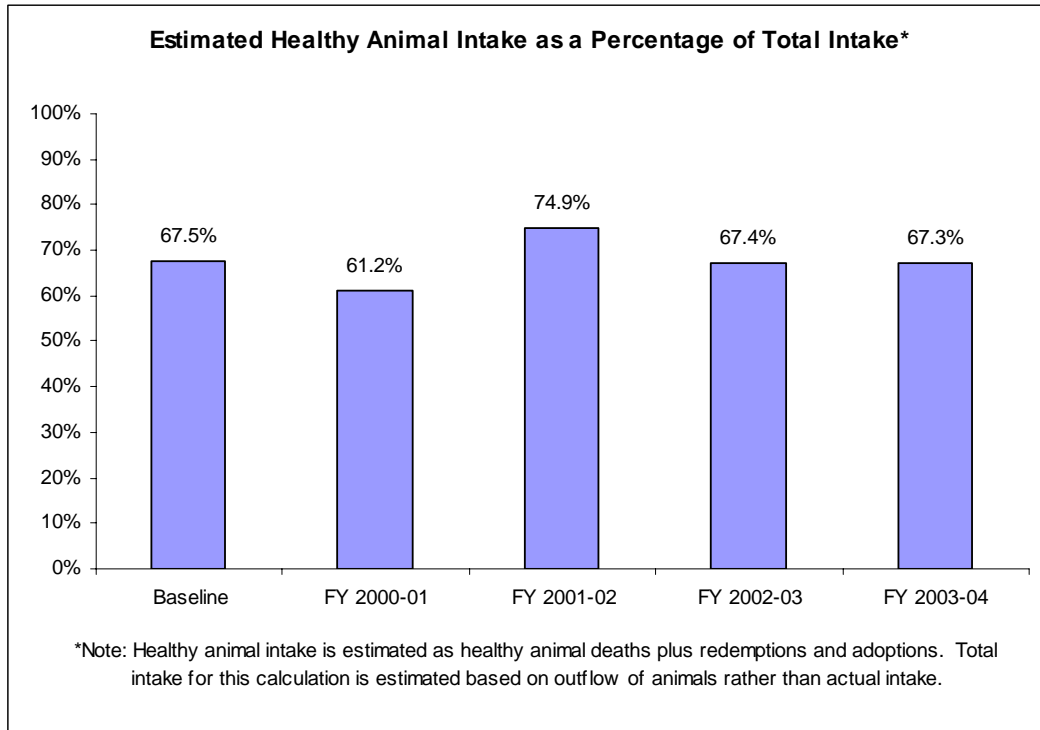


Figure 9

It should be noted that healthy animal intake is estimated based on animal outcomes, with adopted and redeemed animals being assumed to be healthy. These assumptions might not always be true. In addition, the estimate will be biased to the extent that animals change their health status between intake and the time when an outcome occurs (such as health deteriorating in the shelter environment).

The trends in healthy animal deaths and total animal deaths have been reasonably consistent—at least in terms of direction. Although the amounts have varied, healthy and total animal deaths both declined in three of the four program years, while both increased at about the same rate in FY2002-03 (see Figure 10).

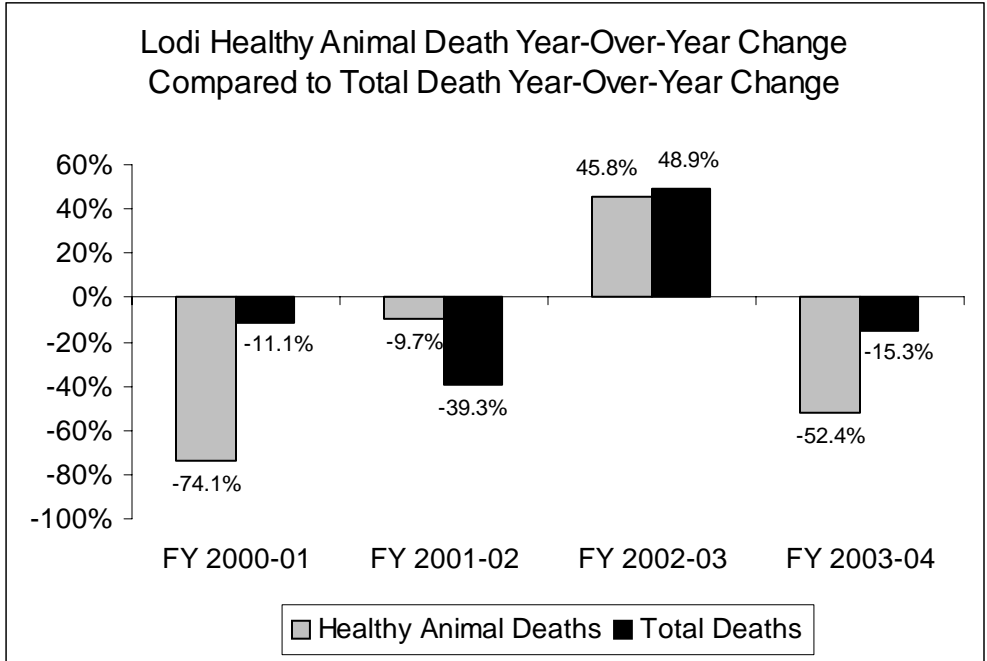


Figure 8

Healthy and Treatable Animal Deaths

Healthy and treatable animal deaths have been cut more than in half since the start of the program. These deaths decreased 61% to 344 since the baseline period (see Figure 11).

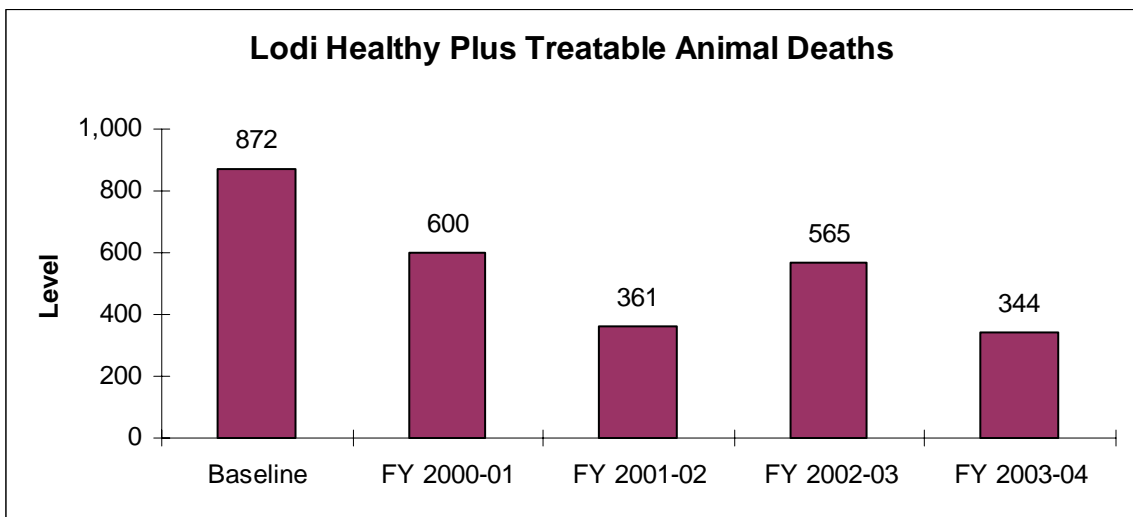


Figure 9

Both healthy and treatable animal deaths have declined compared to the baseline period while non-rehabilitatable animal deaths have increased (see Figure 12). Healthy animal deaths have been the primary focus of efforts to reduce the death rate, which is appropriate given the program goals. However, treatable animal deaths also made some progress simultaneously. Although the raw level of non-rehabilitatable animal deaths is up, this can be explained by general population growth. The non-rehabilitatable animal death rate per thousand people is actually down slightly.

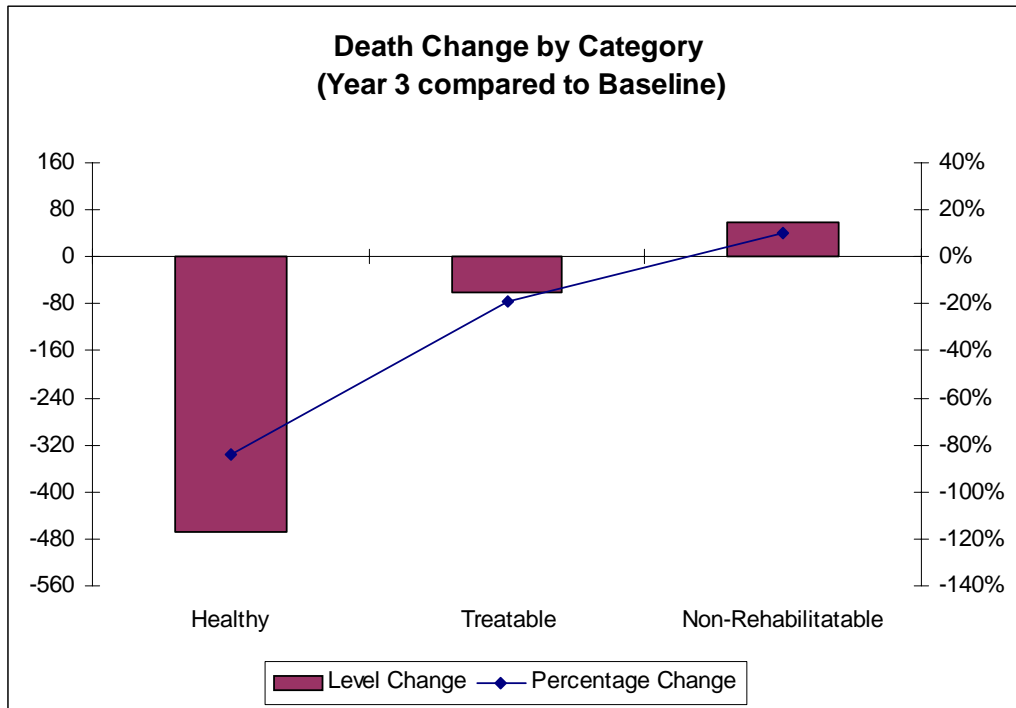


Figure 10

The Maddie’s Fund Lodi community program has no formal goal for saving treatable animals. However it is worth noting that if deaths continue to be reduced at the current rate, the program is on track to save all healthy and treatable animals within seven years (see Figure 13). However, it should be noted that animals with treatable conditions require more resources per animal to save, so it is not necessarily the case that the current trajectory in death rate reduction could be maintained.

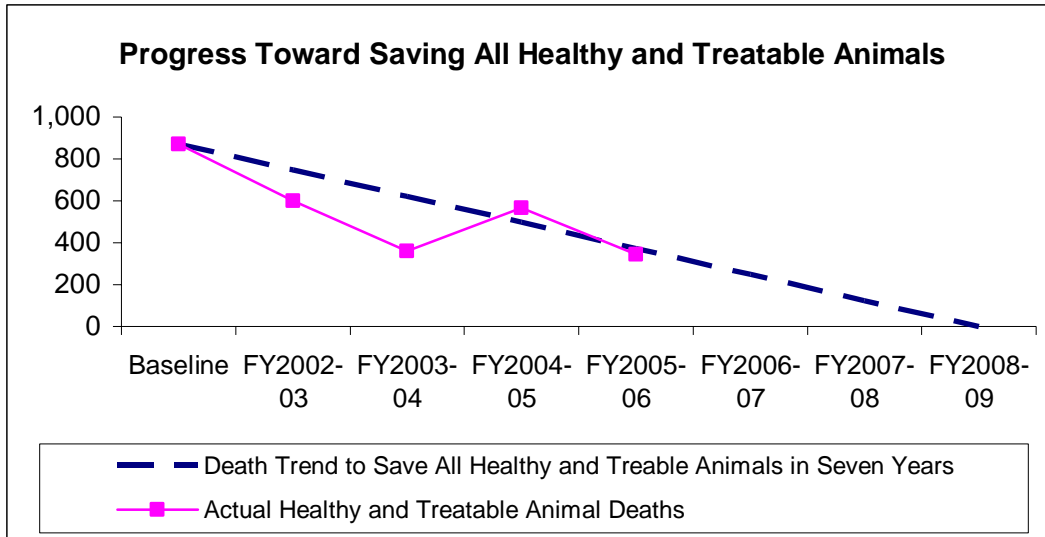


Figure 11

Adoptions

After initially making very strong progress in the first two years of the program, adoptions have declined in both of the last two program years (see Figure 14). In FY2003-04, adoptions declined 5% compared to the prior year, falling from 1,546 to 1,469. This followed a 1% decline compare to the prior year in FY2002-03. Despite falling in the last two years, adoptions are still 42% above their baseline level.

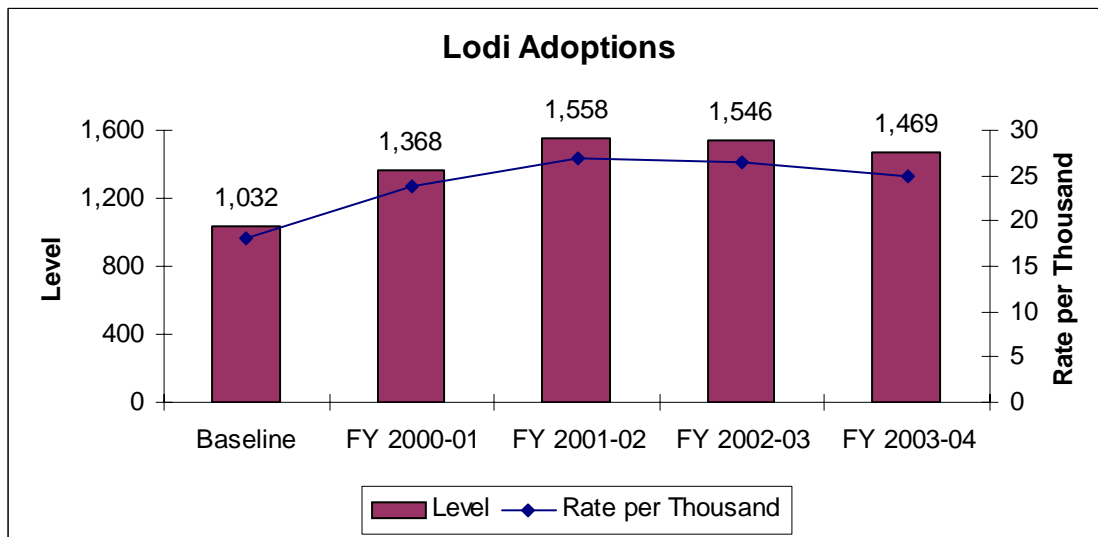


Figure 12

The quarterly adoption data suggests that this decline in adoptions is ongoing—at least through the third quarter of 2004 which is the last data available. Three of the last four quarters had adoptions below the level in the same quarter of the prior year (see Figure 15).

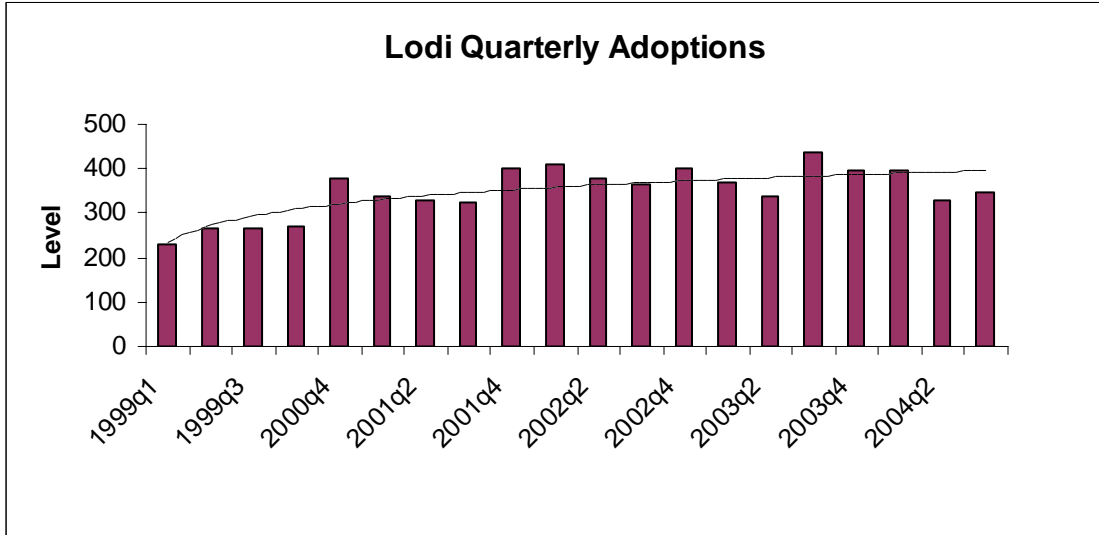


Figure 13

Adoptions in the latest program year were just short of the program goal (see Figure 16). This is the first year in which total adoptions at Lodi did not exceed the Maddie’s Fund program goal.

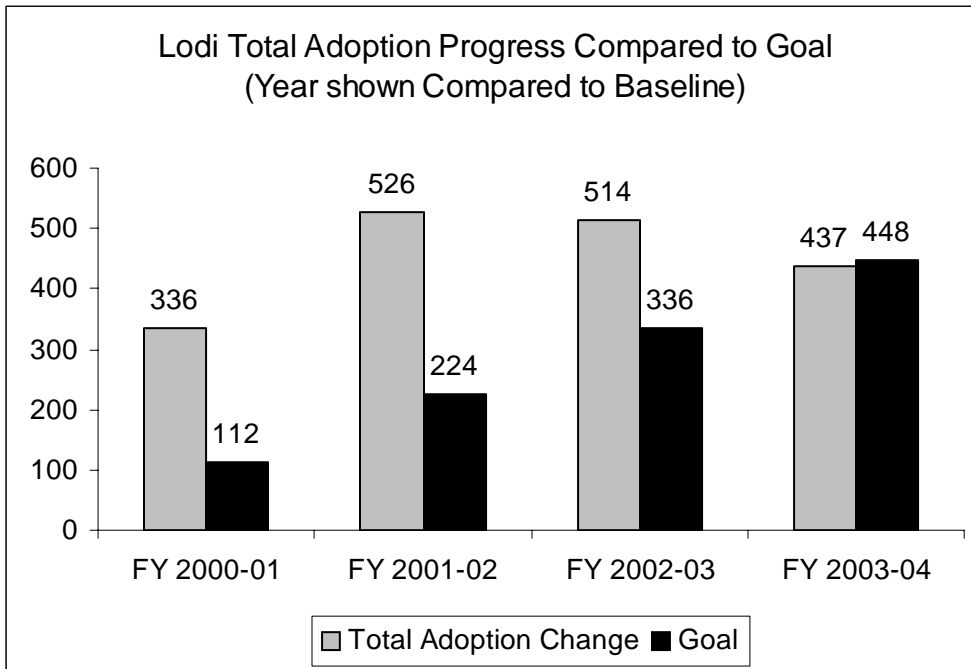


Figure 14

The decline in adoptions during FY2003-04 came about equally from animal control facilities and other shelters (see Figure 17). In FY2002-03, animal control facilities lost ground in their adoptions while other shelters increased their adoptions.

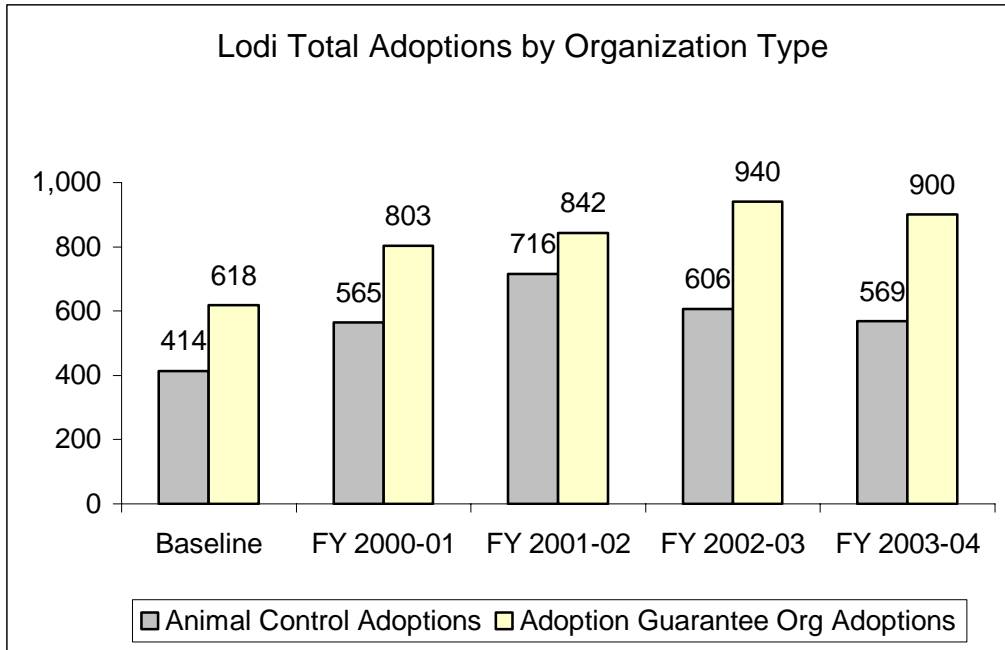


Figure 15

Over the full program period, adoptions at both types of organizations are up, with animal control generating 35% of the increase in adoptions and other shelters generating 65% of the adoption increase (see Figure 18).

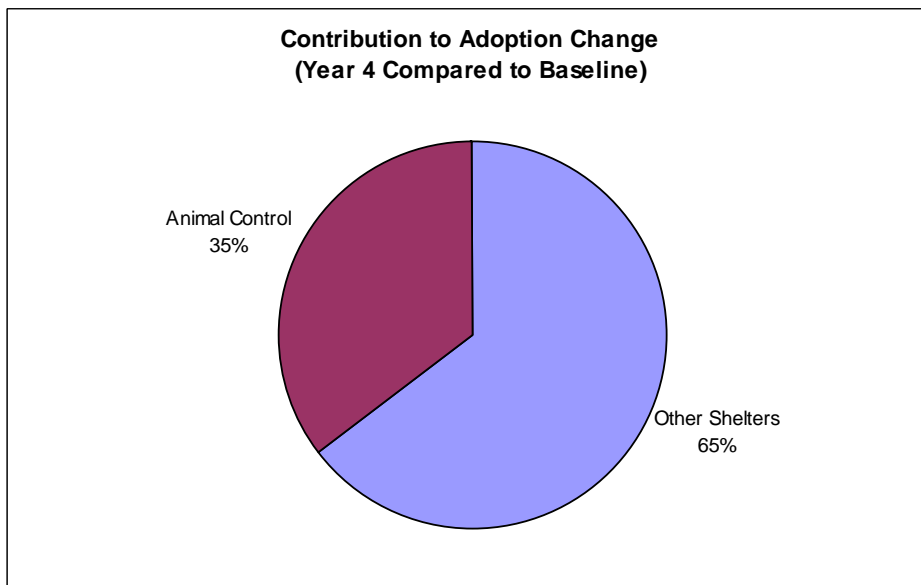


Figure 16

In every year except the latest program year, adoptions and deaths moved in a manner consistent with each other (see Figure 19). In the first two years, both the adoption rate and the total death rate improved (i.e. adoptions increased and deaths decreased). In the third program year, both deteriorated. However, in the fourth program year, adoptions continued to deteriorate while the death rate improved. This can in large part be attributed to a reduction in intake.

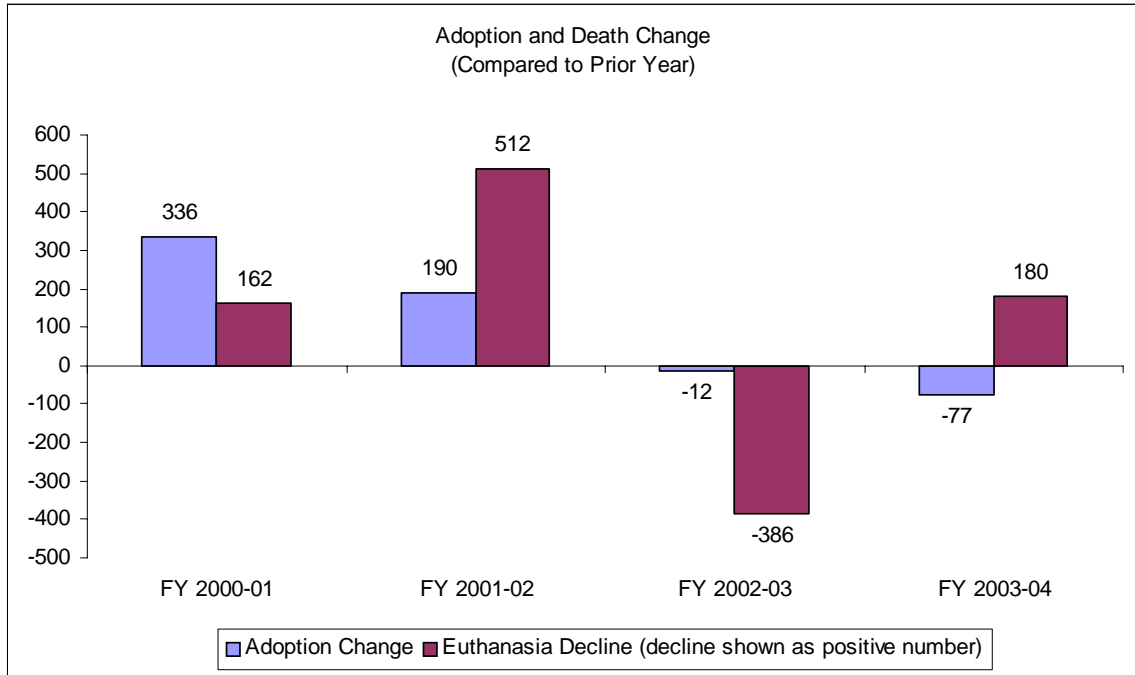


Figure 17

Adoptions of cats and dogs improved at about the same rate over the total program period (see Figure 20). However, the decline in dog deaths was more than twice as rapid as the decline in cat deaths.

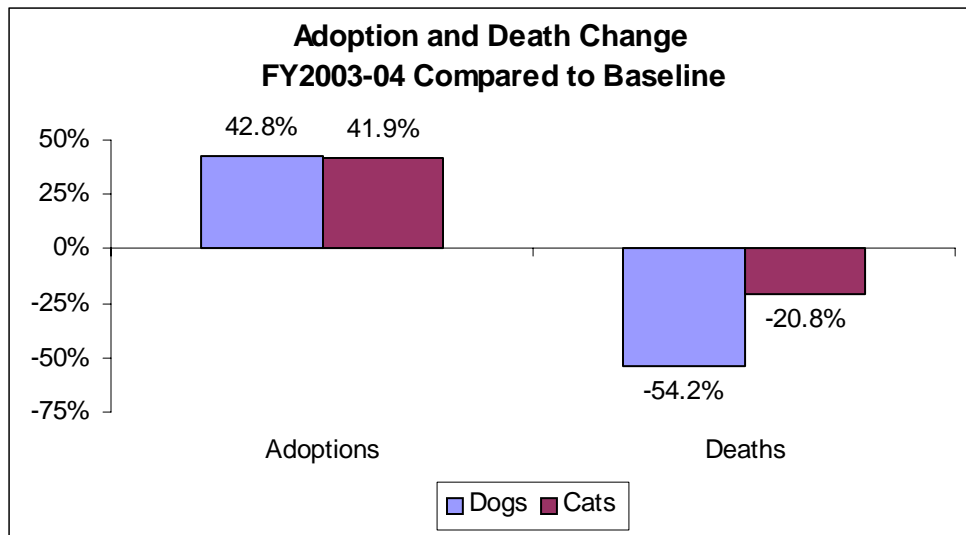


Figure 18

The live animal release rate indicates the portion of animals that have had favorable outcomes (in most cases meaning adoption or redemption of the animal rather than death). In the baseline period, more than half of the animals at Lodi shelters ended up dead. Currently, 64% of the animals at the shelter are released “live” either through adoption or redemption (see Figure 21).

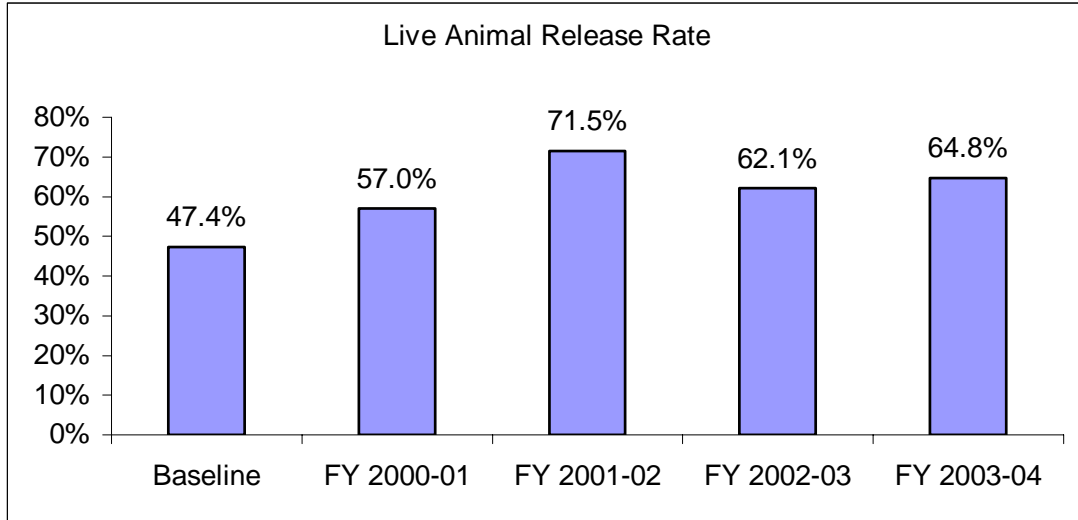


Figure 19

Spay/Neuter Trends

Spay/neuter procedures declined in the fourth program year (see Figure 22). Near the start of FY2003-04, Lodi had exceeded its Maddie’s Fund five-year program goal for spay/neuter procedures. Therefore, new spay/neuter surgeries were generally not subsidized by Maddie’s Fund in Lodi after the five-year goal was exceeded. The decline in surgeries was in large part due to the ending of this successful spay/neuter program. It should be noted that after the end of the program three large organizations stopped reporting procedures to Maddie’s Fund. Since all procedures are shown here, the final program year is not completely comparable to earlier years. However, it was not possible to remove these organizations from data for all years to make a fair comparison because baseline period data was not broken down by organization. During the three prior program years, organizations that stopped reporting some time in FY2003-04 contributed 30% to 40% of the total surgeries. We can estimate baseline surgeries by reducing the total by the average of these numbers, leading to comparable baseline surgeries estimated at roughly 3,456.

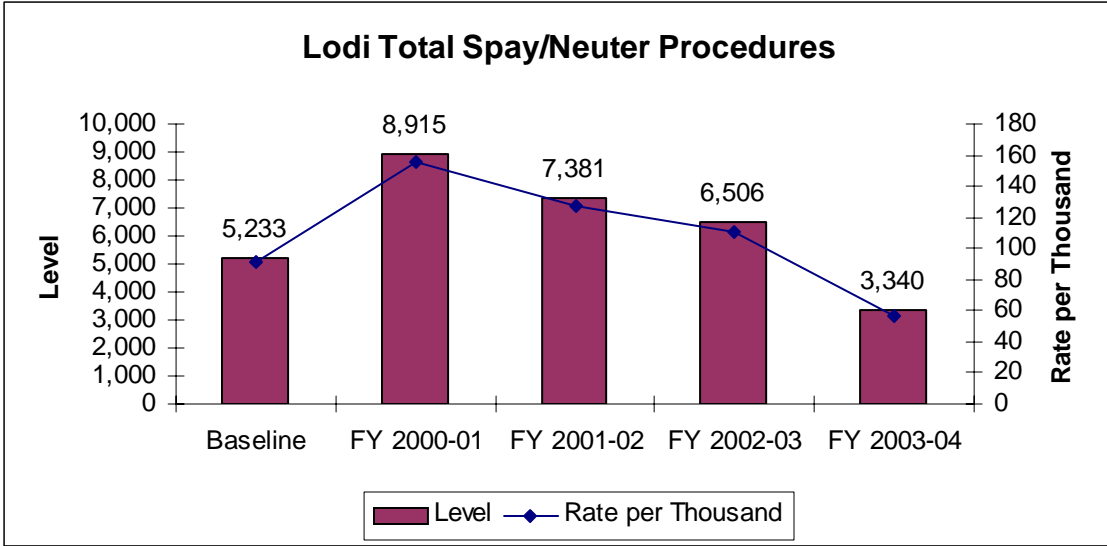


Figure 20

Figure 23 shows spay/neuter procedures using quarterly data. The declining trend in the fourth program year is even stronger using this data. Once again this primarily reflects the termination of funding of spay/neuter procedures by Maddie’s Fund due to successful completion of five-year program goals.

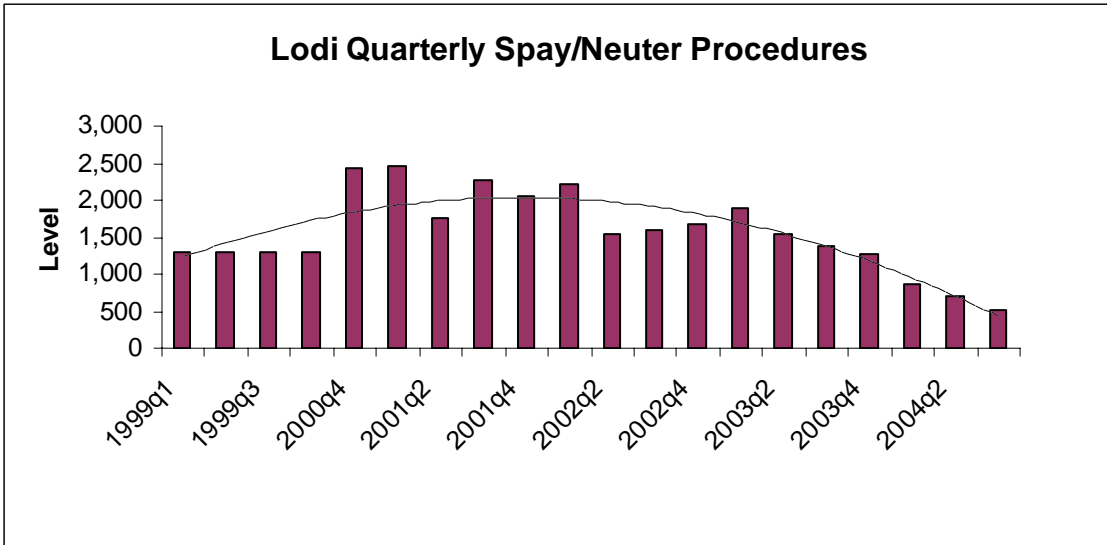


Figure 21

Intake Trends

Despite a decline in spay/neuter procedures in the last two program years, intake declined over that same period (see Figure 24). Intake declined 2% in FY2003-04 compared to the prior year and intake per thousand people declined 3% to 51 animals. This decline in intake may be due to delayed effects from spay/neuter. Prior FIREPAW research suggests that an increase in the number of spay/neuter procedures may affect intake years later (see *The Dynamics of Spay/Neuter: Time-Scale of Impact and Interaction Effects* at www.firepaw.org/research.html). The decline in intake may also simply be a slow recovery from the sudden jump in FY2000-01. The jump in intake during the first year of the Maddie's Fund program may have been due to a "no-kill effect" discussed in previous reports. This effect is due to increased confidence by the public regarding the fate of animals dropped off at the shelter leading to more animals being relinquished. This effect can also impact animal control behavior, leading to more strays being brought in. The jump that year could also have been due to some other random factor that dissipated over time.

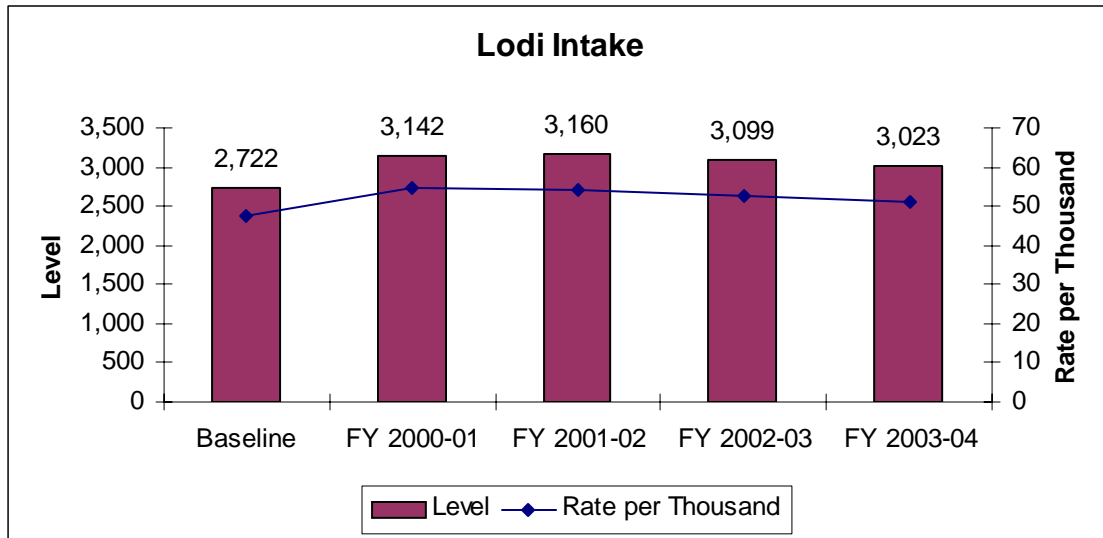


Figure 24

On a quarterly basis, the trend in intake is less clear (see Figure 25). On an annual basis, intake peaked in FY2001-02. However, using quarterly data intake did not peak until the third quarter of 2003. In the third quarter of 2004 intake was far below intake for the same quarter in 2003. However, in the second quarter of 2004, intake was higher than in the same quarter of 2003. This was also true for the two prior quarters compared to the previous fiscal year.

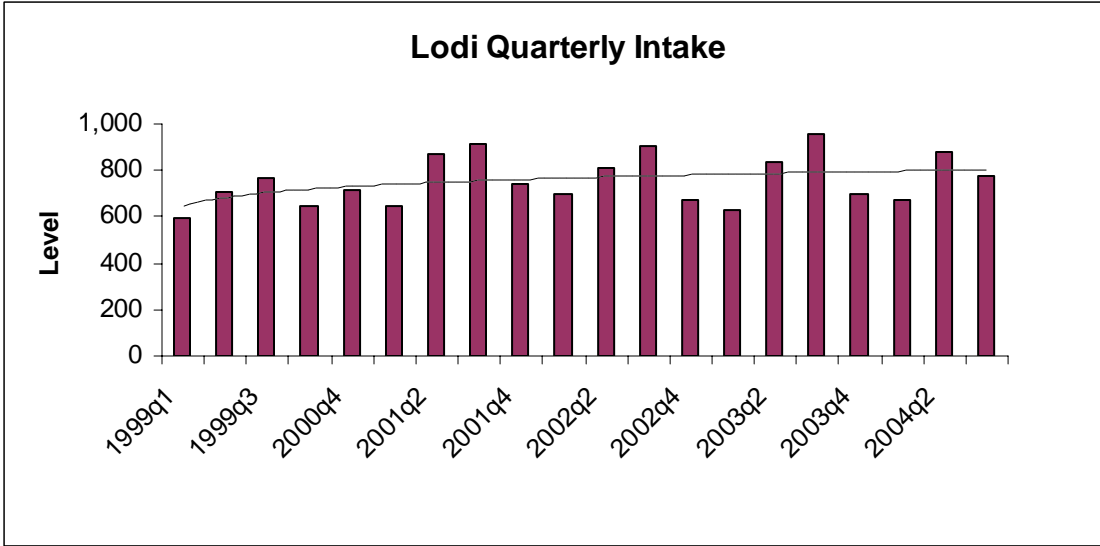


Figure 22

Over the total program period, intake increased for both dogs and cats and from both the field and the counter (see Figure 26). By far the largest percentage growth in intake was from cats from the field. This could be due to a “no-kill effect” where animal control puts more effort into picking up stray cats when the shelter is less filled or has a higher live animal release rate. The second highest increase in intake was from dogs relinquished at the counter.

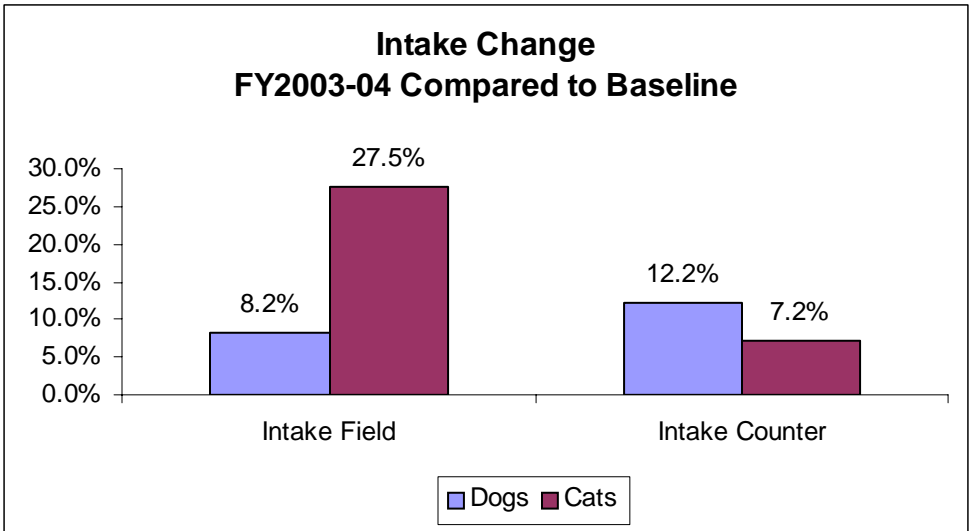


Figure 26

Although the difference in the number of animals coming into and out of the shelter was high in some years (particularly FY2001-02), this number has not exhibited a consistent upward or downward trend (see Figure 27). This should be seen as a positive finding since a trend could be evidence of data errors or unsustainable increases in the number of animals warehoused at area shelters.

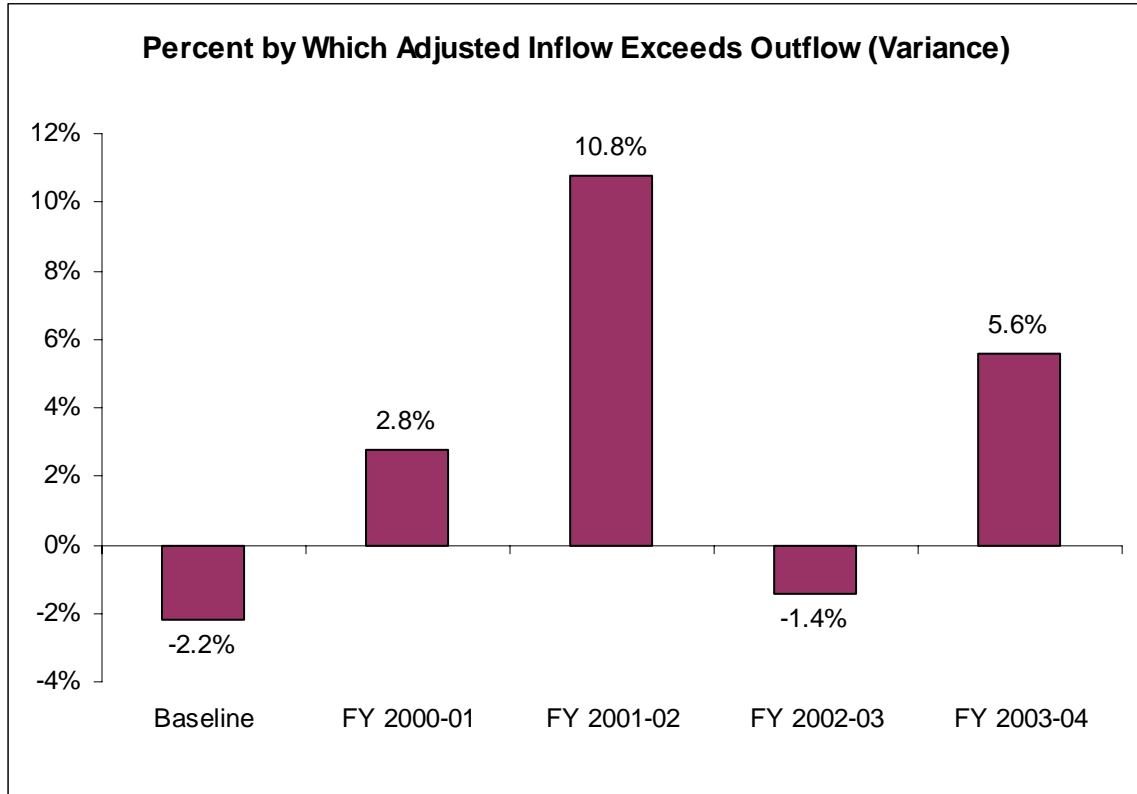


Figure 27

Discussion and Recommendations

Lodi is generally on track with its program goals. Total deaths and healthy animal deaths are both slightly above goal while adoptions fell just slightly short of the goal for FY2003-04. Spay/neuter procedures have already exceeded the five-year goal. Overall, the program appears well-positioned to reach its five-year goal of ending all healthy animal deaths.

Adoption progress is a possible area of concern since the number of adoptions decreased in each of the last two years. If adoptions do not reverse direction and increase in the last program year, then the only likely way that the five-year goal of ending healthy animal deaths can be met is through a further reduction in intake.

Intake is also an area of possible concern. The decline in intake during the fourth program year is a positive sign. However, the sharp decline in spay/neuter procedures may be a warning flag that intake will increase in the near future. Currently not enough is known about the applied dynamics of spay/neuter and the time delays involved in real-

world settings to say with confidence whether intake will go up or down in the coming program year. Given the recent trend in adoptions, the success of the Lodi program may depend critically on what happens to intake in the 2004-05 Fiscal Year.

If Lodi succeeds in FY2004-05 in reaching its five-year goal and does so at least in part through a reduction in intake, it will be important for Lodi to find a way to continue to maintain a high spay/neuter rate without Maddie's Fund grant money. Intake may continue to fall for several years based on the high level of spay/neuter surgeries performed in the first half of the program. However, if the number of spay/neuter surgeries performed declines due to the end of Maddie's Fund grants, intake will eventually rise again.