



Town of Sterling

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER
135 Leominster Rd., Sterling, MA 01564
Phone: 978-422-7331

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2013, the Town of Sterling had over four hundred animal control calls that came in through our dispatch center. This total does not include follow up phone calls to residents for unlicensed dogs or any other necessary phone calls. The total number of calls that came through the dispatch center has increased from 2012. My educated opinion for this increase is because more people are moving into Sterling and many of these residents have more than one animal.

The following statistics represent the incidents that I as Animal Control Officer was involved with in 2013:

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|--|-----|---------------------|
| Dogs at Large..... | 135 | (20 less than 2012) |
| Nuisance | 25 | (5 more than 2012) |
| Hit Dogs/Cats by Vehicles..... | 9 | (2 more than 2012) |
| Feral/Stray Cats..... | 58 | (8 more than 2012) |
| Dog/Cat Bites Sterling residents | 8 | (4 less than 2012) |
| Farm Animal Calls..... | 34 | (10 more than 2012) |
| Wildlife Calls..... | 129 | (30 more than 2012) |
| Dead Animals Picked Up..... | 6 | (11 less than 2012) |
| General questions | 36 | (2 more than 2012) |
| Court cases for unlicensed dogs..... | 9 | All Resolved |

The Town of Sterling licensed 1,472 dogs in 2013, which is about the same as in 2012. In 2013, the total dollar amount of fines that were issued was \$325.00 dollars for animal control by-law violations, which is down from the previous year. This is a good thing because it shows that residents are starting to understand the Animal Control by-laws. This total does not include the late fees of \$25.00 per dog for not being licensed after April 15, of each calendar year. That total came to \$6,950.00, which was caused by 278 unlicensed dogs. The Municipal Impound (holding facility) that was implemented in 2010 is still a great asset for the Town of Sterling. In 2013, I will continue to assist the residents of Sterling in any way I can by getting them to understand the animal control by-laws. My hope is that by doing this, the violations that occur will decrease even more than they have this past year. I also hope to get more dogs licensed in 2014.

In October 2010, I started an Animal Control Officer newsletter to help educate the residents of Sterling on animal happenings, facts within the town and tips to ensure animal safety. This newsletter is continuing to obtain very good responses by Sterling residents. It has lead residents to ask me questions when they see me around town. These newsletters are distributed monthly in designated locations around town. They are distributed at the Apple Town Market, Library, Recreation Department, Sterling Veterinary Clinic, Light Department, Over Easy Café, Town Hall, Village Pizza, Champion Kennels and Senior Center. They are also available online at the sterling-ma.gov website on the Animal Control page. The increase in Wildlife calls in 2013 is caused due to all the construction in the area which is pushing the wildlife out of their habitat into residential areas more and more. Because of this increase I am constantly in contact with mass wildlife due to the strict state laws pertaining to what my limitations are.

This past year I started segments on different topics which have been aired through the town's local cable station. The first segment covered the topic of the dangers of rabies being transmitted to domesticated animals, which was shot at Sterling Veterinary Clinic, with Patricia Dettlinger, D.V.M and two local girl scouts asking both of us questions on the dangers of rabies. As of April 11, 2008, I was re-certified as a level one Animal Control Officer through the National Animal Control Association. My original certification was in May 2005 through the Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts. These two separate courses gave me a different range of skills and knowledge over different lengths of time. The National Animal Control Association course was 40 hours, and the Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts course was 96 hours, providing me with 136 hours of educational and beneficial information. October 4, 2012 I attended a seminar at Tufts Veterinary School of Medicine in North Grafton pertaining to the new law changes that took affect October 31st of 2012 in chapter 140 (state law) for animal control officers, it was an all day seminar and I was granted a diploma. In 2014, an additional goal I have is to take other seminars and courses throughout the year to improve my education, which will in turn not only be beneficial to myself but will benefit the Town of Sterling as well.

Over the past several years the Town of Sterling has offered two rabies clinics open to all towns; one in the spring and one in the fall held at the Sterling Veterinary Clinic. Both of these clinics have been very successful, therefore both will continue yearly. In the fall of 2012, the town started to offer micro chips at both the spring and fall clinic and this has done very well and will also continue yearly. The town does offer dog licensing at the spring clinic to make it convenient for town residents to license their dog once they get a rabies shot. The town clerk does attend to ensure that these services are received only by Sterling residents. I do want to thank Patricia Dettlinger D.V.M and the Staff at the Sterling Veterinary Clinic for all their support and help with these rabies/micro chip clinics.

I also would like to thank the following town departments for their help and support throughout this past year, The Town Clerks office, The Sterling Police Officers and Dispatchers, Animal Control Advisory Board, Board of Health and the Light Department, DPW. I look forward to being your Animal Control Officer for the year of 2014, making positive changes to the town of Sterling's animal community.

Respectfully submitted,

Louis Massa
Town of Sterling Animal Control Officer