

FMCA news



A Message From Our President

As many of you know, I enjoy combining environmental and humane projects, some of which include wildlife as well as domestic animals. My 2006 donation to the Kenya SPCA will be used to spay/neuter feral cats from local housing estates, thereby assuring their care and survival and, hopefully, keeping them off the dinner menu of the occasional predator that wanders away from Nairobi National Park.

San Francisco has reached a new high in marrying "Man's Best Friend" to an aggressive recycling program. In a "green" publication, *Plenty*, the amusing headline reads "Pooches Poop for Power," but the innovative program should be taken more seriously. The local trash hauler, Norcal Waste Systems, has been testing a technology for converting dog poop into energy. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could power your home and car by your own dog's poop. Euthanasia of dogs at public shelters might drop to zero!)

Norcal's research developed an anaerobic digester that is fed a mixture of dog poop and food scraps. The scraps are already being collected from 2,000 San Francisco area restaurants and add a chemical balance to the mixture. Any bacteria or virus in the dog poop is killed by high temperature. Microorganisms in the digester break down the mixture into methane, which, when sent to a turbine produces energy. The plan for "harnessing" this dog poop involves the installation of collection bins and biodegradable bags in parks and public areas.

Why has this project evoked such a positive response? San Francisco has taken a tough stand on trash. The city is aiming for zero landfill garbage by 2020. In San Francisco, 3.8% of landfill waste is pet feces. Nationally, our four-footed friends produce about 10 million tons of waste per year. It is estimated that the dog/cat poop recycling effort in San Francisco could power 1,000 area homes for one year! One has to wonder how much power could be generated by the 10 million tons of animal waste produced nationally per year! An additional question is whether waste from live stock could be added to the mix! (A town of about 500 people in the mid-west, which has as its agricultural base pig farming, is converting pig waste into methane and plans to be gas independent in the near future!)

Granted, the San Francisco "experiment" is a "work in progress" and may only satisfy 10-20% of the city's future energy needs. Also, the dreaded cost/profit balance sheet has not been completed. Nonetheless, it is gratifying to see that "Man's Best Friends" might not only lower our blood pressure but help us kick our addiction to foreign oil!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Claire B.M. Proffitt".

Claire B.M. Proffitt

"When you bring a pet into your life, you begin a journey – a journey that will bring you more love and devotion than you have ever known, yet also tests your strength and courage. If you allow, the journey will teach you many things, about life, about yourself, and most of all, about love. You will come away changed forever, for one soul cannot touch another without leaving its mark."