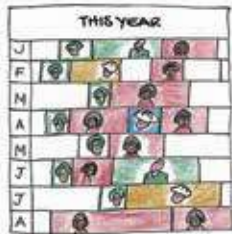


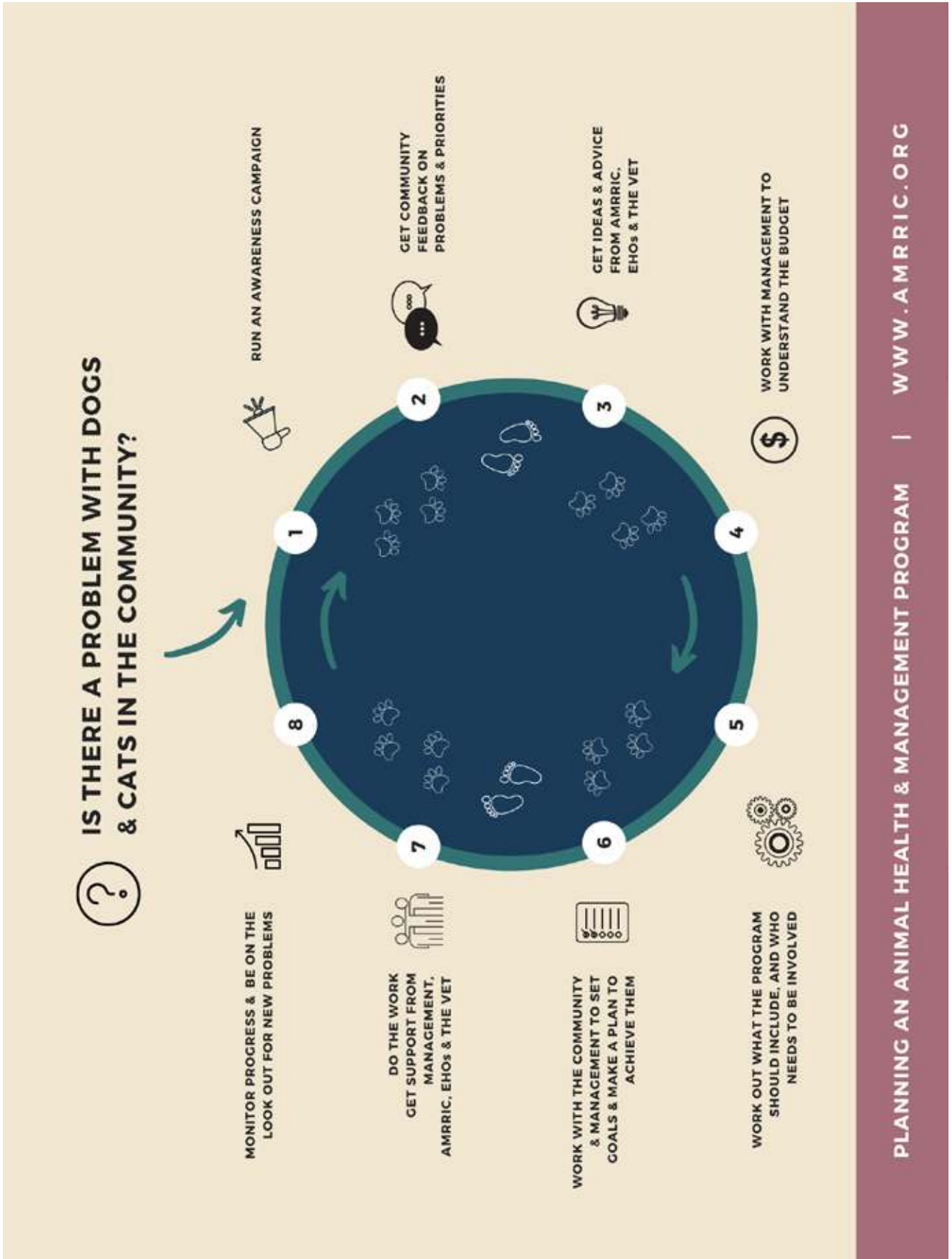
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PLANNING AN ANIMAL HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Planning an animal health and management program

All communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can have problems with dogs and cats.

Large and very isolated communities usually have more problems with dogs and cats than smaller and more accessible communities.

Animal health and management programs help communities to fix problems with dogs and cats, including:

- mange in dogs
- animal parasites like ticks, fleas, lice and worms
- dogs and cats breeding out of control
- lots of puppies and kittens dying too young
- dogs getting into rubbish
- dogs biting people
- people not looking after animals well

For an animal health and management program to be successful, it needs to have community input and support.

1. RUN AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

An awareness campaign will let the community know that the EHP team are looking at developing or improving an animal health and management program.

It should get the community thinking about some of the problems with dogs and cats, and how they should be managed.

Run an awareness campaign to let the community know that you want their thoughts

and ideas about the animal health and management program.

Noticeboard posters, radio interviews and Facebook posts are all good ways to do this.

On the AMRRIC website you can find templates for awareness campaign posters that you can download and edit.

2. FIND OUT WHAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS THINK ABOUT DOGS AND CATS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

As the EHP, you need to be able to talk with pet owners, people who don't own pets, elders, Traditional Owners and councils to find out what the community sees as problems.

You might talk to people by going house to house, or by hosting a community event where people can gather and talk about their issues and ideas.

Hosting events like community BBQs can be a good way to bring people together and get them to share their thoughts.

Some community members may not understand all of the problems with dogs and cats. You can use sections of this resource for raising community awareness about the problems.

The digital version of this resource has many pictures which you can download and use as flip charts, posters or social media posts to help with community education and awareness programs.

You might like to get the English words translated into the community's local language.

The pictures can also be starting points for community artists to make their own resources.

AMRRIC also has lots of other education resources, and you can talk to AMRRIC about which resources might be helpful.

Once you have talked with everyone to find out what they think about dogs and cats in the community, you can use everyone's feedback to create a list of the important issues that should be fixed first.

These are the priorities for the animal health and management program.

It is very important that stopping dogs and cats breeding is always on the list of priorities.

Most things the EHP team do in an animal health and management program will make dogs and cats healthier.

Healthy dogs and cats breed more, and their puppies and kittens are healthier too.

If you are working to make dogs and cats healthier but are not stopping them breeding, communities quickly get too many dogs and cats.



3. GET IDEAS AND ADVICE FROM AMRRIC, EHOS AND VETS

You might have ideas for how to fix some of the priorities, but it's a good idea to get advice from other people too.

AMRRIC, EHOs and the vet can all help you to work out the best way to fix the community's animal health and management priorities.

Getting ideas and advice early in the planning process will help the program be more successful.

4. WORK WITH MANAGEMENT TO UNDERSTAND THE BUDGET

Animal health and management programs can be expensive.

There are some things you and the community can do yourselves that might not cost too much. But if outside contractors like vets are needed, the costs can quickly add up.

It is important to understand how much budget there is to support the program.

You can then work out the costs of fixing the priorities, and stick to the budget when planning animal health and management work.

If there is not enough money in the budget, AMRRIC or EHOs might be able to help you find more funding.

5. WORK OUT WHAT THE PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE, AND WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED

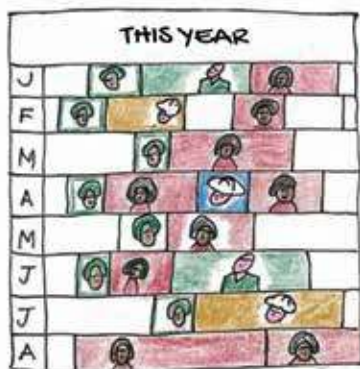
Animal health and management programs can include:

- Ways to stop animals breeding (e.g. by getting vets to surgically desex animals)
- Treatments to reduce animal parasites
- Treatments for animals that are sick or injured
- Delivering community and school education about animals
- Registration systems for dogs and cats
- Ways to manage dangerous dogs that bite people or other animals
- By-laws that set rules about how people keep animals and how many and what type that can have

- Running a pound for stray or unwanted animals
- Working with the shop so that they stock good animal health and care products
- Working with the clinic on germs that are shared between animals and people
- Research to learn more about the links between animal and human health and wellbeing.
- Keeping records and monitoring the program's progress

Some animal health and management programs will do all of these things.

Some animal health and management programs will only do some of them.



Which parts the animal health and management program will focus on depends on the community's priorities and the budget.

This resource has been developed as a training manual to help the EHP team do as much of this work as you can themselves.

With training and support, most of the animal health and management parts listed above can be done by the EHP team.

Some parts need additional help from other people. You could think about working with:

- Vets, to stop animals breeding and give treatments to improve animal health and welfare
- The health clinic, on sicknesses that people and dogs can share
- Council, to decide if by-laws or a pound will work for your community.
- The school and other community groups, to run education programs
- The shop, to stock animal care products
- Traditional medicine experts, to work out other ways to fix animal health problems.

6. WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY AND MANAGEMENT TO SET GOALS AND MAKE A PLAN TO ACHIEVE THEM

It's a good idea to think about setting some goals for what the program will achieve and when.

Work out realistic goals and how soon they can be achieved. Work with the people who are going to be involved in delivering the program (e.g. with the vets) to do this.

The goals should be developed with feedback from management and the community.

Each part of the program should have at least one goal. Goals can be short term (within the next year) or long term (longer than 1 year).

Some example goals might be:

- By this time next year, the vets will have visited three times

- Every 2 months, we will treat the whole community's dog population with anti-parasite treatments
- By July, we will have all animals in the community recorded on the AMRRIC App
- At least once each month, we will talk on the radio about things the community can do to care for animals
- Over the next 5 years, we will increase the percentage of dogs that are desexed from 30% to 80%.

These are just examples. There are lots of other goals that the EHP team might create.

Writing down the goals as part of the animal health and management plan, will help everyone to remember what the goals are, and keep a track of progress.

For each goal, it's a good idea to write down:

- The steps needed to achieve the goal
- Who is responsible for doing each step
- What resources (e.g. funding, equipment or facilities) are needed for each step

This information can be used to create an animal health and management plan for the community. It can also feed into your work plan.

AMRRIC can assist you to set goals and develop an animal health and management plan for your community.



7. DO THE WORK. GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR MANAGEMENT, AMRRIC, EHOs AND VET

Once the plan is developed, you can then follow the plan and get to work delivering the program.

More information about delivering the program can be found in other chapters of this resource.

Running an animal health and management program can be hard work. It is important that you have good support to deliver the program.

Good support can come from:

- **Management**

Having good support from management is very important.

Sometimes, management doesn't understand what an animal health and management program is, or why it is needed.

By talking about the problems with animals in the community, and the community's priorities, you can help management to understand more about the program.

You can also suggest that management talk directly with AMRRIC, EHOs or the vet, to learn more about why an animal health and management program is important.

- **AMRRIC**

AMRRIC stands for Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities.

It is an organisation that helps communities keep their animals healthy and populations under control.

By phoning or emailing, or meeting with AMRRIC, you can get up-to-date information from vets and education specialists about any

problems you may be having with your animal health and management program. You can also get advice on what solutions might work for your community.

AMRRIC might be able to connect you up with other people who have worked in the region or know about previous animal management programs locally.

AMRRIC can also help you to find places to get special training for certain jobs, and has lots of educational resources that you can use in your programs.

- **Environmental Health Officers (EHOs)**

EHOs usually work for the Department of Health.

EHOs who have run animal health and management programs can help you to run programs.

They can come to planning sessions and help to make sure the resources are kept up to the program.

- **Vets**

If the community has a vet they are happy with, the vet might be able to give them good planning advice over the phone or in meetings in the community.

You shouldn't be scared to phone your vet to talk through problems you may be having. Talking with the vet is especially important if animals are having problems after surgery or receiving medicines.

It is worth remembering that vets are running businesses. Vet visits to communities can be quite expensive, and there are many jobs that vets do in communities that could be done by trained community people.

Make sure to choose a vet that wants to help the community run its own program. If the

community wants to work in the program, make sure to choose a vet that is happy to train local people to do a lot of the work.

Using a vet to deliver training will take more time and money. There will need to be a budget that includes training time in the vet's schedule.

This might be more expensive in the short term, but if the vet can train local people to do most of the work in animal health and management programs, then in the long term, this model could be cheaper for the community.

- **Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)**

There are lots of different training options available to give you the skills and knowledge to help with your job. Some of this training has been developed especially for remote communities – talk to AMRRIC about this training.

A lot of training provided by RTOs is not well suited to remote communities so it is important to know which training will be helpful for remote communities.

If you are doing blocks of training, you should talk to the RTO about the problems you are having with your program, and use the training blocks to learn how to get around these problems.



8. MONITOR PROGRESS

To know whether or not the program is achieving its goals, it's important to keep good records.

These records can then be used to go back to the animal health and management plan and check progress. This should happen at least every 12 months.

Later in this resource, there is more information on record keeping and program evaluation.

If the records show that the goals aren't being achieved, you should think about why, and what can be done to change things.

When progress is made and the goals achieved, it's important to let management, the community, and anyone involved in the program know.

Celebrating success is a good way to keep everyone on-board with the program.

Keeping a program running

While there are dogs and cats in a community, there will always be problems with animals.

It is important that animal health and management programs continue to run.

Stop-start programs cost a lot of money. If a program stops for one year the animals will get bad again and any goals achieved by the previous program will be quickly lost.

As the EHP, you should think about what will keep the program running over a long time. Things to think about are:

- working as an EHP team, not just one person doing the job
- going back to the animal health and

management plan at least every 3 months, looking at what to do next

- getting the vets to visit regularly. AMRRIC recommends that vets visit at least every 6 months; visits every 3-4 months are better if there is enough funding
- working together with the clinic, the school and other local organisations like the rangers
- regularly letting the community know how the animal health and management program is working and what goals are being achieved
- keeping good records so the program can show how well its going, and keep getting funding
- getting more training to keep the job interesting
- making sure management know what a good job the EHP team are doing

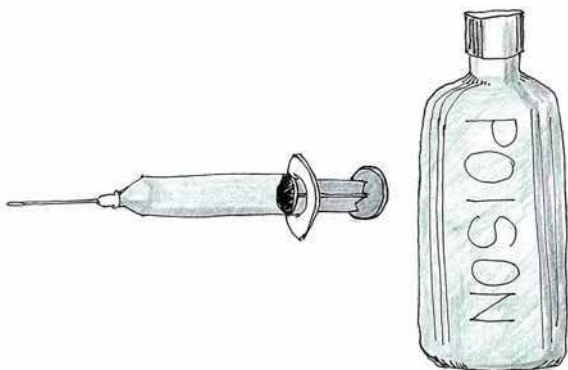


What medicines the EHP can give

For an animal health and management program to run well the EHP needs to be able to give medicines to the animals when the vet is not in the community.

The Federal Health Department puts medicines into different groups depending on how dangerous they are for people and animals.

These lists are called the medicines and poisons schedules.



The most common poisons schedules that EHPs will deal with are:

- **Schedule 5 drugs**
 - These have the word “Caution” on the label.
 - They are called S5 drugs for short.
 - For S5 drugs the safety information on the package is enough to keep people and animals safe when using them.
 - They can be bought over the counter at stock and station agents, vets and supermarkets.
 - They include registered anti-parasite treatment products like Nexgard®, Bravecto®, Drontal®, or Paragard®.

- **Schedule 4 drugs**
 - These have the words “Prescription Animal Remedy” or “Prescription Only Medicine” written on the label.
 - They are called S4 drugs for short.
 - S4 drugs can only be prescribed by the people registered to do so. The people who prescribe S4 medicines are mostly vets, chemists and doctors.
 - These drugs can cause harm if they are not used correctly, so the prescriber needs to provide safety instructions with the medicine.

The most common medicines given by EHPs in animal health and management programs are:

1. IVERMECTIN, DORAMECTIN AND MOXIDECTIN:

They are given to treat and prevent worms and mange.

The ones used in animal health and management programs are really meant for cattle and sheep.

Using them on dogs or cats is what is called an “extra label” use of the drug. Because of this, even though the medicines are S5s, because it is “extra label”, any administration of Ivermectin, Doramectin or Moxidectin must be overseen by a registered veterinarian.

2. PROLIGESTONE (COVINAN®)

This is given to stop female dogs breeding.

It is an S4 drug.

3. PENTOBARBITONE SODIUM (LETHABARB®)

This is used to kill animals by needle.

This is an S4 drug in most places. In NSW there are special restrictions on Lethabarb, and it is a 'S4D' drug.

4. SEDATIVES

These are medicines that can make animals sleepy.

They can help the EHP deal with cheeky dogs or do quick first aid on dogs.

Sedatives are normally S4 drugs. There are many different types of sedatives.

Authorisations to give S4 medicines

In remote communities, S4 drugs might need to be used when the vet is not around.

With training, sometimes EHPs can get a special authorisation that allows them to keep S4 drugs and use them with the vet's approval.

What you need to do to get an authorisation is different in each state and territory.

AMRRIC has a factsheet that contains information about different state and territory requirements to get an authorisation to use S4s.

You, or your vet, should also contact the state or territory Department of Health to check on up-to-date requirements.

In all cases, you need to work with a vet so the vet can be sure that you know when to use these medicines, and how to safely store and give the medicines.

You should talk to your vet if you think that

giving S4 drugs to animals that need them would help to improve the animal health and management program. The vet will know who to talk to and will be able to find out what has to be done to set this up.

Storage requirements for S4 medicines

S4 drugs must be kept in a place where other people can't access them.

In some states or territories, some S4 medicines have extra rules about how they need to be stored.

For example, in NSW Pentobarbitone Sodium (Lethabarb or 'the green dream') must be kept separately in its own locked cupboard or safe that is securely attached to the building.

The NSW Department of Health must be notified if there is any loss or theft of Pentobarbitone Sodium. This is because Pentobarbitone Sodium is a very strong drug and can kill other animals or even people if it is not used correctly.

It is strongly recommended that Pentobarbitone Sodium be stored in a locked safe that can only be accessed by trained people like the EHP or vet. Because it can be misused, some communities might even decide that they don't want it stored in their community.

Getting authorised, storing and treating animals with S4 medicines is a big responsibility. When thinking about getting authorised to give S4 medicines, it's important that you talk with the vet, with management, and with elders and Traditional Owners.

AMRRIC can also help you to decide if getting authorised for S4 is the right decision for you and your animal health and management program.