

Animal Folks Hosts Educational Booth at the Minnesota State Fair

Animal Folks was excited to host a booth at the Minnesota State Fair from August 25 - September 5, 2022. It was our first year at the State Fair and it was a huge success.

Located in the Education Building, our booth was the perfect spot to meet and speak with thousands of people—adults and children—about Animal Folks’ mission and our message to “Be Kind to Animals.”

We had multiple banners along with buttons, free window clings, flyers, and other literature to promote animal protection and animal welfare.

Being at the Minnesota State Fair is one of Animal Folks’ strategies to reach people from all over Minnesota. Thanks to 46 committed volunteers, we were able to speak directly with numerous Minnesotans as well as visitors from 22 other states. We heard many personal stories from people who sincerely care about animals.



We plan to attend the Minnesota State Fair again in 2023! We’ll keep you updated. Additional details provided on page 4 of this report.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Animal Folks is to protect animals and fight animal cruelty through constructive and sustainable reforms of the Minnesota criminal and civil justice systems.

OUR POSITIONING

Public safety and crime prevention.

WHO WE SERVE

Animals in Minnesota. We also serve Minnesota residents who believe animals should be treated humanely and authorities who are involved in the enforcement of animal law.

SYSTEM REFORM

Animal Folks accomplishes its mission through a systems-thinking approach. This strategic approach focuses on the development of long-term, sustainable solutions across multiple disciplines to improve the enforcement of animal law and protection of animals.

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Our five program areas include: 1) Animal Law Resources; 2) Legislative Action; 3) Outreach & Communication; 4) Animal Cruelty Research; and 5) Criminal & Civil Justice. Depending on funding and need, projects may vary each year.

PROGRAM GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PROGRAM 1: Animal Law Resources

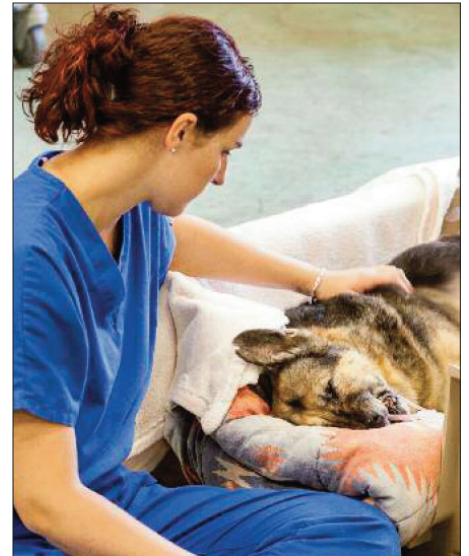
GOAL: To foster professionalism and competency by providing training, resources, and support to Minnesota authorities responsible for the enforcement of animal law.

2022 Strategies and Actions

- **Animal Cruelty Training for Veterinarian Students** — 2022 was the third year that Animal Folks, together with veterinarians at the University of Minnesota, trained senior veterinary students about how to identify, document, and report animal cruelty. This training lays a foundation for their future actions as licensed veterinarians and mandated reporters of animal cruelty.

Key to the presentation is to encourage students to ask future employers, such as a veterinary clinic or hospital, about what protocols they have in place for reporting cruelty; and, if no protocols exist, to help establish protocols and encourage licensed veterinarians to discuss their duties and responsibilities for mandated reporting.

Students are the next generation for animal protection; their voice will help teach others in the veterinary profession about animal cruelty and how to report these crimes.



- **Animal Cruelty Reporting Manual: For Veterinarians** — The animal cruelty reporting manual for veterinarians was written in 2016 by Animal Folks. Each year the manual is reviewed and updates are made, if necessary. This manual is used in the training for students and licensed veterinarians. It is available online and in printed form as a reference. Animal Folks also meets with veterinary clinics directly who request specific training for their veterinary staff.
- **Minnesota Judge's Criminal Benchbook** — Animal Folks convened a team of legal experts to write the Animal Cruelty Chapter for the Minnesota Judge's Criminal Benchbook, published by MN Continuing Legal Education. Each year we update the chapter for any statutory changes (first version was published in 2021). The benchbook is used by judges and prosecutors while conducting legal research on Minnesota criminal laws and related issues. This chapter illustrates Animal Folks' mission to create constructive and sustainable reforms for the protection of animals.

PROGRAM 2: Legislative Action

GOAL: To lead and support state and local legislative efforts, including crafting of humane laws, lobbying, and advocacy, that protects animals and lays a foundation for system reform.

2022 Strategies and Actions

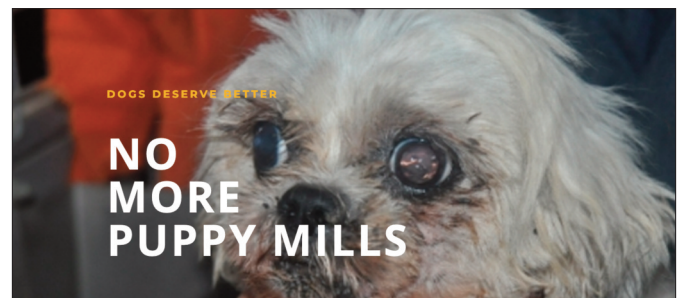
- **November Elections** — Elections were a big part of 2022, impacting who was elected to lead local, state, and federal governments. As a 501c3 nonprofit, Animal Folks cannot be involved in electioneering; however, we could share information about where to vote and how to be involved in the democratic process for animal issues. Elections shaped all offices, but the state was greatly impacted. Due to redistricting in Minnesota and other factors, 59 state legislators retired or sought other seats or offices. The Democrats won the Governor's office, MN Senate, MN House of Representatives, MN Attorney General, and other elected positions; results of this election will impact state bills heard or passed in 2023.



- **Office of Animal Protection (OAP) bill** — For over a decade, Animal Folks has been tracking animal cruelty cases in Minnesota and assessing how these crimes are investigated and prosecuted. We have interviewed numerous authorities in Minnesota and nationally to compile best practices for enforcement efforts. Based on this research, Animal Folks, in 2022, wrote a state bill to create an Office of Animal Protection with expertise and oversight in multiple disciplines (see right) — for introduction at the MN Legislature in 2023. As animal cruelty is a crime, this office would be housed under the Department of Public Safety. As per Minnesota Statutes Chapter 343, all species would be protected.



- **Companion Animal Board (CAB) bill** — In 2022, Animal Folks continued lobbying the Companion Animal Board bill at the MN Legislature. The Companion Animal Board will provide the necessary expertise to lead pet welfare issues statewide. Extensive advocacy was also conducted during the interim months. Learn more: mncab.org
- **Winona County: Puppy mill discussion and ordinance** — With residents in Winona County, Animal Folks has been working hard to address the problem of industrial dog breeding facilities (puppy mills) in Winona County. In November 2022, the county board agreed to discuss this issue and placed it on the agenda for 2023. Sign petition in support and learn more: speakupwinonacounty.org



PROGRAM 3: Outreach and Communication

GOAL: To educate the public on animal law and animal cruelty issues, and enhance communication and cooperation between various stakeholders involved in the enforcement of animal law.

2022 Strategies and Actions

- **Minnesota State Fair** — Hosting a booth at the Minnesota State Fair was every bit as fun as you would imagine. Thousands of people visited the booth, asking questions, sharing stories, and taking free buttons, Pet Alert window clings, and flyers. Almost 1,700 people signed the petition in support of animal protection; this represented 66 Minnesota counties, 248 MN cities, all 67 MN Senate districts, and 130 MN House districts.



- **Events** — Animal Folks participated in animal events and conferences, including the Animal Humane Society Walk for Animals in April 2022 and the Tri-County Humane Society Conference in June 2022. In May 2022, Animal Folks also presented at the Office of Justice Program Conference. Topic was animal sexual abuse with speakers Ann Olson, Executive Director of Animal Folks, Pine County Attorney Reese Frederickson, and criminologist Jenny Edwards.

PROGRAM 4: Animal Cruelty Research

GOAL: To research animal cruelty cases and issues pertaining to crimes against animals, and provide credible Minnesota-specific data to the public, agencies, and organizations upon request.

2022 Strategies and Actions

- **Data requests** — Animal Folks regularly submits data requests to other states and the federal government to obtain data on licensed facilities that use animals for profit, such as dog breeding facilities and research laboratories. Requests include inspection reports and Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (imports/exports). The data is used in testimony to provide factual information on the conditions of animals or facilities, including violations of law.
- **Specific topics** — Many of the initiatives led or supported by Animal Folks require credible research. We have a team of researchers who gather local and national data on a wide variety of animal issues and law.

PROGRAM 5: Criminal and Civil Justice

GOAL: To report suspected or known animal cruelty (or related crimes against animals) and provide input to criminal and civil cases throughout the legal process, including assistance to human and animal victims.

2022 Strategies and Actions

- **Victim Advocacy** — Animal Folks is contacted by human victims of animal cruelty, asking for assistance with how to maneuver the legal process — from understanding criminal law and rights as a victim to understanding civil law and how to hold an abuser accountable financially through consumer protection laws and other legal actions.



- **Criminal law, animal cruelty:** The story below happens too often. In this case, the dog's owner spoke up to get justice for her dog, Pudding (at left). John Strecker, her neighbor and a Mille Lacs resident, killed Pudding. He was charged with and convicted of one count felony animal cruelty.

The incident: One day, the owner's two dogs had gotten loose; the owner notified Strecker, her neighbor, and said that she and her son were looking for them. One of the dogs returned home that evening but Pudding did not return. Days later, after a long search, Strecker admitted to shooting the dog and burying the body. According to the criminal complaint, Strecker told a deputy that he "did not care about the law," and would "continue to shoot any dog that was out when he was deer hunting." There was no evidence that deer were in the area at that time.

Animal Folks was contacted by Pudding's owner. Pudding was considered part of their family — a companion to herself and son. Animal Folks worked with the family, providing knowledge about the legal process, including animal law, expectations for hearings and trial, and victim statements. The Mille Lacs County Attorney understood the severity of the crime and the loss to the family. As one sentencing condition, he recommended that Strecker could no longer use or possess firearms. Animal cruelty cases can be emotionally draining and confusing for those not familiar with the legal system. Animal Folks can assist.

- **Civil law, consumer protection** — Other cases that cause harm to animals involve civil law. Consumers may purchase an animal, such as a pet at a pet store, and, if the animal's health was misrepresented to them and the animal was sick, consumers are often frustrated as to what to do legally. This was true with the case of Lulu - puppy at right held by Bella. (Bella and her mother purchased Lulu from the store Four Paws and A Tail in Blaine). Soon after the day of purchase, Lulu was sick and a month later she died. The owner learned Lulu had been bred at a puppy mill in Wisconsin. These cases involve pain and suffering for both the animal and people. Animal Folks has been working with this family who have been speaking up for Lulu, trying to get a humane pet store ordinance passed in the City of Blaine. The full story is at: gohumaneblaine.org.



FINANCES

Animal Folks is proud to be a Charities Review Council Meets Standards® organization and a Gold Guidestar participant.



STATEMENT – Fiscal Year 2022 — January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022

Support and Revenue

Individual Contributions	\$109,822
In-kind Contributions	\$96,213
Government Grants	\$1,512
Corp/Fdtn Contributions	\$43,305
Program Service CREvenue	\$181
Total Support and Revenue	\$251,033

Expense

Program Services	\$249,835
Fundraising	\$18,899
General/Admin	\$15,618
Total Expenses	\$284,354

Program Services: Major Program Expenses

Animal Cruelty Research	\$85,384
Criminal & Civil Justice	\$32,188
Animal Law Resources	\$75,105
Legislative Action	\$24,521
Outreach & Education	\$32,188

Balance Sheet – Fiscal Year 2020

Assets

Cash	\$80,383
Prepaid Expenses	\$2,857

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$11,674
------------------	----------

Net Assets	\$71,565
-------------------	-----------------

GOVERNANCE

Animal Folks: Board of Directors

Reese Frederickson
 John Kingrey
 Marianne Settano Shumaker
 Rose Surma
 Karen Lundquist
 Ann Olson
 Advisor: Cynthia Erickson

Our Team

Ann Olson, Founder and Executive Director
 Arianna Pittman, Senior Researcher and Writer
 Jessie Lyons, Administrative and Database Manager;
 Animal Cruelty Databank, Project Manager
 Megan Helling, Manager, Public Policy & Advocacy
 Kathy Mock, Public Policy Strategist
 Brittany DeVito, Databank Researcher
 Mike Tincher, Design and Marketing
 Jeff Moravec, Social Media
 Lobbyists: Christopherson Advocates

VALUES

Our actions are guided by our values:
 Nonviolence, Respect, Ethics,
 Credibility, and Innovation

THANKS

Thank you to all the talented volunteers, advocates, and donors who support Animal Folks.