SAMPLE LETTERS TO WRITE TO SHELTERS + NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO A SHELTER’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Writing a letter to the Board of your local shelter or animal rescue is one of the first steps in working towards getting an animal friendly menu policy in place. Here are two sample letters, but please customize yours to best suit your local shelter.

SAMPLE LETTER #1
Dear _____ [Board members of an animal shelter],

As a resident of ______[county or city], I am writing to encourage ______ [shelter] to adopt an animal friendly menu policy for your shelter-sponsored events.

I believe that an animal friendly menu policy would be entirely consistent with your shelter's loving kindness already demonstrated for the animals in its care. Such a policy would promote delicious, healthy, and nutritious, plant-based foods for menu items without serving animals.

The effort to encourage animal shelters to adopt animal friendly menu policies -- called the Food for Thought program -- is being led by Animal Place, a non-profit organization of which I am a member. Founded in 1989, Animal Place is one of the oldest and largest sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country, and it strives to create meaningful change through advocacy and education. It's primary sanctuary, nestled on 600-acres in Grass Valley, CA, provides refuge to hundreds of neglected farmed animals and attracts thousands of visitors each year.

The Food for Thought program is intended to assist animal shelters like yours to consistently demonstrate their values of caring for animals through the type of food served at their sponsored events. Many other shelters and animal protection organizations, from national organizations like the Humane Society of the United States to local shelters, have already adopted animal friendly menu policies. I have enclosed a list of these organizations along with copies of policy statements they have adopted, and a list of endorsements for Food for Thought. For a complete list of these organizations, as well as much more detailed information about the overall initiative, please visit: www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org.

I would be pleased to meet with you in the near future to discuss the possibility of ______ [shelter] adopting an animal friendly menu policy for its shelter-sponsored events. I will call your office [next week] to see if you would like to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,
SAMPLE LETTER #2

Dear Board member of [shelter name],

As a board member of an animal shelter, you know how important being a great ambassador for animals is for you! Your contribution to improving the welfare of dogs, cats, and other animals is admirable. [insert: I am a member/volunteer of your organization or I am a member/volunteer of Animal Place, a sanctuary for animals.]

I would like to introduce you to Animal Place’s program, Food for Thought, which fits well with shelters interested in being role models for their community. Food for Thought is a national effort that encourages animal shelter boards to adopt an animal friendly menu policy for all shelter-sponsored events. The initiative is spirited by Animal Place, a non-profit sanctuary located in Grass Valley, California. The sanctuary was founded in 1989 as an avenue to extend compassion to all life -- with an emphasis on farmed animals.

Many dog and cat shelters rescue farm animals. Rabbits, chickens, goats, pigs, cows, llamas, horses, and alpacas all may enter your shelter. And, as you do with dogs and cats, reasonable efforts are made to find permanent homes for these perhaps more atypical rescues. The Food for Thought program hopes to help make the connection between the chickens saved from hoarding cases and injured calves rescued from the the side of the road to serving chicken and beef at a shelter-sponsored meal.

Shelters are known for rescuing, providing care, and adopting and advocating for animals and, because of that, Food for Thought asks for more consistency with caring for animals by not serving them at your events.

If this animal friendly menu policy is something your shelter might be willing to consider, please feel free to contact me with any questions or visit the website for more information: www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org.

Sincerely,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why should you write a letter to your editor? Because it helps raise awareness in the
community about the opportunities shelters have to help more animals each time they offer food to the public. This isn't asking any individual to make personal dietary changes, but to respect the animals that are rescued by not serving them at events where they are sheltered at the same time.

Below, we have a few sample letters to the editor you can adapt to suit your needs. Be sure to research the submission requirements for your paper, as each newspaper has different word count requirements and may request your contact information before printing. Make these letters your own by writing in your voice and from your own perspective.

Please note, letters to the editor of a newspaper that name a specific shelter/organization would be encouraged by Animal Place only after the "behind the scenes" effort to work with the shelter to adopt an animal friendly menu policy has come to an impasse.

SAMPLE LETTER #1 (for a longer letter)

Dear _______ [editor of newspaper],

I am writing to inform readers of ______ [newspaper] about a nationwide effort to encourage animal shelters to adopt an
animal friendly menu policy for their shelter-sponsored events. I believe that such a policy would be entirely consistent with an animal shelter's loving kindness already demonstrated for the animals in its care. The policy would promote delicious, healthy, and nutritious, plant-based foods for menu items without serving animals. Many other shelters and animal protection organizations have already adopted such policies, including the Humane Society of the United States.

This nationwide effort -- called the Food for Thought program-- is being led by Animal Place, a non-profit organization of which I am a member. Founded in Grass Valley, CA in 1989, Animal Place is one of the oldest and largest sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country, and it strives to create meaningful change through advocacy and education.

Thanks to those of you who support animal shelters, the staff and volunteers of animal shelters, and most of all, the wonderful animals in their care. See www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org for additional information.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER #2 (for a medium-length letter)

Dog and cat shelters offer an important service with public education, adoption, and rescue. They work incredibly hard to help dogs, cats, and other animals, including farmed animals such as rabbits, chickens and goats. Because there is now a fading line between ‘who’ is food and friend when it comes to animals at the shelter, there is a growing trend for animal nonprofits to adopt an animal friendly menu policy. In other words, organizations, including the Humane Society of the United States, are now keeping animals off the menu at their functions. I encourage all animal-related organizations to join this effort to be consistent in our concern for animal welfare by adopting an animal friendly menu policy. A lot of great information is available through Animal Place’s Food for Thought program: foodforthoughtcampaign.org.

[your name]