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THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROMOTING  
ANIMAL WELFARE

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR ALACHUA COUNTY  
MADDIE'S FUND COMMUNITY PROGRAM**

**FY2005-06  
Summary Report**

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## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR ALACHUA COUNTY COMMUNITY PROGRAM

### Introduction

By its fourth completed program year (FY2005-06) Alachua County made substantial progress in many key program areas (Figure 1). The overall animal death rate per 1,000 people in the community dropped 55%. The death rate of animals that are either healthy or with treatable conditions per 1,000 people dropped 61%. Animal adoptions per 1,000 people increased 47%. The live animal release rate, a measure of the portion of shelter animals that are adopted or redeemed, was up 92%. In the baseline period the live animal release rate was 29%. By the fourth program year the live animal release rate was 56% indicating that most of the animals coming into area shelters were adopted or redeemed.

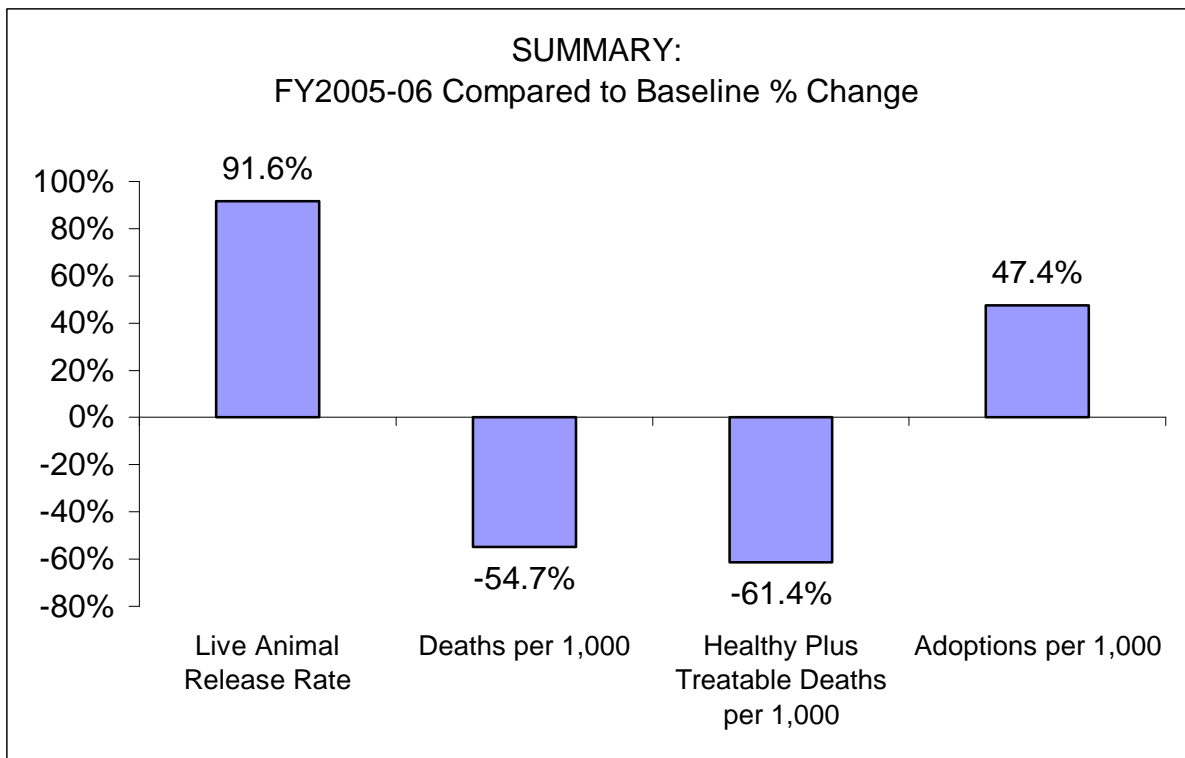
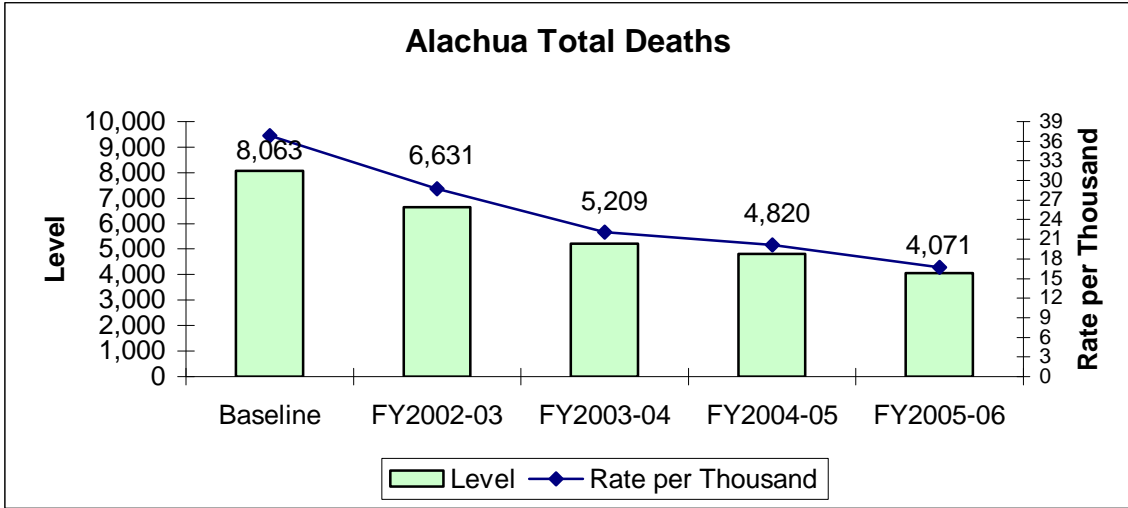


Figure 1

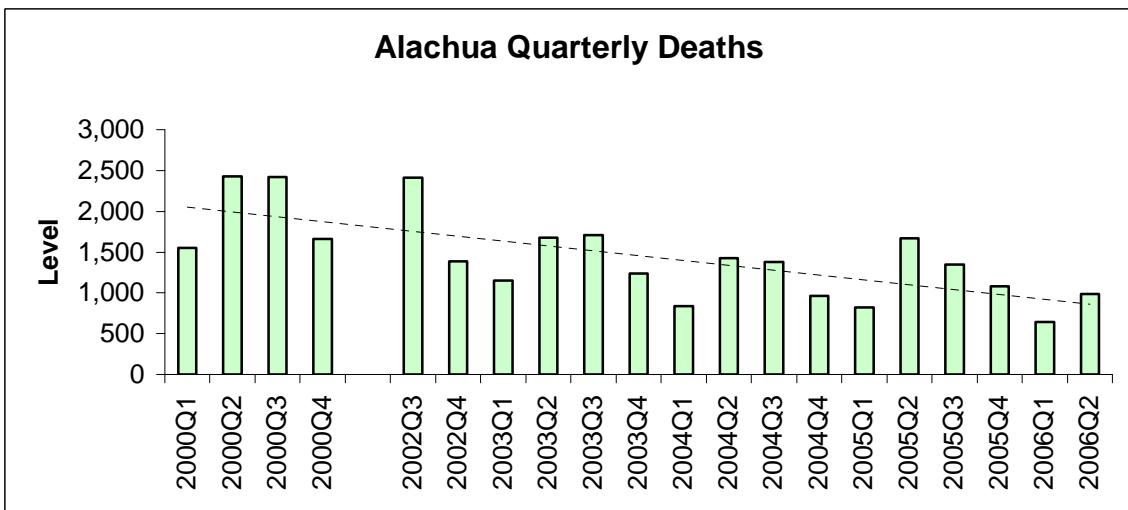
### Total Death Rate

The death rate of animals in Alachua shelters dropped 50% from 8,063 animals to 4,071 animals (see Figure 2). When the size of the human population is taken into account, animal deaths dropped 55% to 16.7 deaths per 1,000 people. The death rate declined every year of the program both in death rate per 1,000 people and in the raw level of deaths. While the strongest decline in terms of level was in the first two years, there is no evidence of ongoing diminishing returns. The fourth year had a sharper decline than the third year, and all years showed solid drops in the death rate.



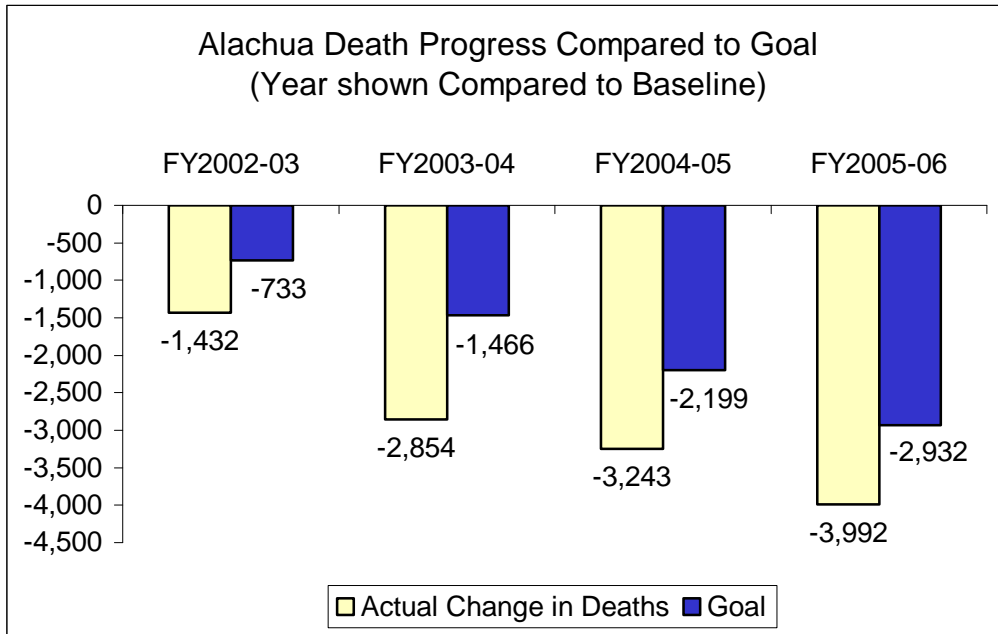
**Figure 2**

The quarterly death rate is shown in Figure 3. There is a clear seasonal pattern with a peak in the second to third quarter and a trough in the first quarter. For the latest full fiscal year, two of the four quarters had significant year over year declines in deaths. The first two quarters of 2006 had lower death rates than the same quarters of the prior year. However, the fourth quarter of 2005 had an increase in deaths from the prior year, and the third quarter of 2005 had almost the same death rate as the prior year. The first quarter of 2006 had the lowest death rate of any quarter in the program so far. Although the second quarter of 2006 shows an increase from the first quarter, this is due to the seasonal pattern present in every year, and in fact the second quarter has the largest percentage drop compared to the same quarter a year ago (40.6%) of any quarter in the entire program period.



**Figure 3**

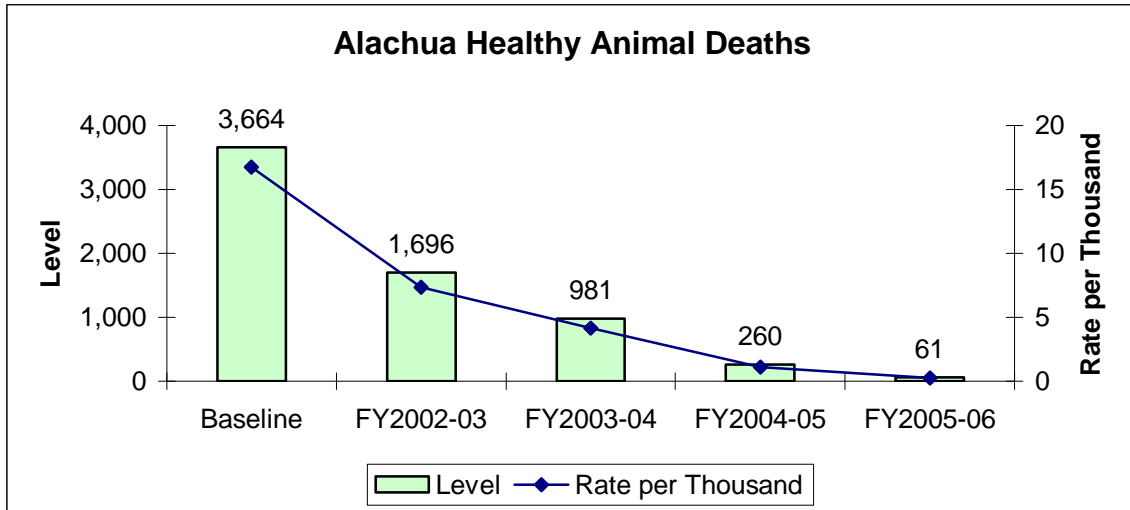
The decline in the death rate in all four program years exceeded the program's goal. In fact, in the first two program years, the death rate declined by close to double the goal (see Figure 4). While the third and fourth years' total decline also exceeded their goals, the year-over-year change was smaller in these two years. The fourth year's change from the prior year was stronger than in the third year. In fact, the year over year change in the fourth program year was greater than -733, the amount of change expected in deaths between year 3 and year 4. Even if Alachua deaths remain unchanged in year 5, the total deaths goal for that year will be met.



**Figure 4**

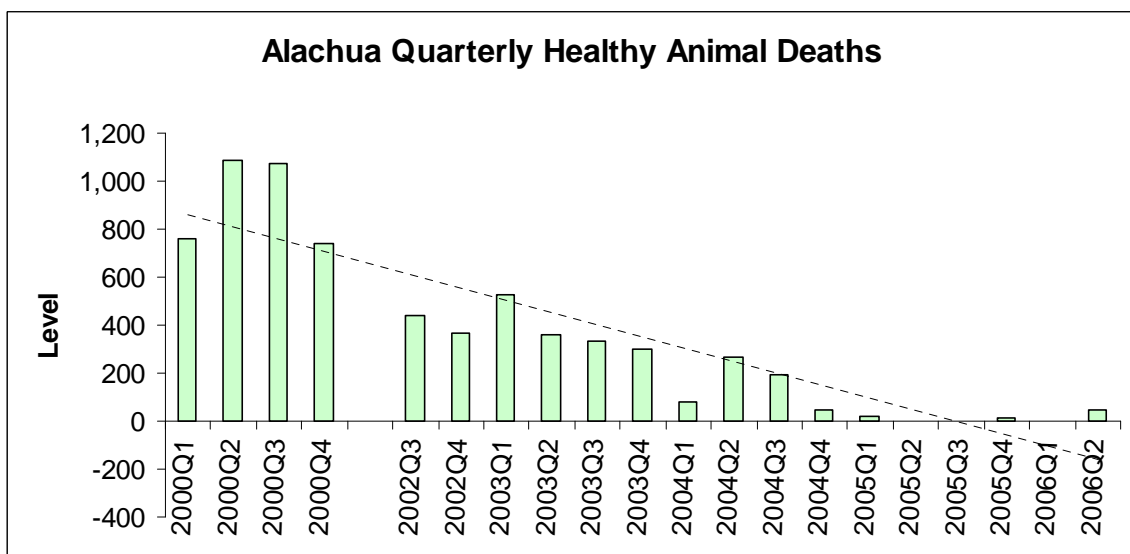
### **Healthy Animal Deaths**

Healthy animal deaths declined 98.3% from 3,664 deaths to 61 deaths (see Figure 5). When population size is taken into consideration, healthy animal deaths declined 98.5% to 0.2 deaths per thousand people in FY2005-06. Each year had lower healthy animal deaths than the prior year. The first three years had a larger decline in level than the fourth program year. However, this is because the healthy animal death rate was quickly approaching zero by the third year, making incremental improvements more difficult to achieve. In fact, as a percent of the prior year's total healthy animal deaths, the decline in the fourth year was the largest of any annual period.



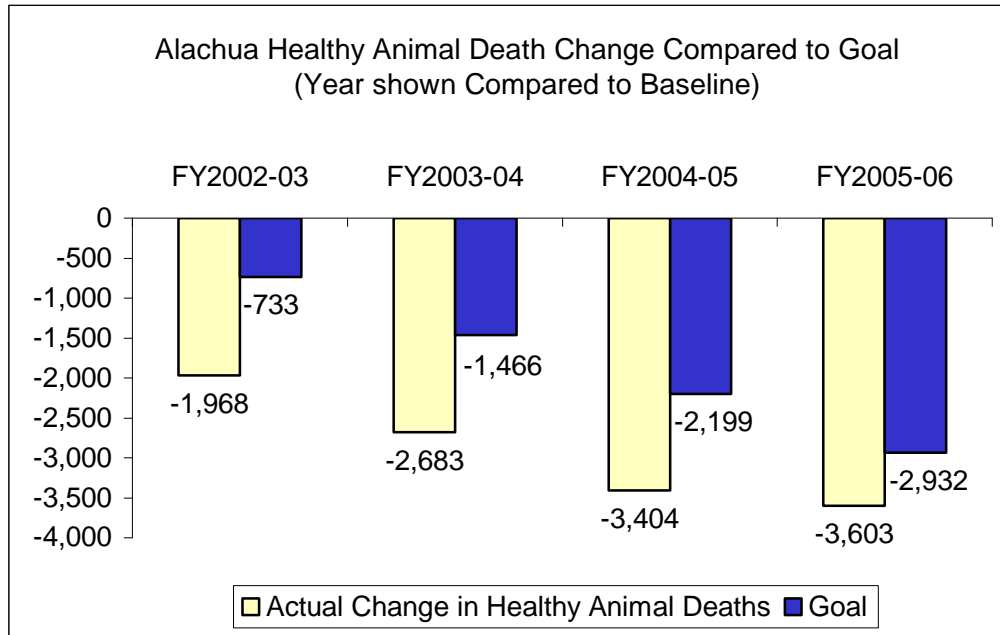
**Figure 5**

On a quarterly basis, healthy animal deaths show a strong declining trend (see Figure 6). Despite a strong seasonal pattern, most quarters have declined not only from the same quarter in the prior year, but also from the prior quarter. All quarters but one in the full program period showed a decline from the same quarter in the prior year. The one exception is the second quarter of 2006, which also happens to be the most recent quarter in the data. Almost 80% of the healthy animal deaths in the fourth program year were in the second quarter of 2006. Most (54%) of these deaths occurred in the month of June, with about 60% of the deaths in June coming from cats. This upturn in the last quarter (and particularly the last month) of data is of some concern, but the death rate in the last year was nevertheless extremely low, with two of the four quarters having no healthy animal deaths.



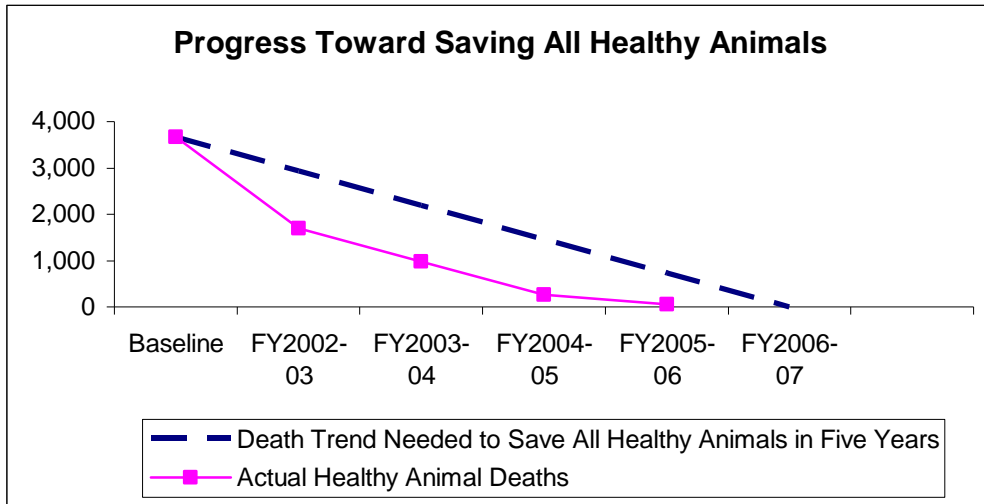
**Figure 6**

The reduction of healthy animal deaths exceeded Maddie’s Fund program goals for all program years (see Figure 7). The first two program years were more than double their respective goals, while the next two years also had healthy death declines in excess of their goals. In fact, the FY2005-06 the healthy animal death change was just short of the next year’s goal (i.e. FY2006-07). Healthy deaths only need to decline slightly to reach the year 5 goal.



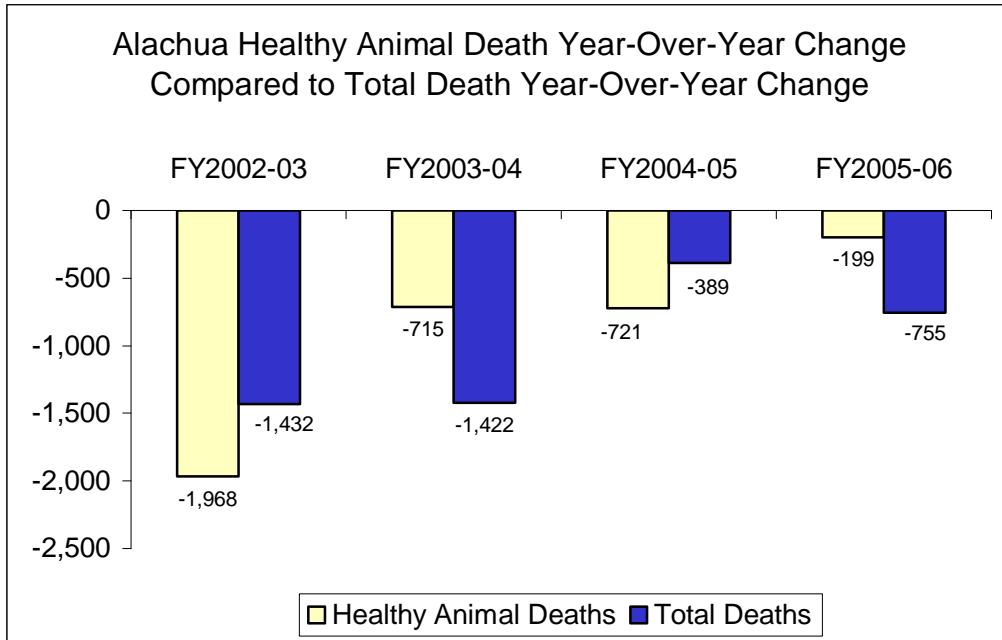
**Figure 7**

In FY2005-06, the program’s fourth year, the Alachua County community program came very close to reaching its five-year goal of reducing all healthy animal deaths (see Figure 8). The County appears to be well-positioned to reaching the goal of eliminating all healthy animal deaths in FY2006-07.



**Figure 8**

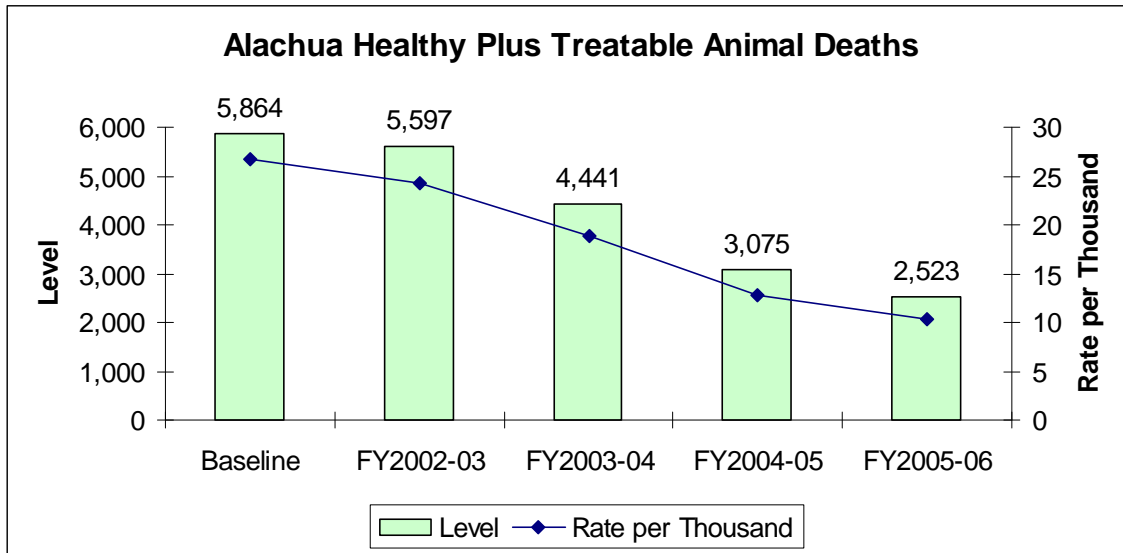
The year-over-year change in both healthy animal deaths and total deaths both moved in the same direction in all program years (see Figure 9). In the first and third years, the decline in healthy animal deaths was larger than the decline in total deaths, while the opposite was true in the second and fourth years. In the baseline period, healthy animal deaths were 45% of total animal deaths. By the fourth year, healthy deaths were only about 1.5% of total deaths due to a larger percentage decline in healthy deaths than total deaths over the full period. Since healthy animal deaths were the primary target of the Alachua community program, the pattern of death decline suggests that Alachua County has generally been successful in focusing its efforts on healthy animals.



**Figure 9**

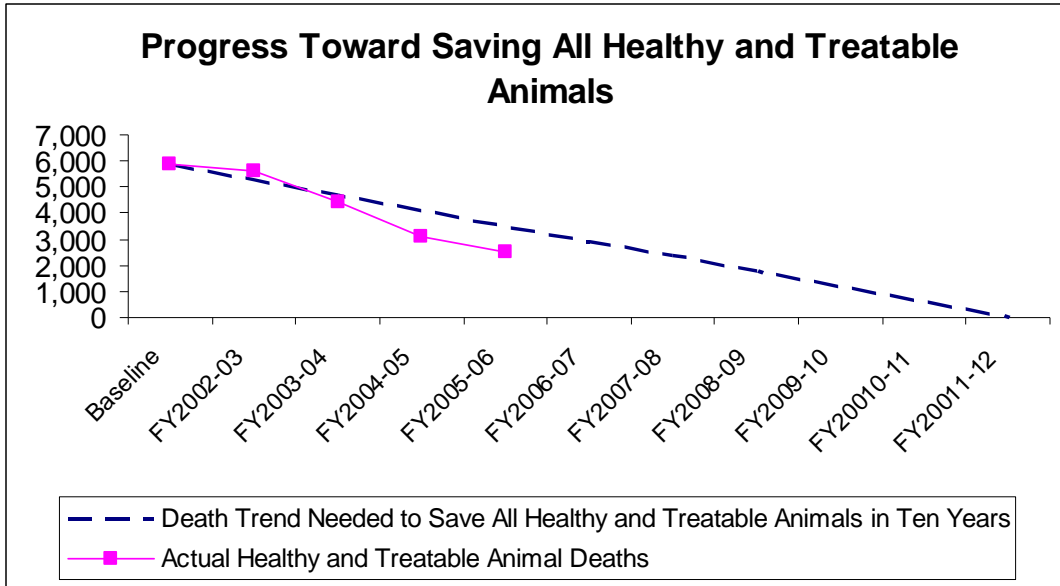
### **Healthy and Treatable Animals**

Healthy and treatable animal deaths declined 57% from 5,864 in the baseline period to 2,523 in FY2005-06 (see Figure 10). After accounting for the size of the human population, the deaths of healthy and treatable animals per 1,000 people decline 61% between the baseline period and FY2005-06. The trend in deaths for healthy plus treatable animals mirrors the trends for total deaths and healthy animal deaths, with deaths decreasing year-over-year in every fiscal year.



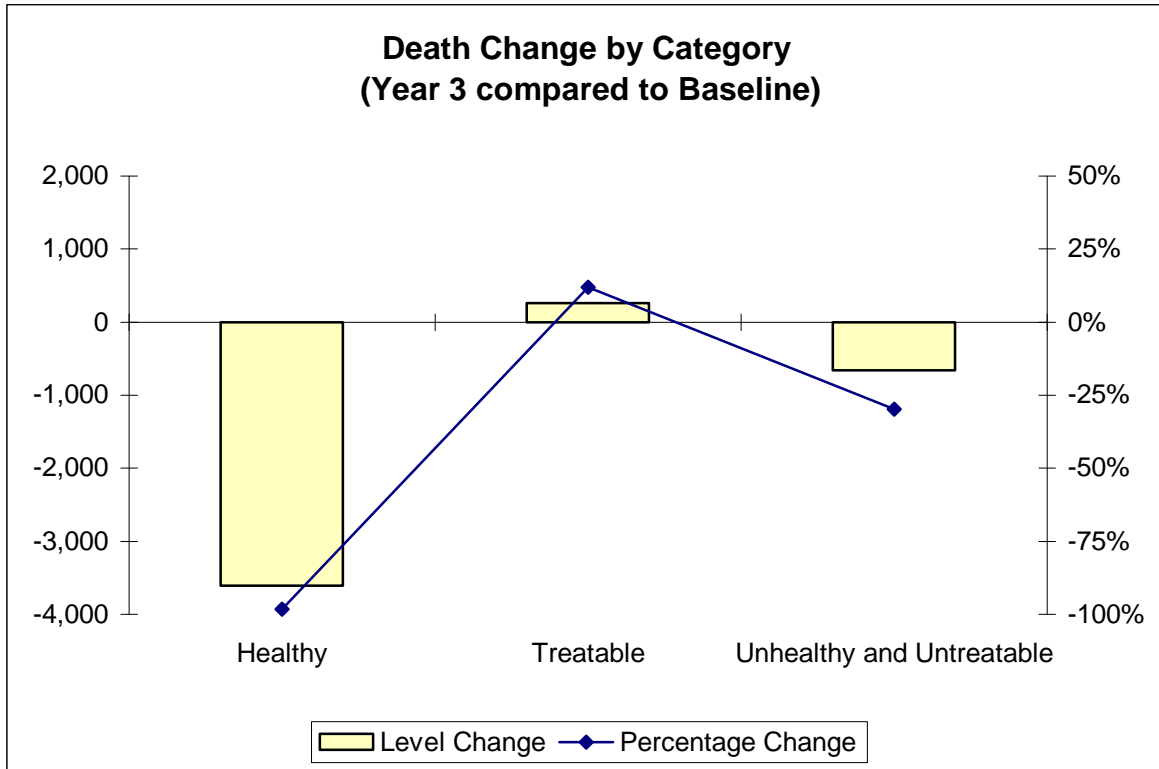
**Figure 10**

With deaths down more than 50% in four years, at the current rate of reduction in healthy and treatable animal deaths beyond the five year program, these deaths would be eliminated well within a ten year period (see Figure 11). In fact, at the current rate it would take 8 years to eliminate all healthy and treatable animal deaths. However, it is important to note that the Maddie’s Fund Alachua County community program currently targets healthy animal deaths and that treatable animals by definition present more difficult issues than healthy animals. Therefore, the assumption used here that healthy plus treatable deaths could continue to be reduced at the current rate after all healthy animals are being saved without additional resources devoted to treating those animals may be unrealistic.



**Figure 11**

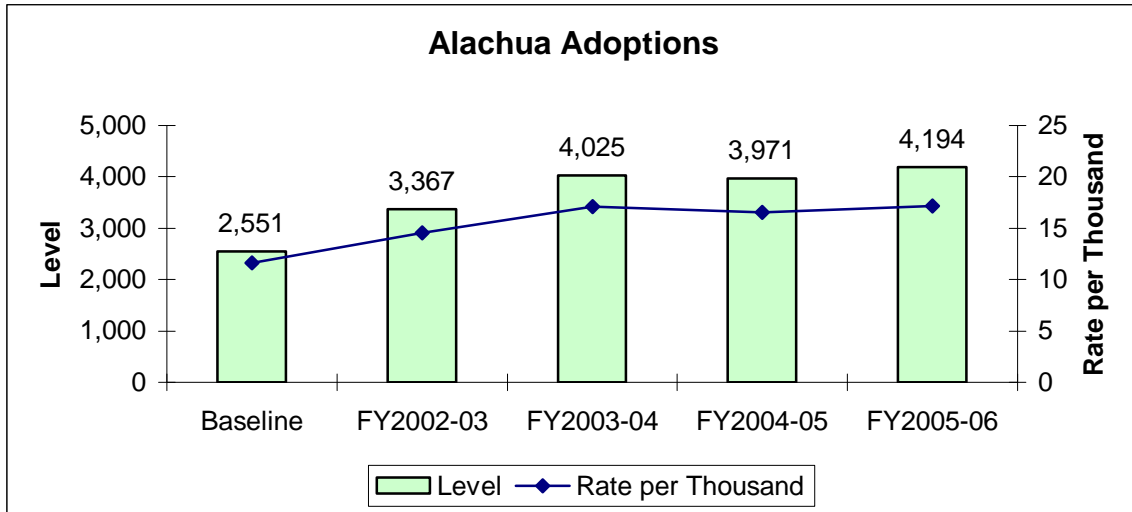
While animal deaths declined for healthy animals over the program period, the death rate for treatable animals increased slightly (see Figure 12). However, the increase in treatable animal deaths was very close to the change in population, suggesting that this change may have come from natural growth in the animal population in homes. The decline in healthy plus treatable animal deaths over the total program period is due entirely to the decline in healthy animal deaths. In the last two program years, as the number of healthy animal deaths approached zero, treatable animal deaths also started to decline. Unhealthy & untreatable deaths also declined substantially over the program period. The cause of this decline is unknown.



**Figure 12**

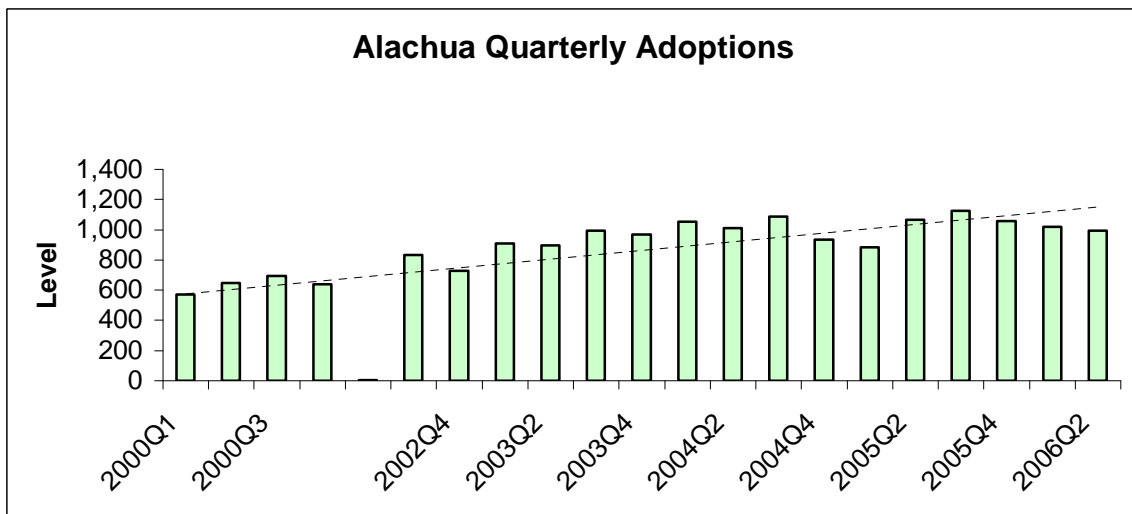
### **Adoptions**

Adoptions increased 64% from 2,551 to 4,194 between the baseline period and the fourth program year (see Figure 13). After adjusting for the size of the human population, adoptions increased 47% from 11.7 animals adopted per 1,000 people to 17.2 animals adopted per 1,000 people. In all program years, adoptions were above the baseline level. Adoptions had their strongest increase in the first two program years. Adoptions then declined in FY2004-05 year over year before recovering in FY2005-06.



**Figure 13**

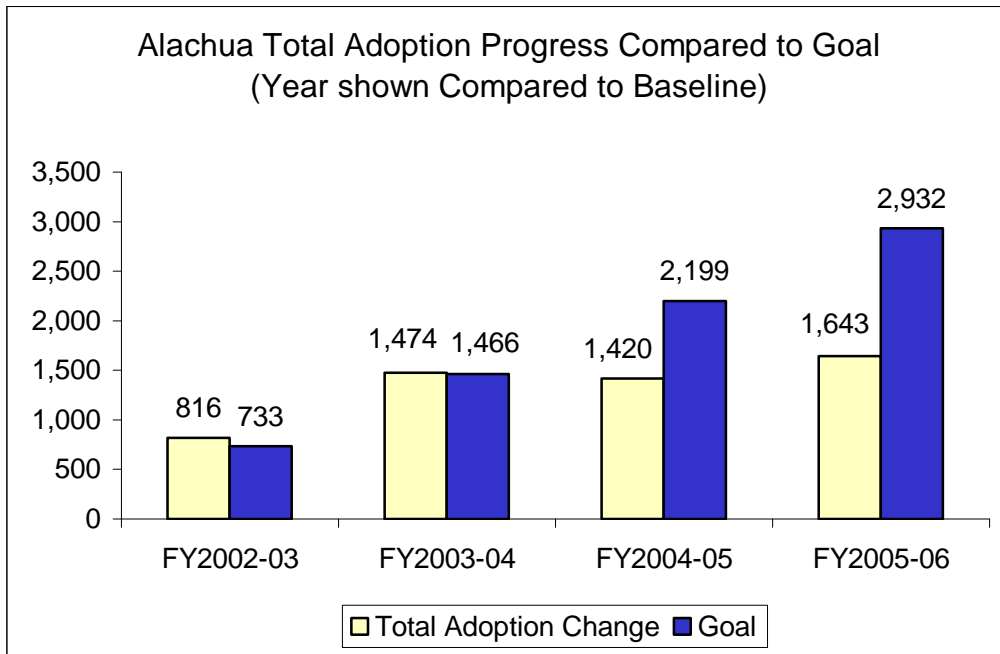
The quarterly data on adoptions suggests that the increasing trend may be ending (see Figure 14). Adoptions increased in every quarter of the first two program years compared to the same quarter a year earlier. However, the third and fourth program years both showed some quarters with year over year declines. The last quarter available shows a decline from the same quarter a year ago. In addition, although quarter to quarter changes can be misleading due to seasonality, it is worth noting that the last three quarters of data each show a decline in adoptions from the immediately prior quarter.



**Figure 14**

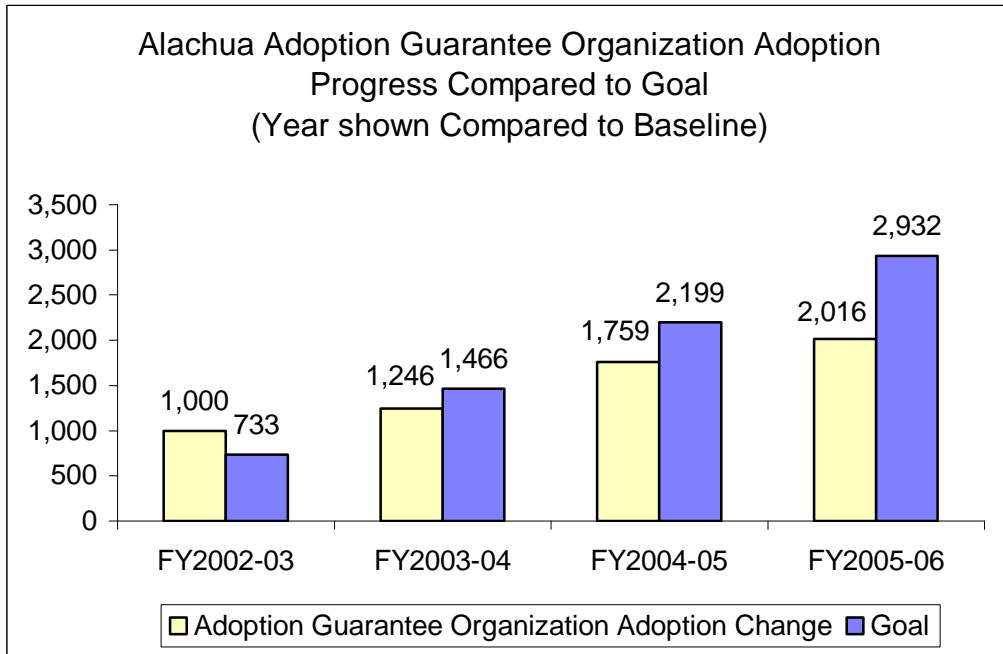
In the first two program years, the actual total adoption change compared to the baseline period slightly exceeded the adoption goals for those years (see Figure 15). However, in FY2004-05 adoptions declined slightly, falling far short of the goal for that year. Adoptions increased moderately in FY2005-06, however, they were still far short of goal. In fact, because the year over year increase in adoptions was less than the year over year change in the goal, adoptions were further away from their goal in FY2005-06 than they were in FY2004-05.

The change in adoptions will have to more than double the amount seen in FY2005-06 in order to meet the FY2006-07 goal. This may be very difficult to achieve since it would require an increase in adoptions of double the amount seen in any year so far.



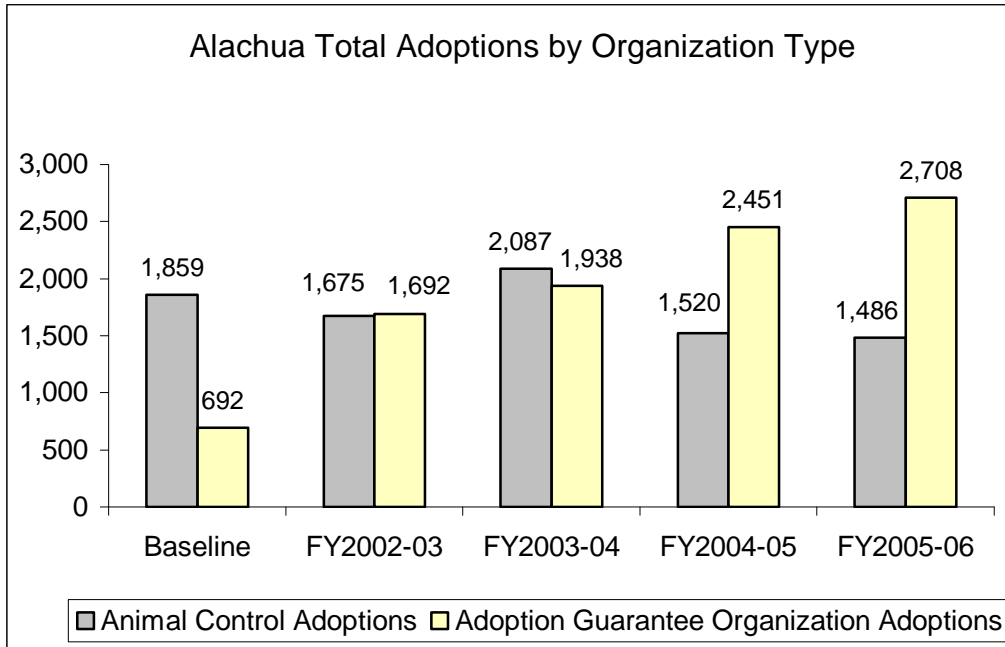
**Figure 15**

Progress at adoption guarantee organizations were part of the reason total adoptions did not reach their goal. After exceeding their goal in the first year, adoption guarantee organization adoptions fell short of the goal in the three years that followed (see Figure 16). However, in the last two years adoption guarantee organizations were closer to their adoption goal than all organization adoptions. This suggests that animal control organizations contributed in part to the adoption shortfall.



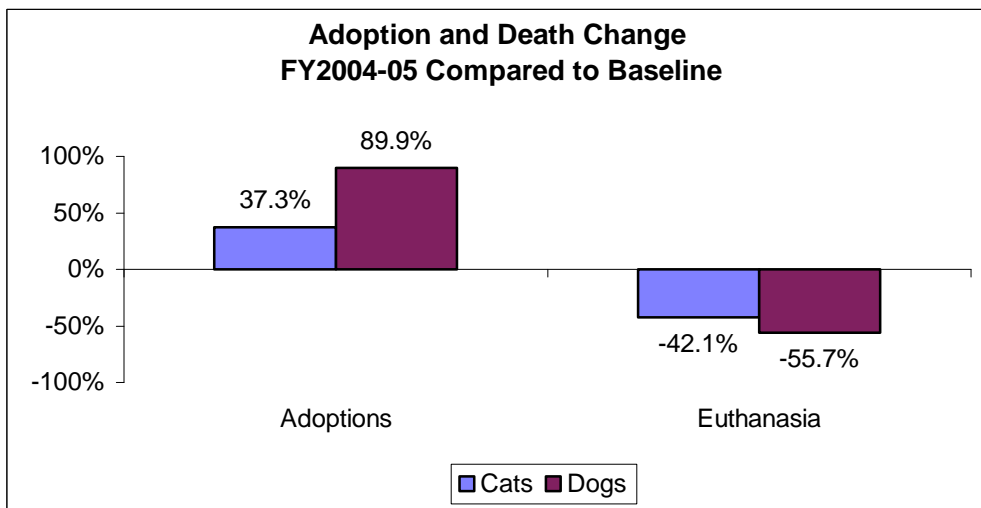
**Figure 16**

While adoption guarantee organization adoptions increased every year throughout the program, animal control adoptions showed mixed results, peaking in the second program year but decreasing in both subsequent program years (see Figure 17). By the fourth program year, animal control adoptions were down almost 400 from their baseline level. Animal control adoptions in the baseline period were more than double the level of adoption guarantee organization adoptions. By the third program year, adoption guarantee organization adoptions were higher than animal control adoptions, and by the fourth program year, adoption guarantee organization adoptions were approaching double the level of animal control adoptions.



**Figure 17**

Adoptions increased for both dogs and cats, with dog adoptions increasing faster than cat adoptions (see Figure 18). Both dog and cat death rates declined, with dog death rates declining faster than cats. These two species breakdowns are logically consistent since the species with greater adoptions also showed a larger decline in deaths.



**Figure 18**

## Total Intake

Total shelter intake declined 14% over the full program period. In three of the four program years, the level of intake declined, with a slight increase occurring in the FY2004-05. However, when adjusted for population growth, intake declined in every program year (see Figure 19). After accounting for the size of the human population, intake per 1,000 people declined 23% over the total program period from 52 animals per 1,000 people to 40 animals per thousand people. The largest decline in intake was seen in the program year 3, FY2004-05.

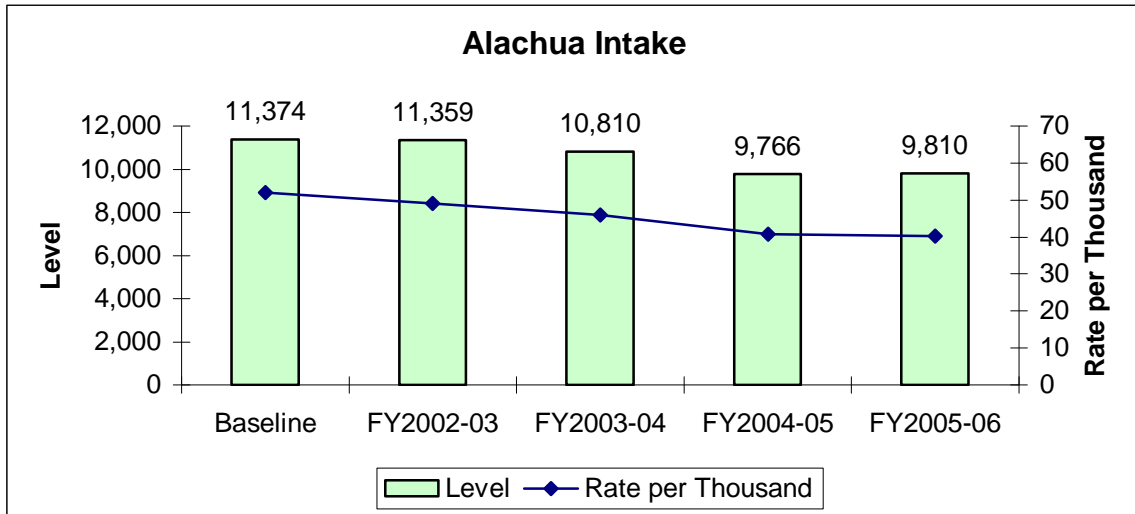
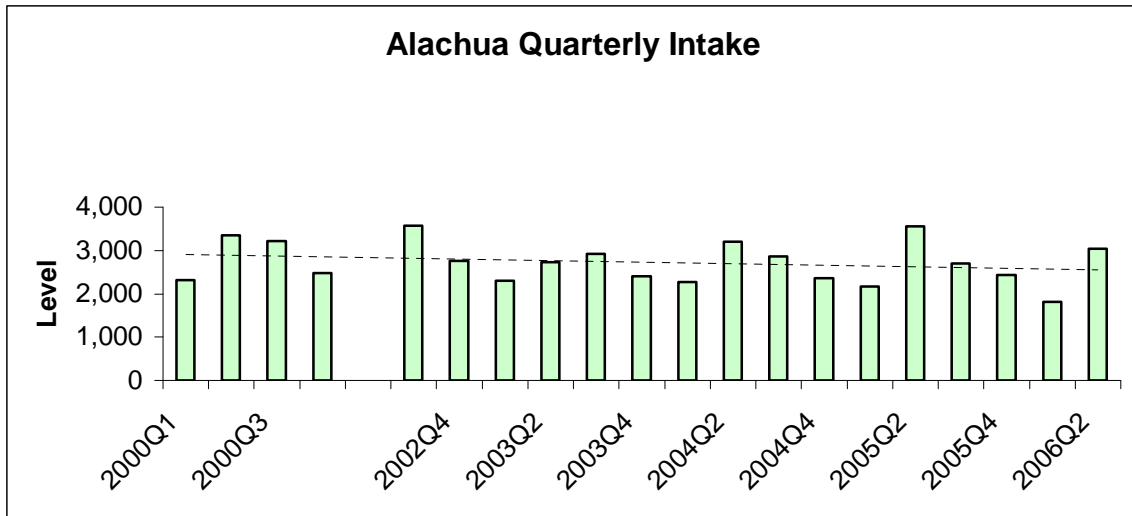


Figure 19

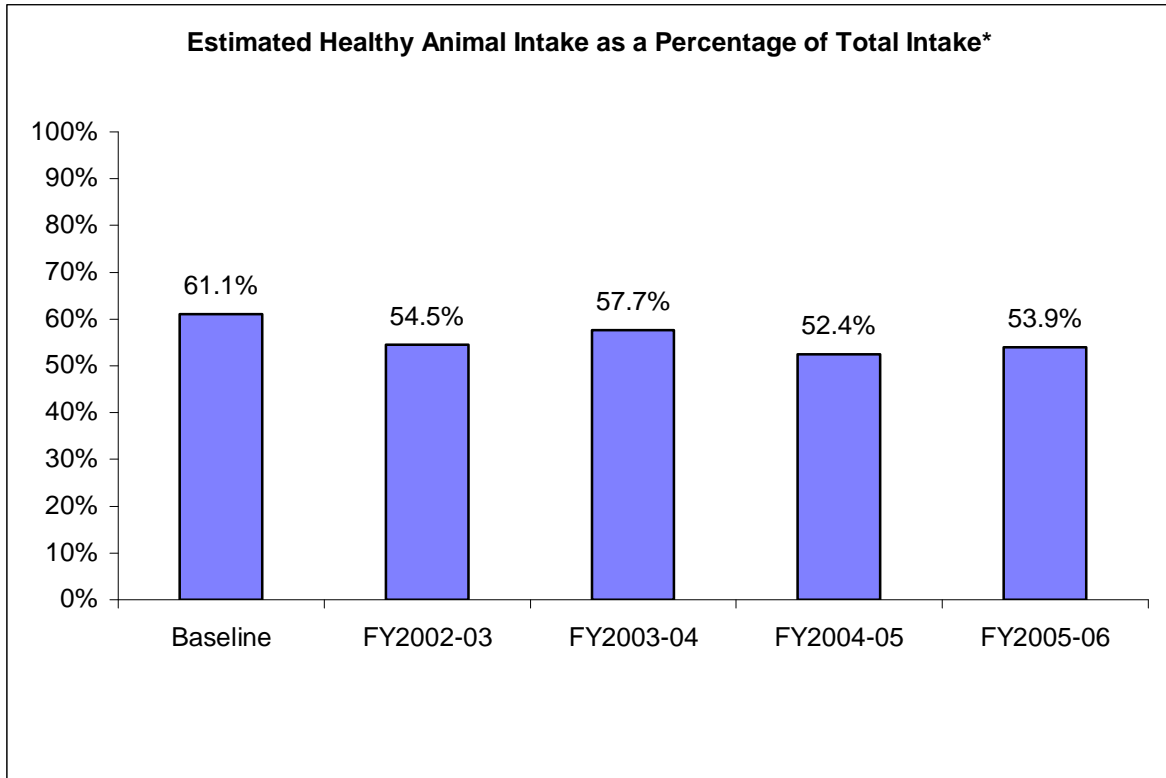
Quarterly data supports the finding of a continuing modest declining trend for intake (see Figure 20). Intake was lower in the first and second quarter of 2006 (the most recent quarters for which data is available) than in the same quarters of the prior year. However, intake was higher in the fourth quarter of 2005 than the fourth quarter of 2004. The first quarter of 2006 had the lowest level of intake of any quarter so far in the program.



**Figure 20**

Intake declined for both cats and dogs. The decline for dogs was higher at 17.0% than the decline for cats, which was 9.5%.

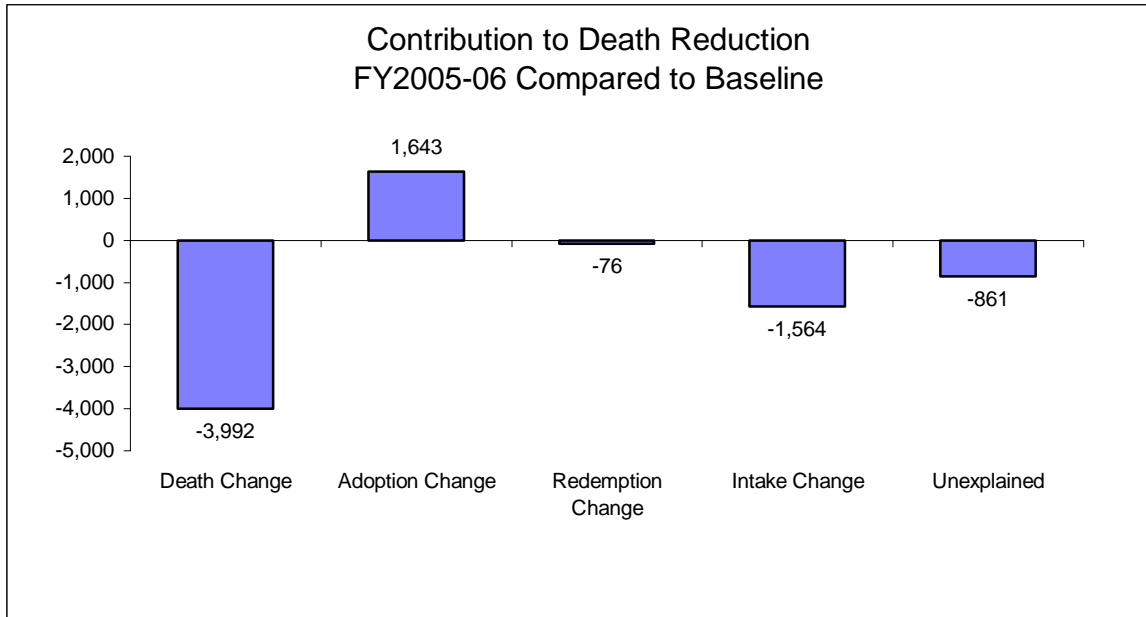
Estimated healthy animal intake as a portion of total intake was generally flat, though there was a slight decline over the program (see Figure 24). This suggests that the categories used for animals were fairly consistent over time. It is important to note that animal categories are not recorded at the time of intake, so the categorization of animals is estimated based on outcomes. More specifically, healthy animal intake is estimated as healthy animal deaths plus redemptions plus adoptions. However, animals at the shelter can change in their health status over time and adopted/redeemed animals may not always be healthy. To the extent that these two situations occur, the estimate of healthy animal intake may be inaccurate. For example, if due to shelter improvements fewer animals deteriorate in their health condition at the time of euthanasia, this will cause healthy animal intake to appear to increase even if the condition of the animals at the time of intake has not changed.



**Figure 24**

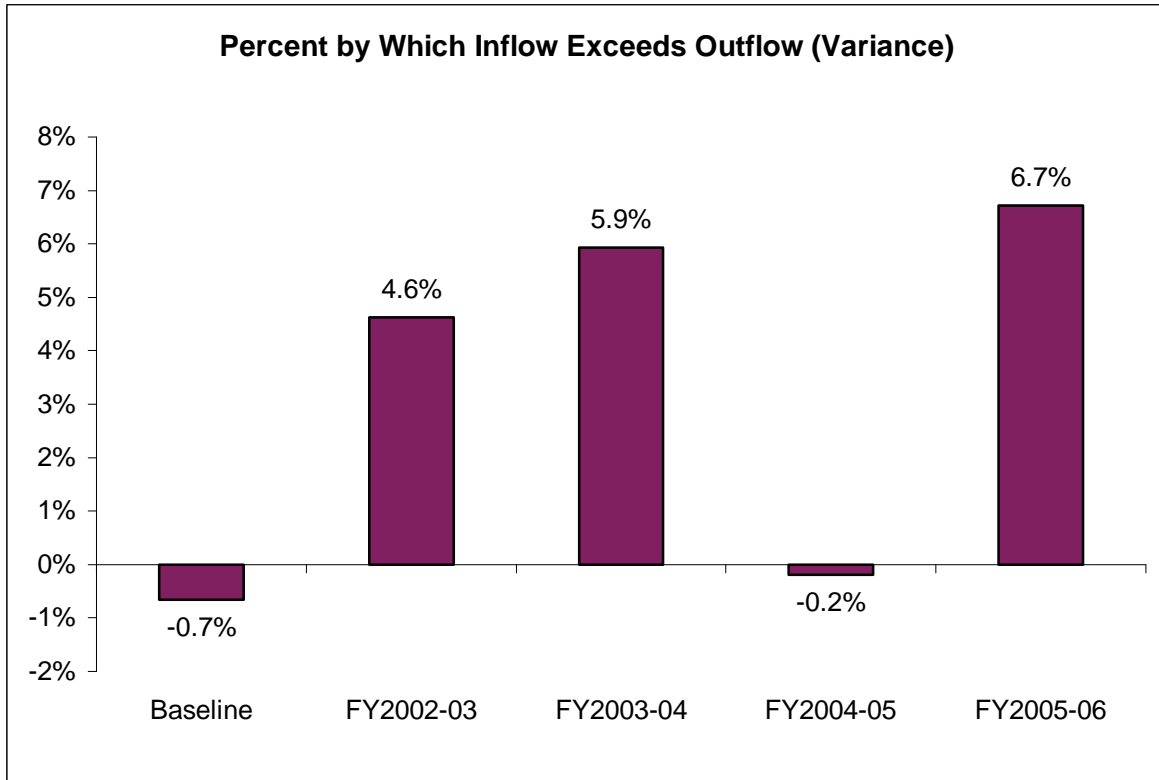
**Sources of Change**

The decrease in deaths over the total program period can mostly be explained by adoption and intake changes (see Figure 25). Increased adoptions can account for an increase of 1,643, or about 41% of the total death change. The change in intake can account for another 1,564 or 39% of the change. Redemptions declined slightly, and therefore explains none of the decline in deaths. Given these component changes, a decline of 861 deaths remains unexplained. This reduction in deaths may be attributable to a reduction in outcomes relative to intake, which is a statistical discrepancy. This type of statistical discrepancy is not uncommon and could be caused by a number of factors such as changes in animal inventory over time, transfers into or out of the region, and data errors.



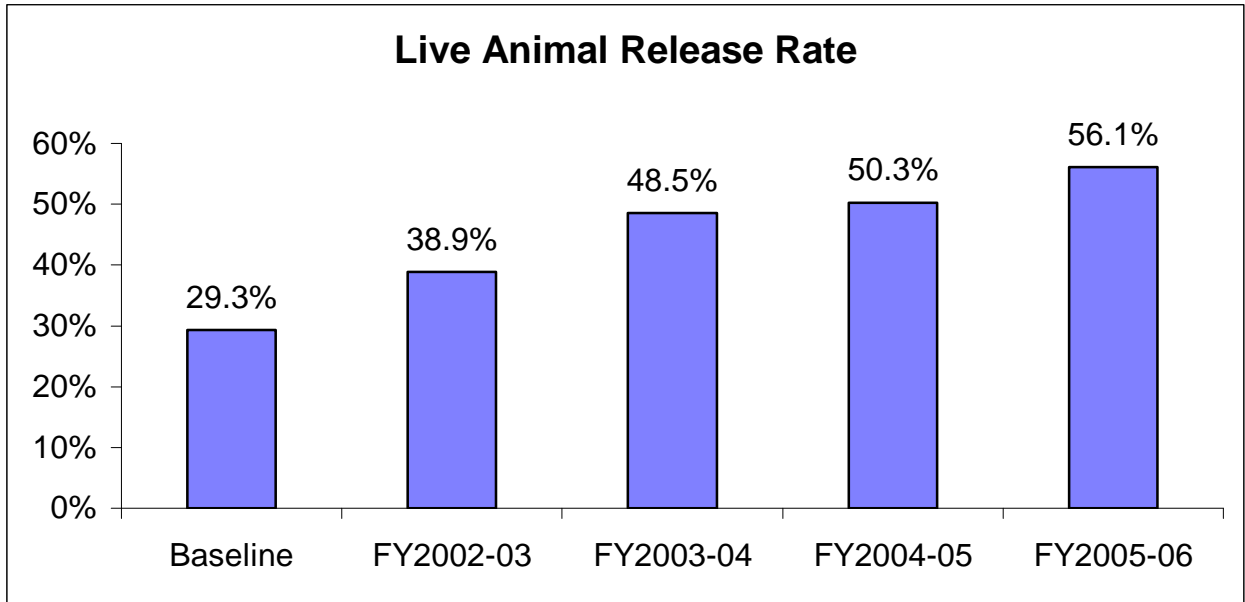
**Figure 25**

The statistical discrepancy can be seen in Figure 26. Initially, the outflow of animals exceeds the inflow slightly. However, this has changed rapidly, with the inflow of animals becoming quite a bit larger than the outflow in most years. This is not necessarily an error. For example, rising levels of fostered animals could cause an increase in animal “inventory”. The difference is large enough to explain the decline in deaths seen over the total period. However, the rapid growth in this statistical discrepancy on average and its current high level is a possible cause of concern. It may indicate that the current rate of improvement is not sustainable if it has been caused for example by a buildup of animal inventory.



**Figure 26**

The live animal release rate indicates that the portion of shelter animals that end up with positive outcomes (normally adopted or redeemed) as opposed to negative outcomes (i.e. killed at the shelter) has grown dramatically. In the baseline period, 29% of animals were adopted or redeemed (see Figure 29). By FY2004-05, the live animal release rate was over 50%, indicating that more than half of animals entering shelters are adopted or redeemed. In FY2005-06, well over half of animals were adopted or redeemed, with a live animal release rate of 56.1%.



**Figure 27**

## **Conclusions**

The results indicate that Alachua County exceeded its goals for healthy animal deaths and total deaths. The program fell short of its adoption goals, although adoptions increased throughout the program. Fortunately, the death goals were achieved despite shortfalls in adoptions, due in part to a significant reduction in intake.

Alachua County appears to be well-positioned both to achieve its five-year goal of eliminating all healthy animal deaths and to reach a ten-year goal of eliminating all treatable animal deaths. These goals of course depend on what happens in future program years. In particular, reducing treatable animal deaths may prove more difficult than healthy animal deaths.