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THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROMOTING  
ANIMAL WELFARE

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

**FY2005  
Summary Report**

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## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR MOBILE COUNTY COMMUNITY PROGRAM

### Introduction

In its first program year (FY2005) Mobile County made significant progress in its key program areas (Figure 1). The overall animal death rate per 1,000 people in the community dropped 17%. The death rate of animals that are either healthy or with treatable conditions per 1,000 people dropped 27%. Animal adoptions per 1,000 people increased 14%. The live animal release rate, a measure of the portion of shelter animals that are adopted or redeemed, was up 27%. In the baseline period the live animal release rate was 23%, while in the first program year the live animal release rate was 29%.

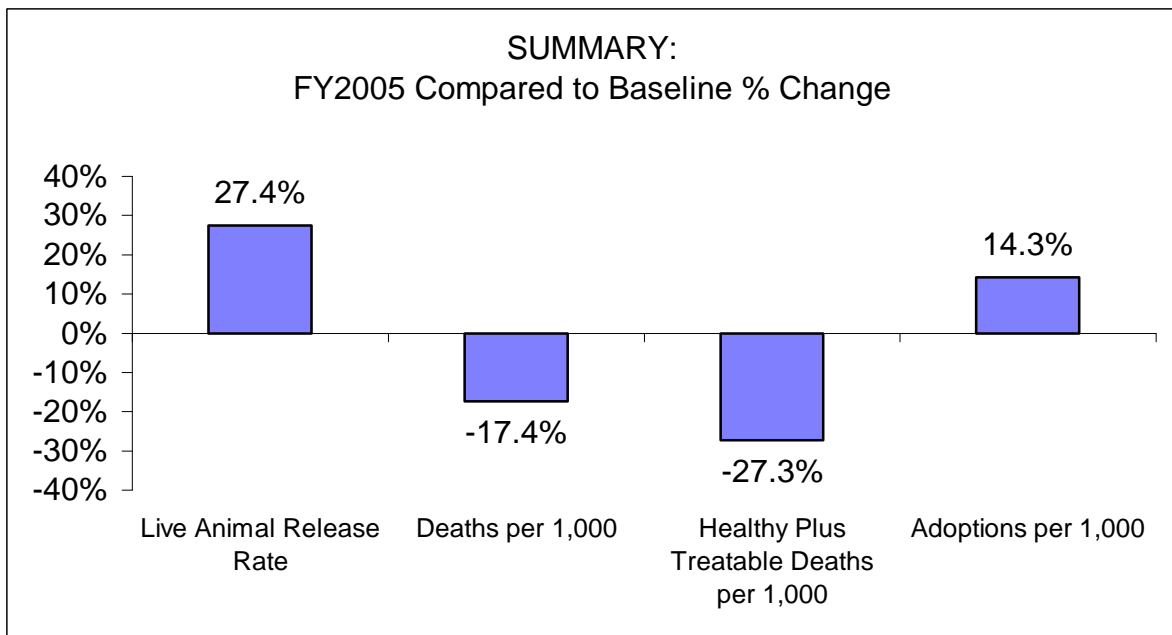


Figure 1

### Total Death Rate

The first program year for Mobile included the four quarters of the 2005 calendar year. The baseline period was the calendar year of 2003. In the first program year, total deaths of animals in Mobile dropped 16.9% compared to the baseline period (see Figure 2). When the size of the human population is taken into account, animal deaths dropped 17.4% to 24.9 deaths per 1,000 people. The level of deaths in Mobile is high relative to the country at large, with Mobile's baseline death rate of 30.1 animals per thousand people being roughly double the average for the country. However, this death rate is not necessarily high relative to other regions in the southeastern United States. More

importantly, Mobile made significant progress in the first program year towards reducing the death rate.

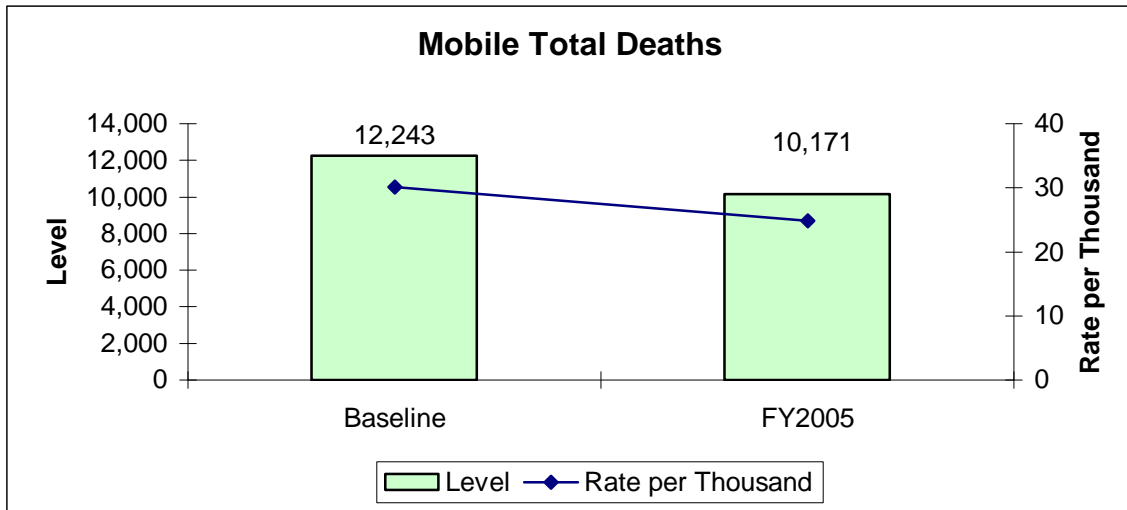


Figure 2

The quarterly death rate is shown in Figure 3. While there is some evidence of a seasonal pattern, the quarters when this pattern peaks and reaches its lowest point are inconsistent from year to year. Two of the four quarters of the first program year had death rates below the baseline period. Fortunately, the latest two quarters were also the two quarters that showed declines in the death rate, which may be an indication that program momentum is growing. The latest quarter of data (4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 205) had the greatest percentage decline of any quarter compared to the same quarter in the baseline period, with a decline of almost 50%.

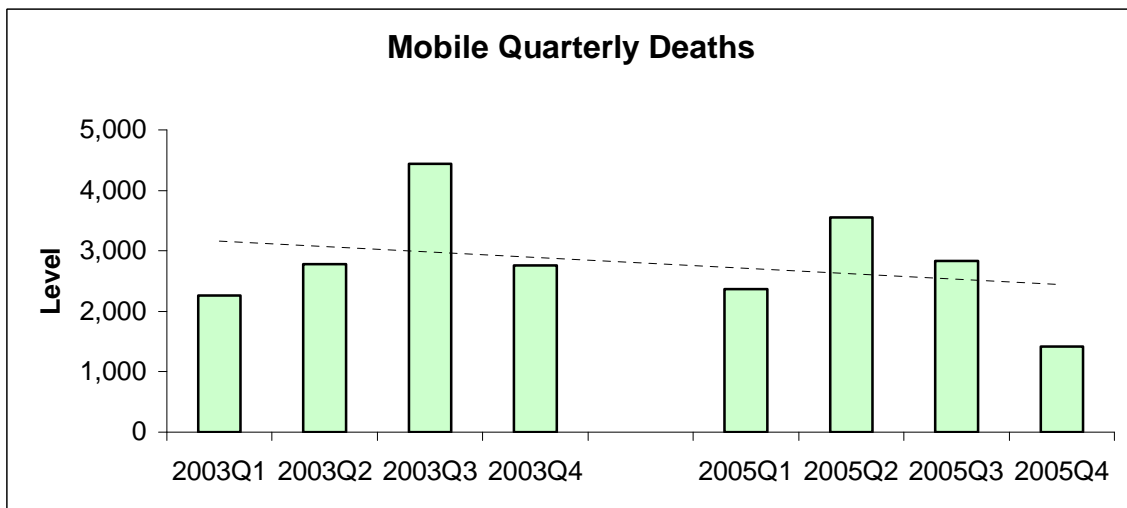
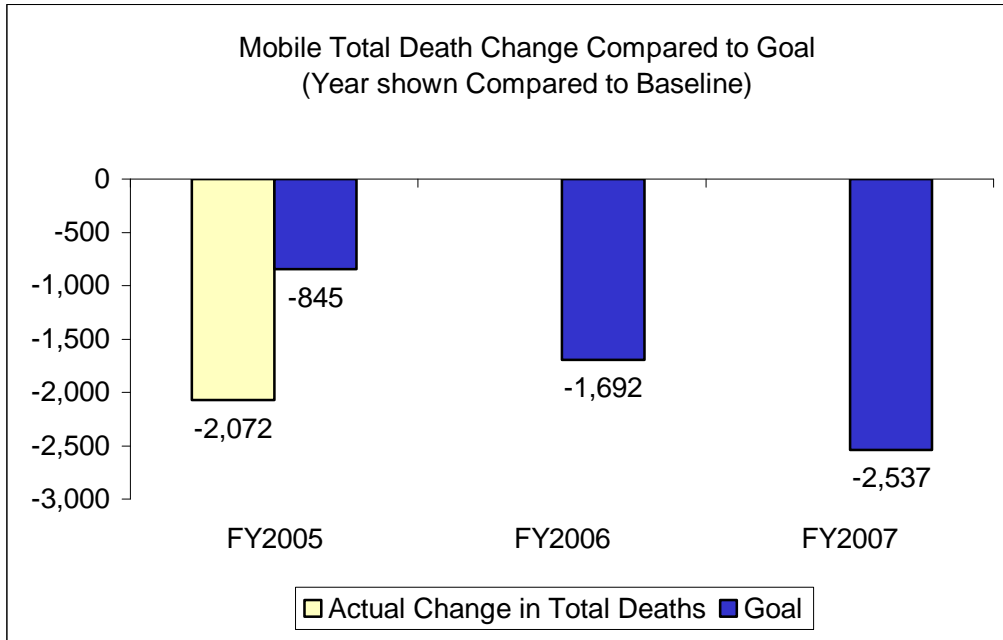


Figure 3

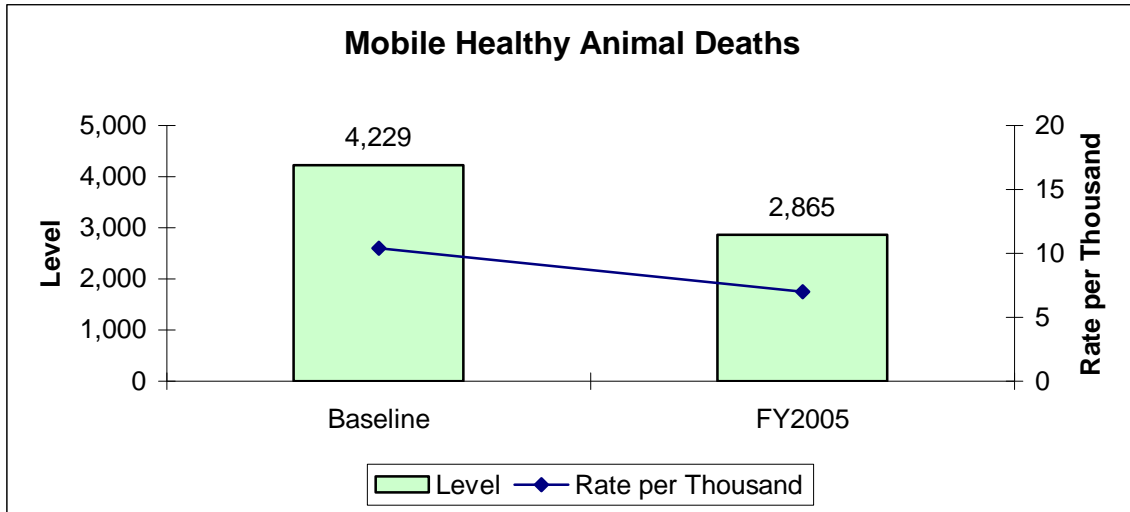
The decline in the death rate in the first program year was more than double the program's goal (see Figure 4). Even if Mobile's death rate does not decline any further in the second program year, the second year's total death goal would be met and much progress would have been made towards reaching the third year's goal.



**Figure 4**

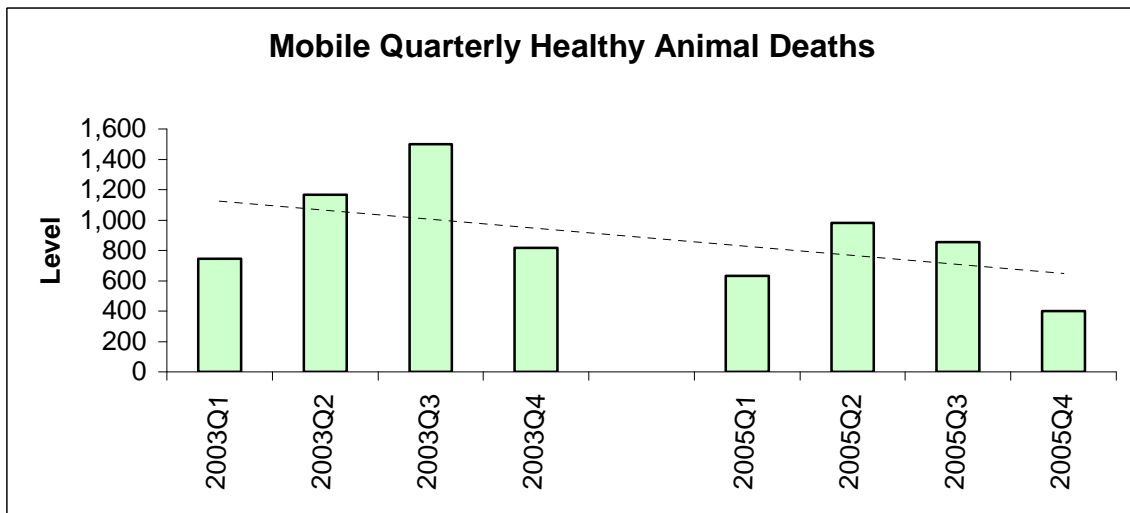
### Healthy Animal Deaths

Healthy animal deaths declined 32.3% in the first program year, declining to 2,865 deaths (see Figure 5). When population size is taken into consideration, healthy animal deaths declined 32.6% to 7.0 deaths per thousand people in FY2005.



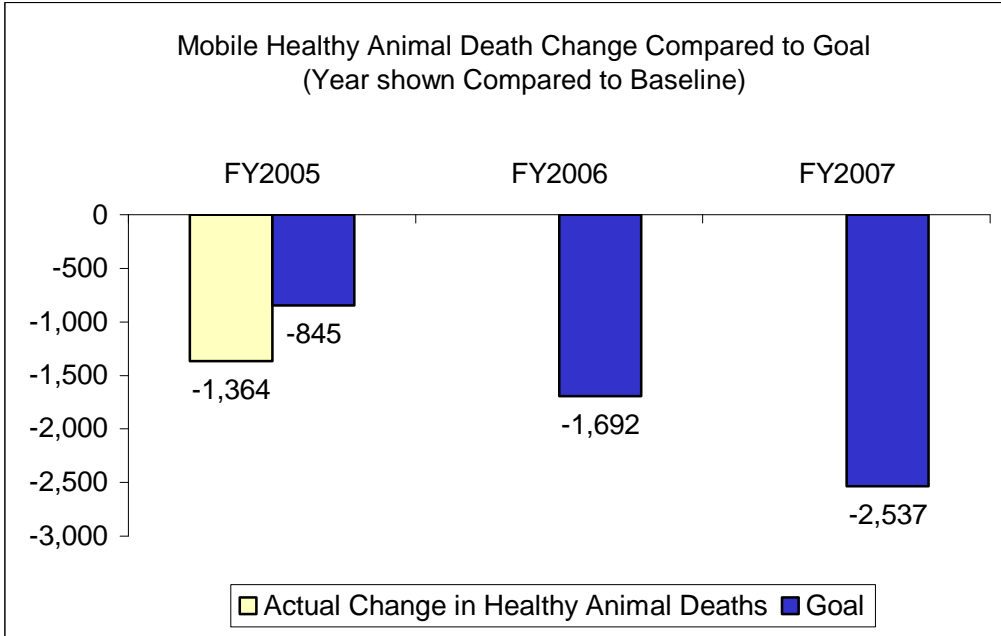
**Figure 5**

On a quarterly basis, healthy animal deaths showed a consistent declining trend (see Figure 6). The seasonal pattern is similar to the pattern seen for total animal deaths. The latest two quarters showing better results than the first two quarters of 2005. However, unlike with total deaths every quarter of 2005 showed a decline from the same quarter in the baseline period. The strongest percentage decline was in the fourth quarter of 2005, when healthy animal deaths declined 51.0%. This is also the latest quarter for which data is available.



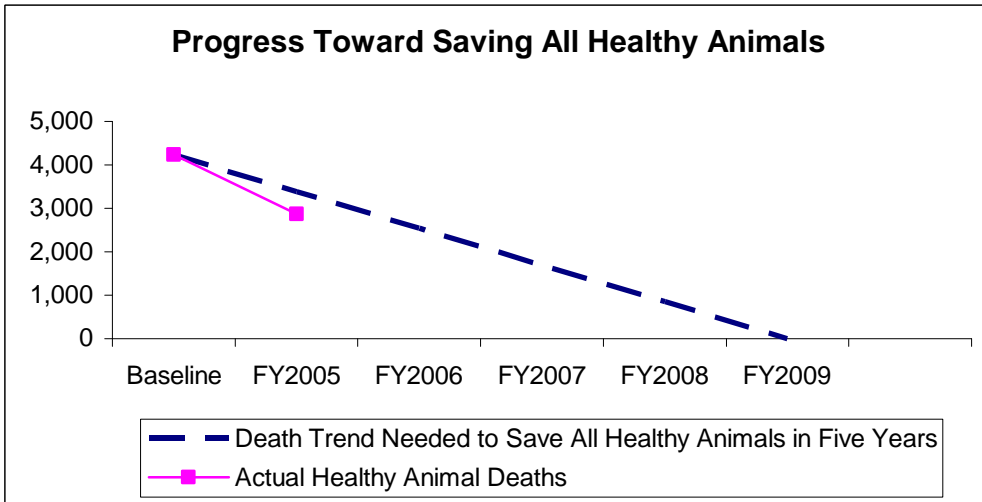
**Figure 6**

The reduction of healthy animal deaths was exceeded the Maddie’s Fund program goal for the first program year (see Figure 7). The FY2005 the healthy animal death change was most of the way towards reaching the second year’s goal.



**Figure 7**

In FY2005, the Mobile County community program was close to a third of the way towards 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 well before the end of five years. While it is likely that the rate of improvement in the death rate will diminish, if it continued at the current rate in future program years, healthy animal deaths would be nearly eliminated in the third year, and completely eliminated in the fourth year.



**Figure 8**

Total animal deaths declined by about 50% more than healthy animal deaths in the first program year (see Figure 9). This was due to a decline in the deaths of treatable animals.

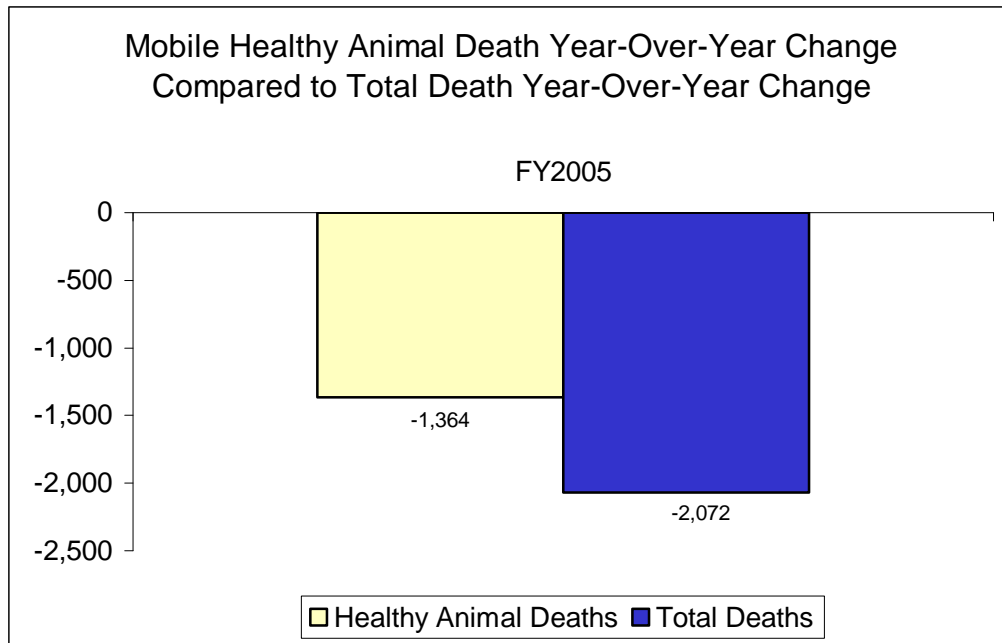
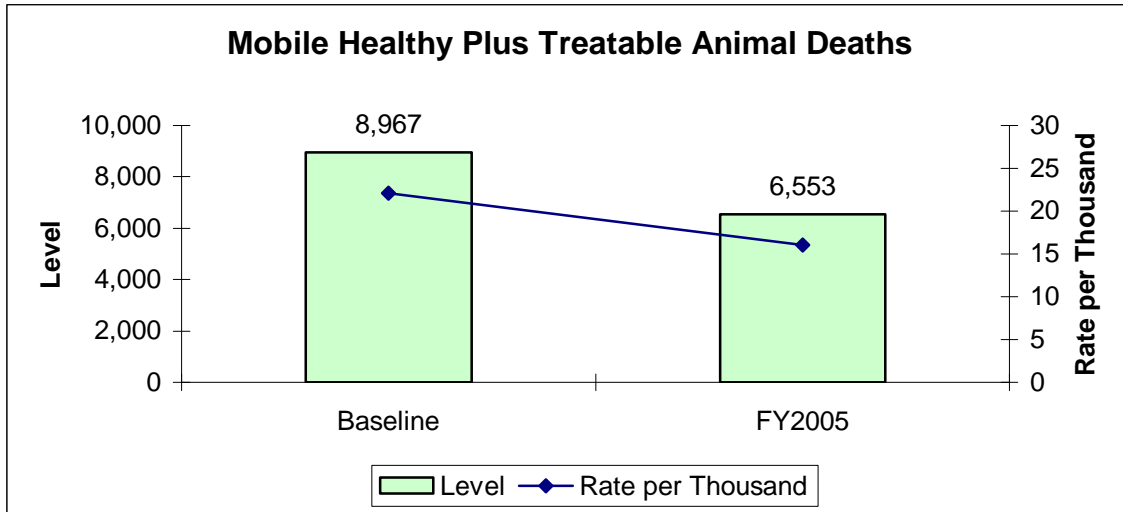


Figure 9

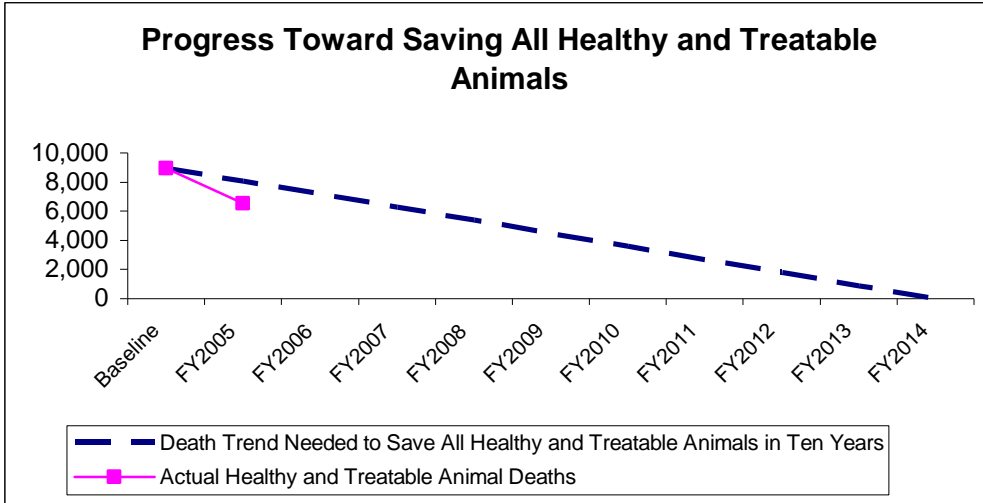
### Healthy and Treatable Animals

Healthy and treatable animals deaths combined declined 26.9% from 8,967 deaths to 6,553 deaths (see Figure 10). After accounting for the size of the human population, the deaths of healthy and treatable animals combined declined 27.3% to 16.0 deaths per 1,000 people.



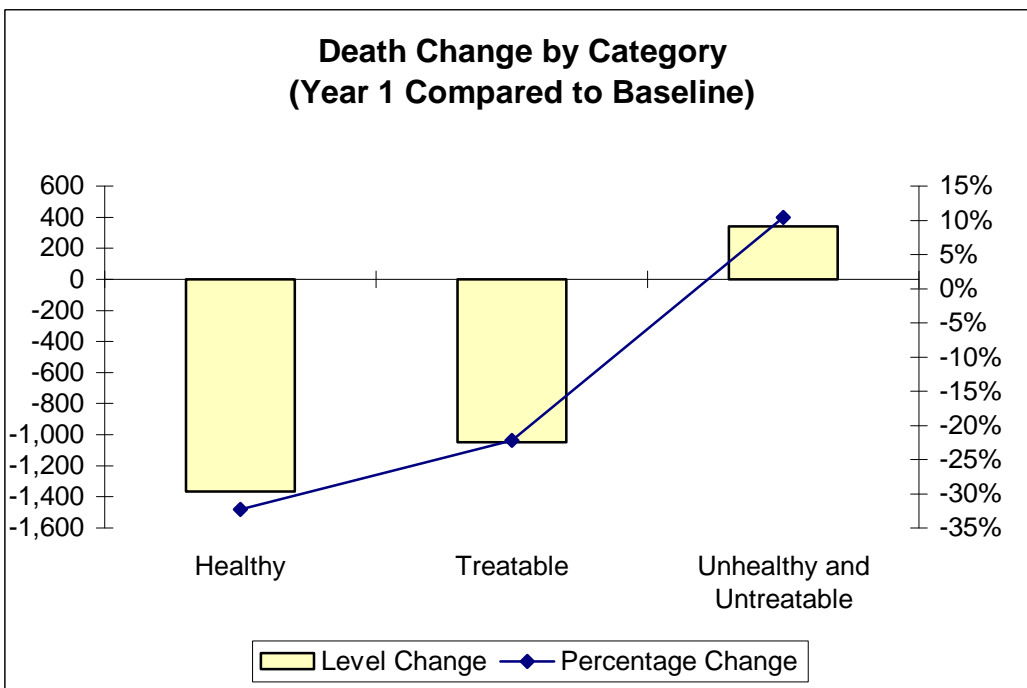
**Figure 10**

At the current rate of reduction in healthy and treatable animal deaths, these deaths would be eliminated within four years, well within the ten year goal period (see Figure 11). However, it is important to note that the Maddie’s Fund Mobile 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 healthy and treatable animal deaths declined over the program period, the death rate for unhealthy & untreatable animals increased somewhat (see Figure 12). Part of the increase in unhealthy & untreatable animal deaths can be attributed to population growth. The cause of the remaining increase in unhealthy & untreatable animal deaths is unknown. It may be due to increased intake of this particular category of animals, other random forces, or changes in the categorization of animals. Data broken down by species indicates that this increase was driven by higher euthanasia of cats, while unhealthy & untreatable dog euthanasia declined.



**Figure 12**

## Adoptions

Adoptions increased 14.9% from 3,088 to 3,548 between the baseline period and the first program year (see Figure 13). After adjusting for the size of the human population, adoptions increased 14.3% from 7.6 animals adopted per 1,000 people to 8.7 animals adopted per 1,000 people.

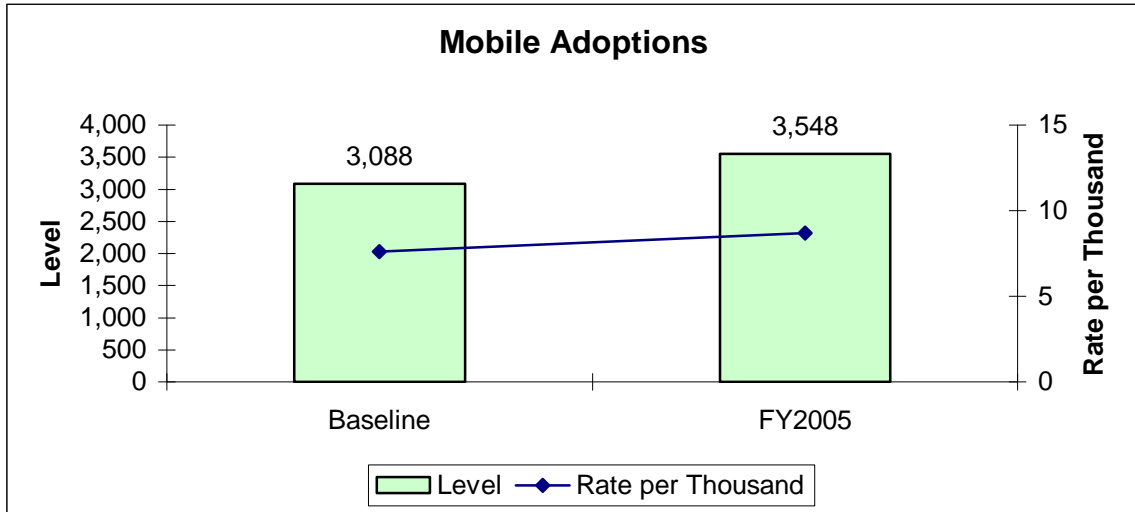


Figure 13

Using quarterly data, adoptions increased in three of four quarters compared to the same quarter in the baseline period (see Figure 14).

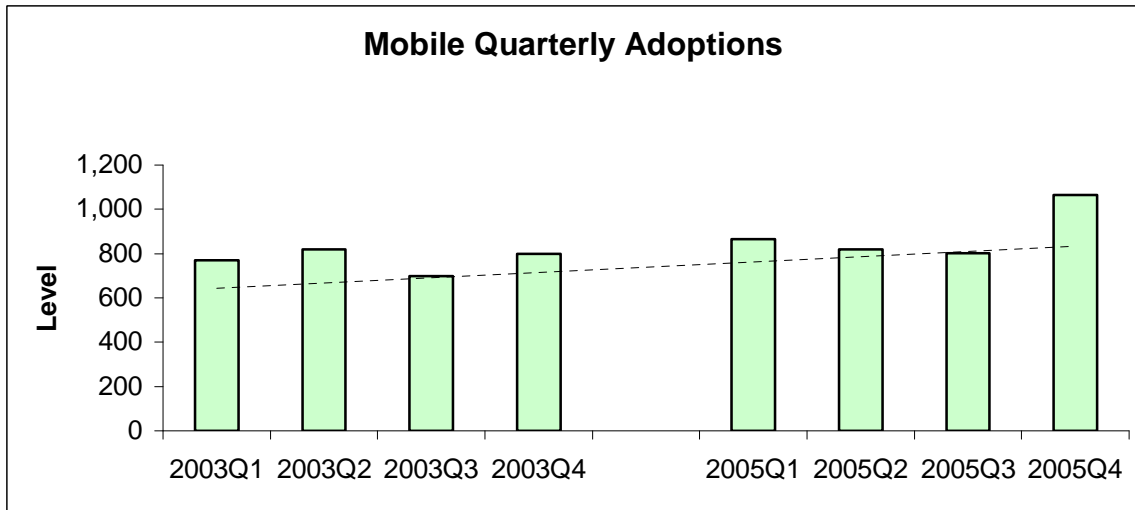
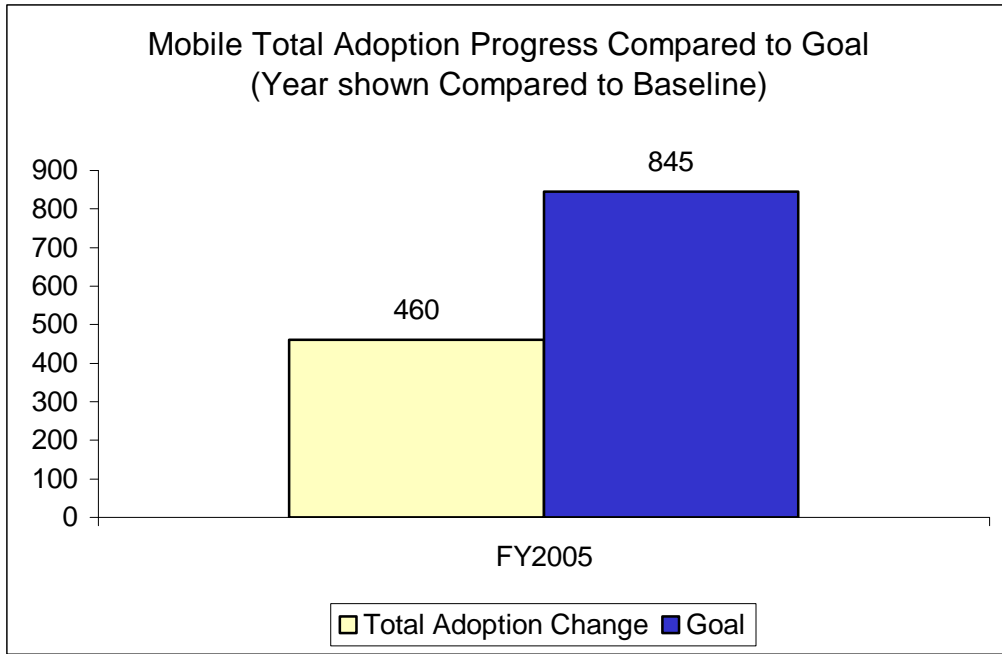


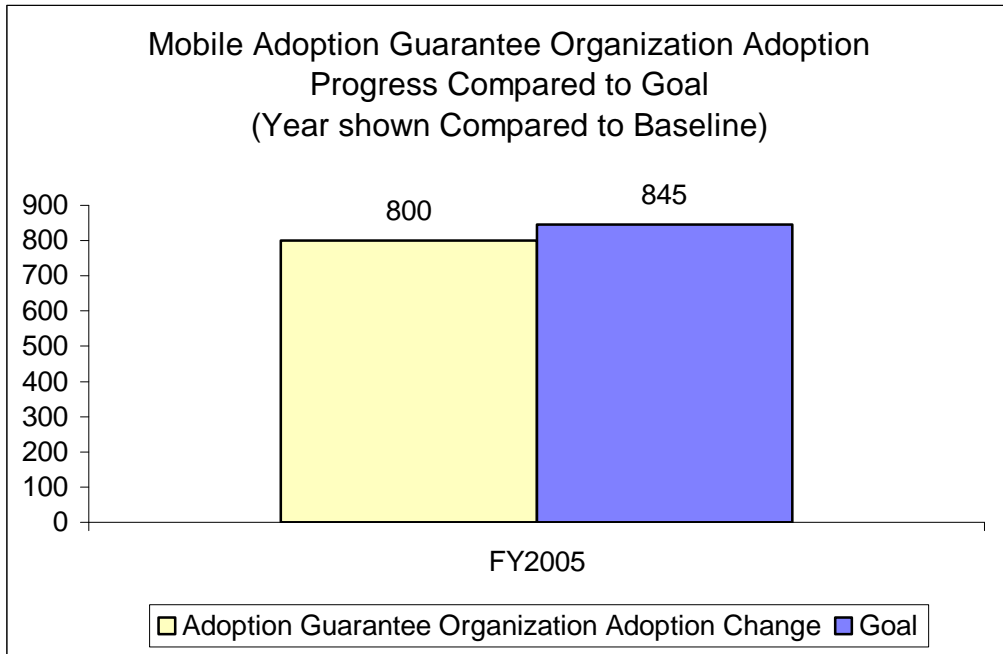
Figure 14

In the first program year, the total adoption change was short of the adoption goal (see Figure 15). Furthermore, the change in adoptions will have to be close to triple the increase seen in FY2005 in order to meet the FY2006 goal.



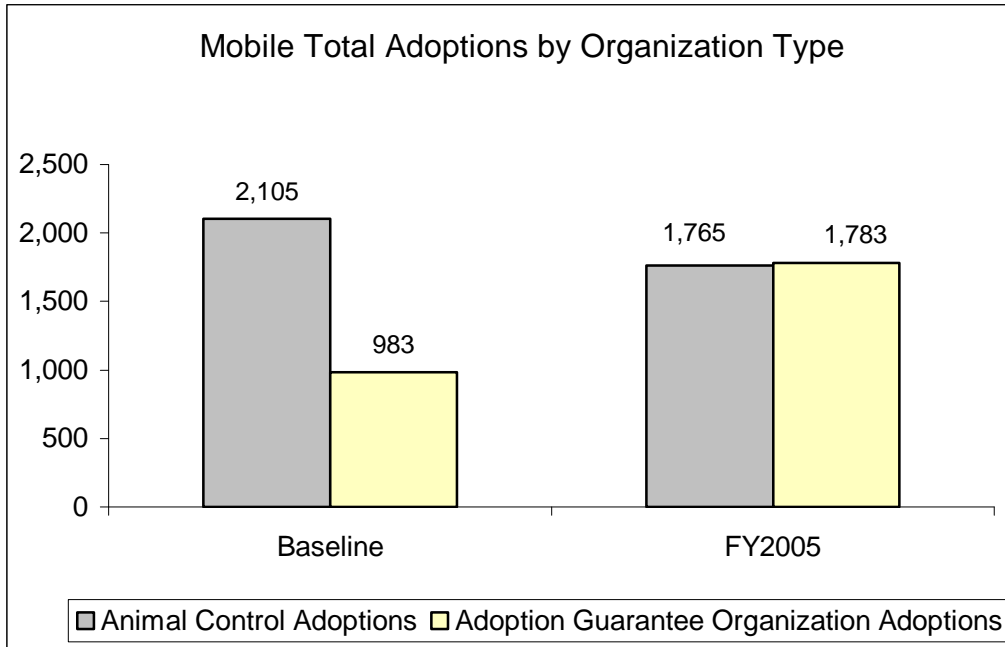
**Figure 15**

While total adoptions fell far short of goal, adoption guarantee organizations were not the primary cause of this shortfall. Adoption guarantee organizations came close to their adoption goal (see Figure 16).



**Figure 16**

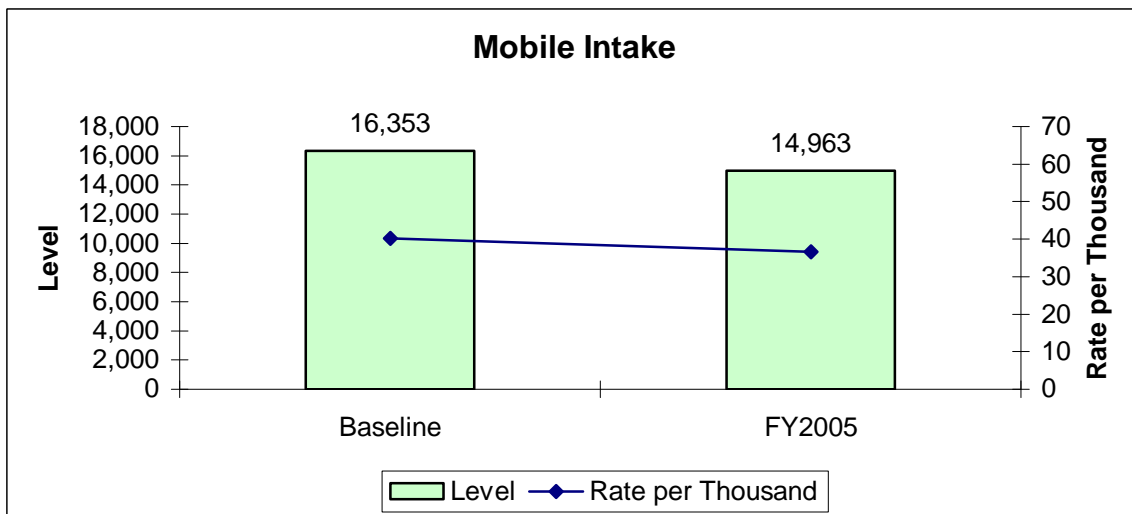
While adoption guarantee organization adoptions almost doubled in the first program year, animal control adoptions decreased compared to the baseline period (see Figure 17). The increase in adoption guarantee organization adoptions was more than double the decline in animal control adoptions. However, the decline at animal control offset adoption guarantee organization progress enough to cause the total to fall short of the program goal. Within a single year, adoption guarantee organization adoptions jumped from less than half of animal control adoptions to being larger than animal control adoptions.



**Figure 17**

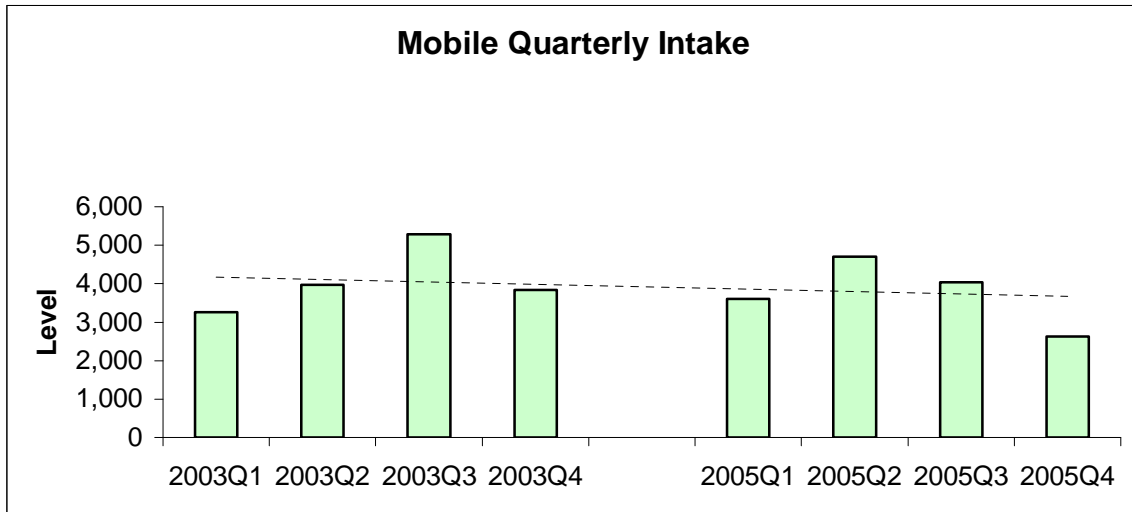
**Total Intake**

Total shelter intake declined 8.5% in the first program year. When adjusted for population growth, intake declined 9.0% in the first program year to 36.6 animals per thousand people (see Figure 18).



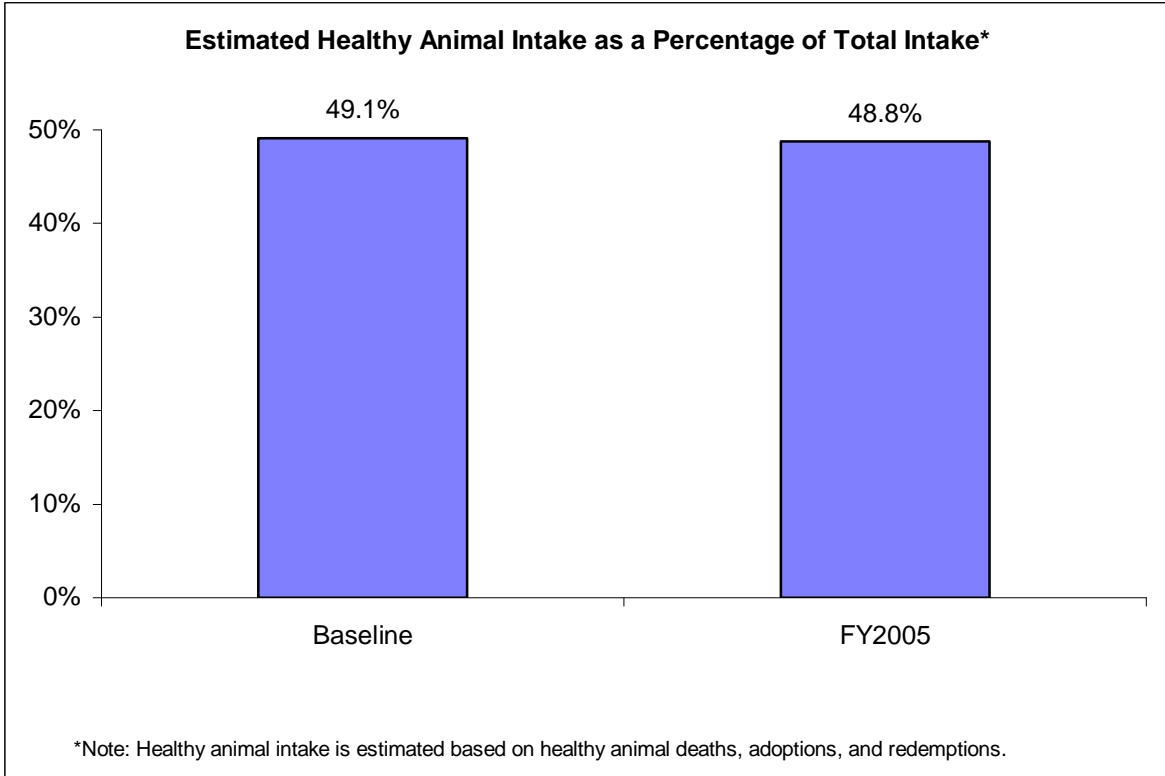
**Figure 18**

Quarterly data shows that the progress in intake came in the second half of the first program year (see Figure 19). Intake was lower in the last two quarters of FY2005 compared to the same quarters of the baseline period. It was higher in the first two quarters. The fourth quarter of 2005 had the lowest level of intake of any quarter so far in the program, as well as the largest percentage drop in intake.



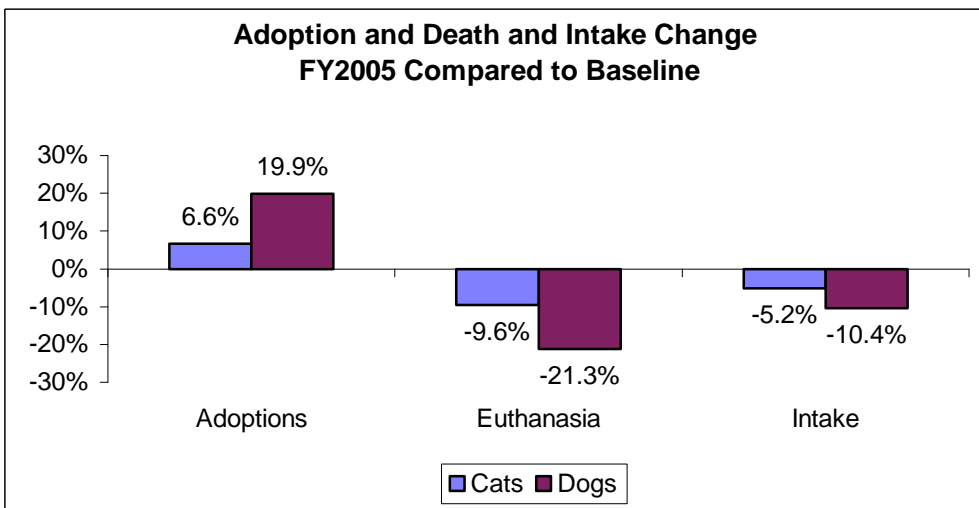
**Figure 19**

Estimated healthy animal intake as a portion of total intake was very stable at 49.1% in the baseline period and 48.8% in the first program year (see Figure 20). 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 20**

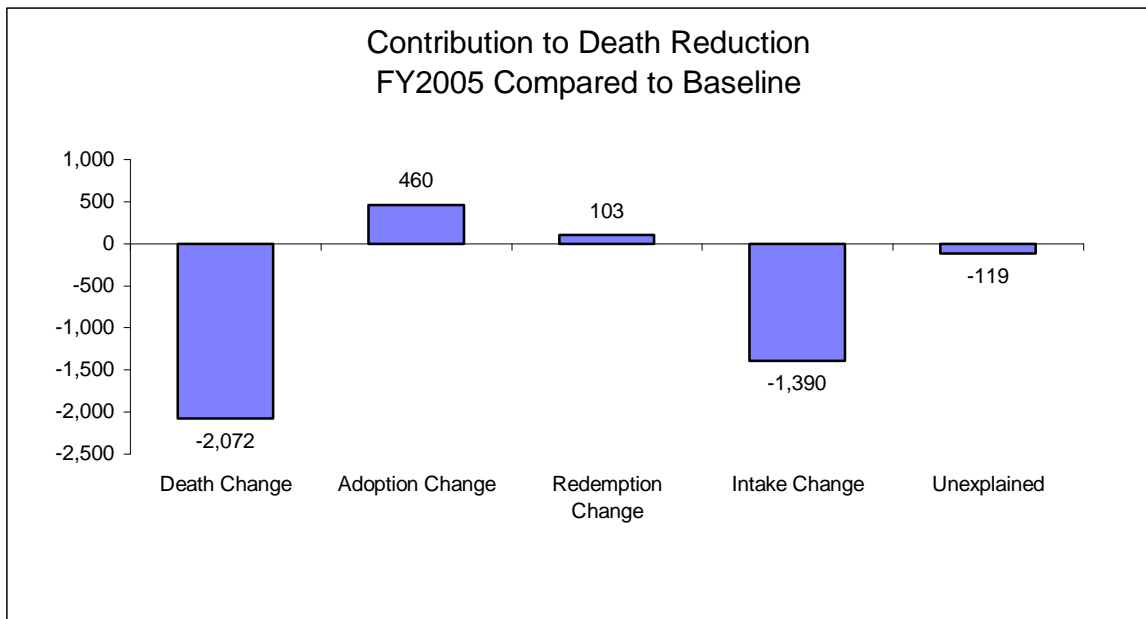
Adoptions, intake, and euthanasia improved for both cats and dogs. However, the improvement for dogs was greater than for cat in all categories (see Figure 21). In every case, the improvement for dogs was at least double the improvement seen in cats. Since reduced intake and increased adoptions theoretically lead to fewer deaths, it makes sense that dog deaths would be lower than cat deaths given the other changes.



**Figure 21**

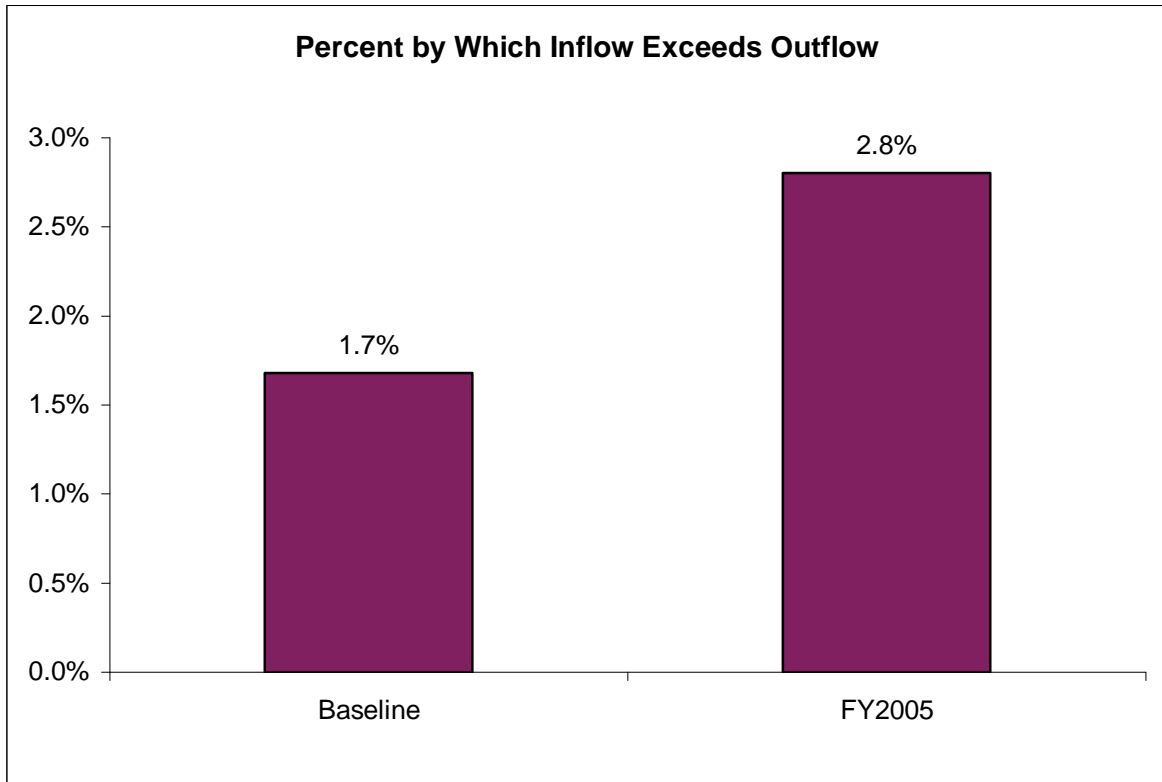
## Sources of Change

The decrease in deaths over the total program period can mostly be explained by adoption and intake changes (see Figure 22). In particular, declining intake explains about two-thirds (67%) of the decline in the death rate. Increased adoptions can account for 22% of the total death change. Redemptions increased slightly, explaining about 5% of the decline in deaths. Given these component changes, a decline of 119 deaths, or about 6% of the total death change, 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.



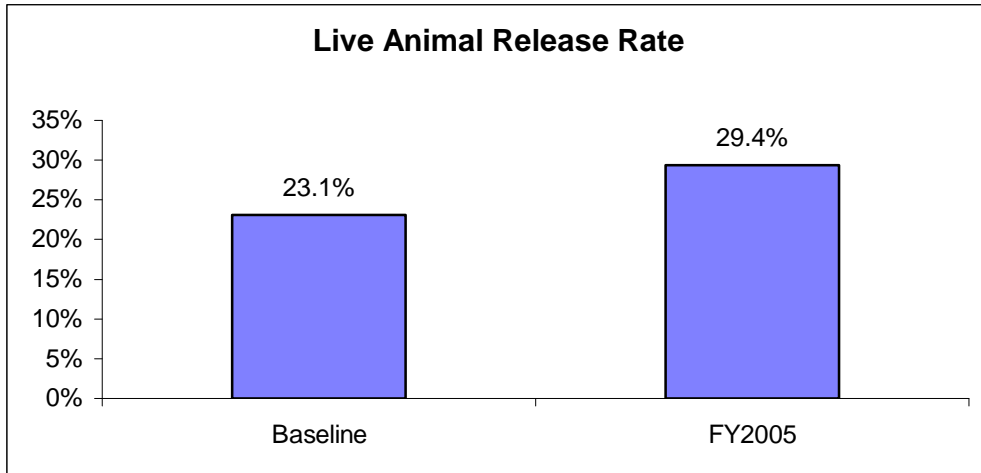
**Figure 22**

The statistical discrepancy can be seen in Figure 23. Initially, the outflow of animals exceeds the inflow by 1.7%. However, this changed slightly in the first program year, with the inflow of animals becoming 2.8% larger than the outflow. This is not necessarily an error. For example, rising levels of fostered animals could cause an increase of animal “inventory”. The difference is large enough to explain the “unexplained” decline in deaths shown in Figure 22. However, the growth in this statistical discrepancy may not be sustainable if it has been caused, for example, by a buildup of animal inventory.



**Figure 23**

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, 23.1% of animals were adopted or redeemed (see Figure 24). In FY2005, the live animal release rate was 29.4%. While this may be lower than shelters in some other regions of the country, it is a substantial improvement from the baseline period's live animal release rate.



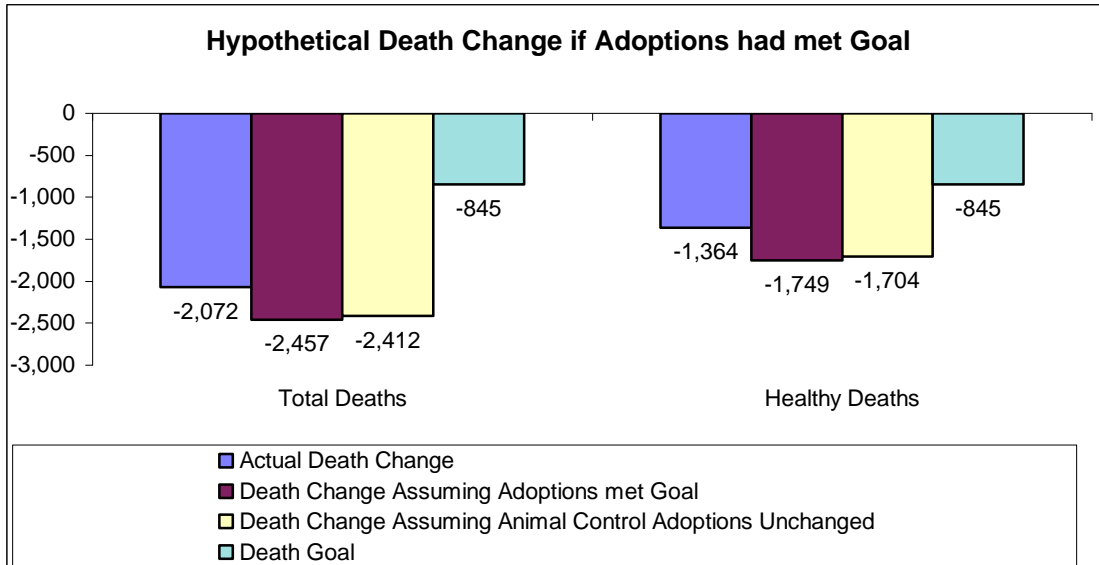
**Figure 24**

## **Conclusions**

The results indicate that Mobile County exceeded its goals in most categories. The program fell short of its adoption goals, although adoption guarantee organizations came very close to meeting their first year adoption goal. Fortunately, the death goals were achieved despite shortfalls in adoptions, due in part to a significant reduction in intake.

As shown in Figure 25, total deaths and healthy deaths would have made even more progress if the first year's adoption goals were met. If the total adoption goal was met and all other shelter dynamics remained unchanged total deaths would have decline by 2,457 rather than 2,072. Furthermore, if animal control adoptions remained unchanged from the baseline period and adoption guarantee organization adoptions had increased at the same rate they actually did, total deaths would have decline by 2,412 rather than 2,072. Though all death rates exceeded their program goals, getting animal control adoptions back up at least to their baseline level may become important for Mobile to reach its long-term goals in future years.

It is important that Mobile comes closer to reaching its adoption goals in future years because Mobile cannot depend on intake declining again in future years to meet its death goal.



**Figure 25**

Mobile 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.