

Guide to the use of the AIAM sample animal data spreadsheet

The AIAM Sample Animal Data Spreadsheet is a resource supplied to AIAM members to assist with commencing, or improving, the collection of useful information about the animals in their care. Data collection and analysis helps you understand your community and how your operations can improve the lives of people and animals.

We recommend that Council invest in a purpose-built software product such as Shelter Mate, Animal Shelter Manager or similar, but, if that isn't a possibility right now, then we recommend you get started today using this template. Every day that goes by is a day of information lost. It is important that local governments, shelters, and rescue groups collect the same data so it can be combined to track progress wherever possible.

The basis of effective strategic planning and problem solving begins with metrics, data collection, and analysis. When implementing new policies or processes, councils should be monitoring relevant metrics to assess the efficacy, efficiency, and other impacts of changes made. This will ensure that limited resources are used most effectively and help councils to develop good data to inform future changes to animal management policies and processes in their municipality. To be useful, data must be accurate and as up-to-date as possible. This means entering the details for each animal as and when they come in and go out of care.

Guidance on what you can do with all this information can be found in the Getting 2 Zero resource '[Data Collection and Use for Animal Management and Shelter Staff](#)', and for a deeper dive we encourage you to find the book, [Every Nose Counts – Using Metrics in Animal Shelters](#) by Dr J.M. Scarlett, Dr M. Greenberg and Dr T. Hoshizaki.

The AIAM Sample Animal Data Spreadsheet is the basic level of data that you should be collecting to be able to analyse your operations and outcomes. There is no end to the range of metrics that might be useful for your organisation, and we encourage you to add to the spreadsheet. We do not recommend the removal of any of the existing columns and categories. The spreadsheet comes in two parts.

Master Sheet

This sheet consists of 29 columns. The first row has been completed as a sample of the information that should be inputted. Many of the columns have drop down boxes in the cells so that you can choose a response. The list of responses available are located on the Drop-Down Lists sheet. We strongly encourage you to input information into every relevant cell that is available.

The Master Sheet has been locked to prevent accidental deletion of column headings, formulas, or formatting. We advise that if you edit any of the sheet that you then re-lock it for the same reasons.

All information that has been inputted to the sheet can then be sorted and filtered. The use of standardized categories and responses then makes the analysis of the data very simple, enabling the easy identification of trends, resource use, and anomalies.

Every animal that finds itself in the care of your organisation (even if returned in the field) must have its information inputted into the sheet, as an individual record, to ensure its usefulness. This includes deceased animals, underage animals, and those that might be euthanised on entry.

Drop-Down Lists sheet

The Drop-Down List sheet contains the information used in the drop-down selections on the Master Sheet and are mapped to the relevant column. This sheet has also been locked to prevent accidental editing and deletion of important information. There may be other categories that you will find useful to add and we encourage you to do so.

What metrics are useful to monitor?

There is no end to the questions that you can answer (or ask) once you start collecting data. Do you want to know if you need more staffing resources at a particular time of year? Or how long animals are in your care (and subsequently what that costs you)? Or what group of the companion animal population your community members are struggling with? Do you want to know where in your municipality you receive the most animals from? The answers might surprise you now that you have the evidence and don't need to rely on staff knowledge, unintentional biases, or experience. You now have the evidence to ask for extra resources for a particular budget line or to trial a pilot project. The exciting thing is that you now also have the means to monitor those projects performance or review the difference that extra budget income is having.

We encourage you to get in touch with the AIAM team if you would like further information or guidance on setting up your data collection system and its use.