

Marc Hodges
Candidate for Mayor of Maui County

1. Are you a pet owner? **Yes. One cat, one dog.**
2. Do you believe funding for animal-related programs....is a priority for Maui? **Yes. Control of animals has been recognized as essential in our society since the 1800s. The question is how to accomplish it. As the economy continues to resist recovery, many operations supported by Maui County can expect to experience further cuts. Maui Humane Society will not be exempt from further careful review. As Mayor, I will be expecting the leaders, employees and volunteers of all of our operations, including those operations funded by the County and carried out by MHS, to develop and implement innovative ways to better serve the public with less funding. Cost-savings to the County which result from innovative new practices and procedures will be shared with those employees and volunteers who create and implement them.**

As a former Maui Police Officer who dealt routinely with MHS Animal Control Officers, I recognize and appreciate the shoestring budget on which our ACOs are expected to operate. And, I support better equipment, training and support for our ACOs. Our challenge is to work together to cut costs while improving service and realizing savings so we can obtain better for our ACOs and MHS operations. We did it at MPD and we can do it together at MHS.

3. Sterilization...**Yes, it is an important factor. How it compares on balance with other options for control will have to be reviewed.**
4. Off-leash dog parks for Maui... **This is a great idea that has been proven to work well in many communities across the U.S. It can work here as well.**
5. Ever visited MHS...? **Yes, for work (MPD) and for family pet reasons.**
6. County support for new MHS facility...? **No. County funding for a new MHS facility is not feasible at this time. I will, however, help MHS cut its construction costs by ensuring that MHS' permits and inspections move very quickly. And, I will advocate for private donations for MHS and will lead by example as Mayor by making a significant private donation to MHS myself for this purpose.**
7. Support stiffer penalties for cockfighting...? **No. The major concern over cockfighting is not the animal cruelty aspect. While this concern is significant, the major concern is the related organized crime that accompanies cockfighting. In reality, the animal cruelty law as it is applied in vice operations is a means to combat the related crime, not the cockfighting per se. As a former officer, I know full-well that better approaches to combating cock-fighting-related crime are needed. However, dramatically increasing cockfighting penalties as the means to accomplish this carries a risk of inappropriately elevating animal cruelty laws beyond their proper role in society. A better approach to start with would be an overhaul of the related enforcement strategy.**
8. Support increasing penalties for animal cruelty...? **No. A pattern of animal cruelty by an individual can be an indicator of related and escalating violent crime and thus is worth investigating. However, expanding penalties for animal cruelty without properly identifying the type of animals were are meaning to protect leads to an expansion of MHS' mission beyond the social contract. On Maui, we have a long and rural history of differentiating between pets and livestock. As Maui moves away from our rural heritage, some residents have begun to lose this distinction, resulting in some very unfortunate applications of the animal cruelty law.**

9. Trap, Neuter, Return and Manage (TNRM) effective for feral cat populations...? **As an experienced and published professional wildlife biologist, I am familiar with the concept of TNRM. Good idea in concept, but it is not cost-effective given our present economic situation. I would not support county funding for TNRM.**

10. Natural disaster planning for pets...? **Yes, of course. However, this responsibility lies with the pet-owner. When we are at the point where we can adequately take care of our people in a disaster, we can start talking about a more organized response to help pets.**

11. Public support for animal activities...? **I will advocate for private donations to MHS operations and will make a donation myself. I will advocate and support animal activities related to agriculture and economic development.**

12. County funding for animal and pet awareness programs...? **No. The county's mission is providing core services. Direct, on-the-ground animal control operations are part of these core functions. Awareness campaigns, though related to animal control, are not.**

13. Animal companionship important to our quality of life...? **Certainly. Animals have been our supporters and our partners since the Ice Age. We all know the powerful, healing role animal pets and companions play in our lives.**

14. Additional comments...**People vary in their degree of love for animals. Me, I love them so much I became a wildlife biologist! But I know that while some individuals will give their life for their pet, when push comes to shove, I choose people over animals whether they are wild animals, domestic animals or pets. As Mayor, my job is to look out for the well-being of all of Maui's citizens. Animals have a crucial role in our society, but that role is subordinate to people. When some people, because of their passion for animals, elevate animals over the lives and rights of other people, we have a problem.**

Maui Humane Society provides the essential core service of direct animal control. I will support and fund this service better than has been done previously. Other missions of MHS are not central to the county's operations and will experience careful review and likely reductions of county funding.

The solution to MHS' needs is building a vibrant Maui economy. As your Mayor, that will be my top priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions.

Aloha,

Marc