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Aurora Animal Shelter Finds New Effective Tool in Battle Against URI and Ringworm

After battling round-after-round of Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) in their cat kennels, the Aurora Animal Shelter agreed to test some new technology to see if they could reduce the condition.

“A company representative showed me a beautiful brochure with data from millions-of-dollars of lab tests and explained that their system is currently being used in the International Space Station,” said Shelter Veterinarian Dr. Nicole Bartley, “but I told them I wasn’t impressed by mere lab tests. I wanted to see if their unit worked in a live shelter environment before I would be interested in investing in it.”

What is the technology? At its most basic level it could be called an air purifier, but this unit is a horse of a different color. Most air filtration systems require that all the air in a room passes through their unit in order to clean it. Once a door opens or someone sneezes, the room is again contaminated until ALL air in the room again goes through the filter, a timely process. This unit is different in that a photodynamic catalyst produces friendly oxidizers from humidity in the air. The oxidizers move freely about the room, seeking out something to clean, instead of waiting for the contaminants to come to them.

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“This all sounded good,” said Bartley, “but I still wanted to see the unit in action.”

The manufacturer, UVAIRx, agreed to place a unit in the Aurora Animal Shelter’s cattery and the veterinarian agreed to track data and document results. The unit ran for six weeks, was turned off for the next four weeks, and then turned on again for another month.

At the time of installation, the shelter had six cases of ring worm. All felines undergoing treatment for the fungus had been housed in the main cat room. Once the unit was installed, without any extra cleaning or disinfecting in the cattery, the ringworm outbreak was stopped cold. There were no new cases of ringworm. “While this doesn’t prove the unit stopped the ringworm,” said Bartley, “it is highly suggestive and can be inferred.”

During the first six weeks of testing the unit, the Aurora Animal Shelter tracked URI cases. They continued to track URI when the unit was turned off (URI cases increased), and when it was again restarted. After the unit was turned on the second time, there were NO cases of URI.

“This surprised me,” said Bartley. “Two of the major things that impact URI are crowded cat rooms, and extended stays for the cats. We met both those conditions when the unit was on, so we expected to see an increase in URI cases, but with the unit running, our cases of URI were virtually non-existent in the second run.”

“I’m really impressed with this system,” relays Aurora Animal Care Division Manager Pamela Alford. “So much so that, as a Board Member of Freedom Service Dogs, I suggested a controlled test for canine kennel cough at their facility.”

UVAIRx agreed to install a unit in one closed room at Freedom Service Dogs (FSD), and compare data against a second closed room functioning without the system. This test is currently in progress.

“I’m hopeful this unit will function as well for decreasing disease in our dog area, as it appears to work in our cattery,” says Alford. “This system could be the next big breakthrough in maintaining a healthy animal shelter.”

If you would like additional information about the air system in use at the Aurora Animal Shelter and FSD, go to UVAIRx.com or call 303-327-5353

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