A Social History of Postwar Animal Protection

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Introduction

The rise of concern for animals during the post–World War II period was an unanticipated result of convergent trends in demographics, animal utilization, science, technology, moral philosophy, and popular culture. Together, these factors brought certain forms of animal use under greater scrutiny and created the structures of opportunity necessary to challenge and transform those uses. These trends also spurred the revitalization and extension of a movement that, in the nineteenth century, had been robust. Alongside older notions about the humane treatment of animals, modern animal protection introduced new and different premises that both reflected and shaped emerging attitudes about the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals.

Organized animal protection in America dates from the 1860s, when like-minded citizens launched independent, nonprofit societies for the protection of cruelty to animals (SPCAs) in one city after another and pursued their goals of kind treatment on a range of fronts. After a period of considerable vitality, however, the movement lost ground after World War I and its concerns dropped from the public view. Several generations of leaders failed to match the vision, energy, or executive abilities of the humane movement’s founding figures. The period between World War I and World War II proved to be an infertile social context for the consideration of animal issues, and the American humane movement became quiescent and ineffectual. This decline in movement strength coincided with the beginning of an expansion of animal use in such major segments of the twentieth-century economy as agriculture, biomedical research, and product testing. Humane advocates were either unaware of trends in animal husbandry and animal research or were unable to effect reforms in practices that were increasingly hidden from view and often exempted from extant anticycruelty statutes and regulations. By 1950 animal protection, once a vibrant reform, stood mired in a phase of insularity, lack of vision, and irrelevance.

During the first decades of the century, the anticycruelty societies had shifted their energy and resources away from the promotion of a coherent humane ideology and a broad-based approach to the prevention of cruelty. They focused their attention on the management of horse, dog, and cat welfare problems and to educational activities tied to pet keeping. The assumption of urban animal control duties by humane societies throughout the country made it difficult to sustain broader educational campaigns addressing the cruel treatment of animals in other contexts. Animal control was largely thankless work, undersubsidized by municipal governments, and it usually overtaxed the staff and financial resources of the local SPCAs. The American Humane Association (AHA), the movement’s umbrella association during that period, catered mainly to the interests of its constituent local societies, which were increasingly absorbed with urban animal control issues.

After World War II, the animal protection movement enjoyed the revival that we discuss in this chapter. Contemporary scholarship suggests that social movements are more or less continuous, shifting from periods of peak activity to those of relative decline. The renaissance of animal protection during the past half century involved several distinct phases of evolution. Such divisions are discretionary, but they can clarify important trends. This analysis relies on a three-stage chronology in considering the progress of postwar animal protection, one that emphasizes revival, mobilization and transformation, and consolidation of gains.

1950–1975: Revival

A specific grievance, the issue of “pound seizure,” rooted in existing animal shelter principles and policies, precipitated the transformation and revitalization of organized animal
protection in the early 1950s. At the time, both the AHA and the wealthier local and regional humane societies had narrowed their focus, for the most part, to companion animal issues. The postwar boom in expenditures on biomedical research greatly increased the demand for laboratory animals, and in the mid-1940s, scientific institutions began to turn to municipal shelters as a cheap source of research dogs and cats. Animal procurement laws were developed and usually passed without much difficulty.

Responding to the situation, leaders within the AHA attempted to negotiate with the biomedical research community. This antagonized some supporters, who attacked the propriety of such negotiations. As a result the AHA backed away altogether from the issue. This decision also generated discord, and several important breakaway factions emerged from the resulting intra-organizational dispute within the AHA. Before long, there were two new national organizations in the field (Rowan 1984).

As it turned out, the same people who parted ways with the AHA over its pound release policy quickly found other reasons to chart a new course for the work of animal protection. Renewal began in earnest with the formation, in 1951, of the Animal Welfare Institute and, in 1954, of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), both of which were founded by individuals formerly associated with the AHA. The new groups explicitly distinguished themselves from extant organizations and their approaches. Although they were in sympathy with the problems and challenges that local SPCAs faced, they did not become directly involved with the management of animal shelters or municipal animal control work. Instead, they focused on areas of animal use that their predecessors had either failed to address or had neglected for some time. Among other accomplishments they revived and revitalized early twentieth-century campaigns devoted to humane slaughter; the regulation of laborato-
rected the debate over animals’ status, which to a limited degree had engaged their predecessors in both classical (before A.D. 200) and early modern times (1600–1900). The advent of serious philosophical and academic debate concerning the treatment of animals changed not only the movement’s own frame of reference, but also the way in which it was perceived by outsiders. If animal protection had suffered from the stigma of being perceived as based largely in emotion and sentiment, the addition of rational argument and debate was a crucial factor in its move toward wider legitimacy.

Renewed attention to animal cognition bolstered these reinvigorated ethical arguments concerning human obligation to animals (Griffin 1976). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Darwin’s theory of evolution spurred a strong interest in animal cognition that led some to argue that animals deserved better treatment. By the early 1900s, however, the rise of behaviorism as a scientific paradigm reduced the study of animal mind to an investigation of physiological facts rather than an exploration of consciousness, and the argument that animals deserved greater consideration, based on higher mental faculties, waned. From the early 1950s onward, another cycle of intense interest in animal consciousness commenced, as scientists and others established and explored the cognitive, psychological, and social capacities of animals. This new generation of scientists, including Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen, combined field observations with scientific methods, and the result was a new discipline—ethology—the naturalistic study of animal behavior. Importantly, the pioneering ethologists discussed their works with explicit reference to the mental and emotional states of animals. A subsequent generation of field scientists extended the discipline by showing that non-human animals possessed many of the abilities previously assumed to be singularly human. Researchers working with primates in the laboratory cast doubt even on the uniqueness of the human ability to communicate through language. These various inquiries set the stage for a renewal of arguments over the moral status of animals.

The dissemination of such research to a broad public audience through the mass media was another crucial stimulus. Television nature programs and relevant books and articles have catered to and encouraged a virtually limitless popular taste for information and insight concerning whales, dolphins, chimpanzees, and other highly valued species. During the same period, the television series “Lassie,” Walt Disney productions, and other animal-related programming that drew heavily upon anthropomorphism attracted mass audiences and shaped public attitudes toward animals (Cartmill 1993; Payne 1995; Mitman 1999).

The steady expansion of pet keeping during the postwar period also heightened popular interest in animal capacities. It has been suggested that this continuing fascination with the intelligence and emotional faculties of companion animals also led more people to question the mistreatment or misuse of animals in numerous other contexts (Serpell 1986).

The principal areas of concern for humane groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s included general wildlife protection, anti-hunting, anti-fur and anti-trapping, animal research, endangered species, wild horse and burro round-ups, and companion animal overpopulation. Other issues, like those of intensive farming, cruelty to performing animals, and zoo practices, were largely neglected. Few humane organizations had either the resources or the assurances of public and membership support for sustained exploration of these concerns.

The two major legislative benchmarks of the postwar period, the Humane Slaughter Act and the AWA, depended less on coalition-building with other interest groups than on securing the agreement of the regulated parties under pressure from elite politicians. Subsequent legislative accomplishments in the 1960s and 1970s drew more on grassroots mobilization and direct-mail contact with supporters to generate the necessary support for positive legislation. Animal protection groups began to explore tentative and situational alliances with interest groups working in related areas, especially those connected with environmental protection. Thus, humane groups joined environmentalists in successful legislative campaigns that resulted in the passage of the Endangered Species Act (1967), the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (1971), and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972). Gradually animal protection became a pressure group movement with a realizable legislative agenda and the capacity for national mobilization.

Even so, a collective consciousness among those sharing in the work was slow to coalesce. Humanitarians did not contest their public characterization as an armchair army, composed of “little old ladies in tennis shoes,” although they took pride in the fact that their efforts were beginning to bring results. While steady gains were being made in protective legislation and public awareness, for the most part, congressional offices still assigned animal issues to junior aides or temporary interns. Notwithstanding the substantial progress that had been achieved from 1950 to 1975, animal protection had yet to become a “household” issue, and it rarely featured in the media or in popular culture. Few advocates thought of themselves as participants in a movement. By 1975, however, this would change, as a sense of collective identity began to emerge, and new issues and actors came into the field.
1975–1990: Mobilization and Transformation

Some animal organizations working in the 1960s and 1970s were already beginning to rely on more extensive research and planning, more perceptive political strategies, and the language of rights and liberation. A number of the people who emerged as key figures in post-1975 activism began their careers in the established organizations. There was considerable continuity and cooperation between the older and the newer animal advocates. Many longtime adherents, including some of those who had been part of the 1954 breakaway faction and subsequent minor schisms, continued to make important contributions (Taylor 1989).

These precedents notwithstanding, it is still clear that the publication of Peter Singer’s Animal Liberation in 1975 and the formation of Animal Rights International by Henry Spira in 1976 inaugurated a new phase of the work. In his book Singer recast the cause as a justice-based movement that underscored human obligation to animals, while challenging traditional justifications for their exclusion from ethical consideration. Animal Liberation also gave the animal protection movement a unifying ideology (based more on reason than emotion)—whose elements included anti-speciesism, equal consideration of interests, and the notion that animal liberation is human liberation—around which most of its factions could mobilize.

Spira had interacted directly with other advocates of this new ethical sensibility concerning animals, notably Singer himself. More importantly, he brought a lifetime of experience in the labor, civil rights, peace, and women’s movements to bear on the problem of animal suffering. Spira was one of the first activists to apply the methods and tactics of other postwar movements in the animal protection arena. For movement loyalists who had suffered through decades of meager media attention and few tangible successes, as well as for newcomers primed by the public discussion of Animal Liberation, such innovation was inspiring. His work had dramatic results, including an elevation of the general standard of campaigning throughout the humane movement as others began to emulate and extend his approach. Another important outcome of the Spira-led campaigns was the formation of channels of dialog among government, industry, and the humane community. Spira proved especially skillful at mediating between the traditional humane societies, insurgent factions, and the animal-use constituencies in the interest of reform (Singer 1998).

In the early 1980s, an important wave of group formation and movement expansion commenced. Several key conferences gave rise to new organizations and generated considerable momentum toward the development of a national grassroots movement. The animal rights ideology that Tom Regan and other contemporary philosophers popularized expressed itself powerfully in the rhetoric and platforms of these new organizations. They challenged the arbitrariness of moral boundaries that subordinated animals to human interests. Some began to conceive and articulate broad demands that the traditional movement had either abandoned or never formulated. The groups that adopted progressive campaign styles gained members at a rapid rate during the mid-1980s, as their confrontational and more militant approaches appealed to both the media (which “discovered” animal rights after 1980) and to a public ready for protest drama and direct action. A number of single-issue groups also emerged, sharpening the focus of attack on relatively neglected problems of animal use in entertainment, food production, and so-called sport.

The decade also saw an unparalleled expression of grassroots-level activism in support of animal protection, as local and regional organizations formed in both large and small communities in every state. Their monthly meetings sometimes resembled the consciousness-raising sessions of the early feminist movement, incorporating personal testimony, guest speakers, the distribution of literature, the circulation of petitions, the planning of actions and events, and the viewing of videos detailing animal abuse in various contexts. Incoming activists were not encouraged simply to send money to the national groups; instead, they were conscripted into campaigns that targeted animal exploitation in their own locales. The movement also showed increasing reticulation, as local organizations knit themselves together as part of larger state or regional coalitions.

The new generation of animal advocates brought the message to the public through high-profile tactics, such as demonstrations outside the institutions where animals were used, including factory farms, stockyards, restaurants, laboratories, fur salons, circuses, zoos, and bird shoots. About 1984 activists began to employ civil disobedience measures, and the movement’s reliance on sit-ins, site blockage, and similar tactics expanded steadily through the rest of the decade. National days of action focusing on such high-priority issues as veal production, animal experimentation, pigeon shooting, and fur took on “high holiday” status, as activists honored their commitment by participation in mass rallies and protests on these calendar dates. Some American campaigners borrowed the tactic of hunt sabotage from England, entering the woods to challenge hunters and the constitutionality of the “harassment” laws passed to protect them. They also took to the airwaves, challenging a wide range of animal uses in mass media debates. This expanded repertoire of protest kept the issue before the public and drew new participants into the work.

In the age of twenty-four-hour mass media and the hand-held video camera, the growing reliance of animal groups on casework and investigation...
also proved to be very important. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (1981) set the standard for such work. When other groups began to adopt the investigative approach as well, it had an energizing effect. The credibility of both individuals and organizations mounted in the wake of exposés that substantiated longstanding allegations concerning abusive treatment of animals in a number of realms, and provided crucial momentum to the cause as a whole. A highly publicized case involving the so-called Silver Spring monkeys (1981 et seq.), which focused on allegations of neglect in the laboratory of a Maryland researcher, made it apparent that neglect and improper care of animals could and did occur in American research facilities. Three years later a scandal involving the treatment of baboons at the head-injury laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania made it clear that the Silver Spring case had not been an anomaly. In the wake of these and subsequent episodes, advocates working in support of the Dole/Brown amendments to the AWA found it far easier to demonstrate the value of the proposed legislation. Investigative exposés of stockyards, cosmetics testing laboratories, and other targets spurred legislative and public awareness campaigns designed to restrict or suppress animal suffering in these and other social locations.

Professionalization within the ranks of animal protection groups began in the 1970s at both the national and local levels, as humane organizations attracted knowledgeable staff members who enhanced both the organizations’ daily operations and their ability to serve the cause. For many of the newly recruited professionals, the rationality that Regan, Singer, and other philosophers introduced to the debate made participation in the movement possible. By 1985 The HSUS employed a large number of staff members with professional and academic credentials in a broad range of disciplines related to animals and their well-being.

Outside of the established organizations, a different form of professional recruitment aided the movement’s growth. Animal-interest caucuses began to form among attorneys, biologists, medical doctors, nurses, veterinarians, and psychologists, to name the most visible. These new groups were especially influential in the pursuit and implementation of innovative ideas and tactics. They also made it possible for the humane movement to present stronger evidence in support of its positions in legislatures, courts, and professional arenas and to the public.

All of the foregoing developments contributed to the emergence of a science of animal welfare that has slowly penetrated discussions of animals’ treatment in many fields of agricultural, industrial, and scientific endeavor, as well as in other contexts. In the wake of rising social concern about animals, animal welfare science began to develop into an established scientific discipline drawing on ethology, veterinary medicine, and psychology. A growing number of scientists are applying their energies to the reduction of animal suffering and similar objectives. The science of animal welfare has thus opened the way for innovations and refinements touching on animal use in a wide range of areas and established itself as an influence in policy debates on the use and treatment of nonhuman animals.

If the decade of the 1980s saw intense and widespread protest against animal exploitation, it was also one of considerable media visibility for animal protection and great change within the movement itself. The entry of new groups into the competition for resources via direct mail not only flooded the mailboxes of potential supporters, but it also led established organizations to reinvent themselves in light of new pressures and opportunities. Many of these groups lagged in providing either leadership or resources for advancing the cause. The advent of dynamic competition and the heightened expectations of an increasingly mobilized constituency spurred considerable change. The movement as a whole developed greater consistency and adopted more progressive positions on a range of issues. Even in the case of groups whose political ideology remained moderate, tactical radicalization brought both practical gains and new supporters. Finally, greater informal interaction between the staff members of various organizations ensured better coordination of effort and approach.

Adherents of the animal movement have often compared their cause to other postwar movements for change, especially the African American freedom struggle and that of women’s liberation. In a sense, the claim has been mainly putative. A few people graduated from the civil rights and feminist movements into the struggle for animals’ rights, but the evidence for overlap of personnel and constituencies remains largely anecdotal. In any case, it is more important that the 1960s-era rights-based movements generated a “master frame” (“the interpretive medium through which collective actors associated with different movements” in a given cycle of activity define and comprehend their goals and targets), and a belief in agency that proved helpful to the formation of an animal rights movement (Snow and Benford 1992). The appropriation by animal advocates of the strategic thinking and mobilization methods characteristic of established justice-based movements was significant and lay at the core of many of the dramatic victories accomplished by animal rights groups throughout the decade.

The policies and ideology of the Reagan administration also catalyzed animal protection, just as it affected a number of other movements that appeared or reappeared during the 1980s. The presence of an apparently hostile administration led to the resurgence of feminism, environmentalism, antimilitarism, and the nuclear freeze movement, as well as animal protection. The proposed executive branch budgets provided no support for the AWA during all eight years of President Ronald Reagan’s
tenure. At the same time, federal agencies under the president’s authority took a number of other steps that animal protectionists perceived as threatening to the well-being of both domestic and wild animals.

One measure of the movement’s success during this phase of its development was the launching of counteroffensive tactics and campaigns by its adversaries. Furriers, agribusiness interests, product testing companies, hunting and trapping groups, and biomedical research concerns collectively spent tens of millions of dollars for public awareness campaigns and other activities aimed at squelching the animal movement. Their pressure sparked a political backlash, too, as congressional representatives introduced legislation to shield animal use from the scrutiny and challenge of animal protectionists. Old stereotypes were also revised—the dismissive symbolism of the “little old lady in tennis shoes” was deemed no longer adequate to the task. Targeted institutions and individuals promoted instead the more threatening image of animal-rights terrorist in their efforts to thwart the growth of public sympathy with animal advocates.

Sidney Tarrow’s observation that movement cycles are activated by tactical innovation applies well to the transformation and impressive growth of organized animal protection during the period 1975–1990 (Tarrow 1998). The emergence of a unifying ideology and new organizational actors committed to new strategies of protest and mobilization further reinvigorated the field of humane work after the renaissance of the 1950s and 1960s. Institutions that had long gone unchallenged now faced a strong and tactically resourceful movement with a strong base of grassroots volunteers. Animal protectionists registered a series of successes as the targeted interests struggled to reestablish their accustomed dominance. A new generation of activists came into the groups most closely associated with tactical innovation and campaign success. However, all groups enjoyed increasing membership during the period. By the end of the 1980s, the animal protection movement had set a number of reforms into play, and the argument that animals were deserving of greater moral consideration had penetrated public consciousness. By then, too, however, government, industrial, institutional, and entrepreneurial interests with a stake in animal use had mobilized with sufficient authority to slow the movement’s momentum and influence. The field of contest, the relevant parties, and the issues themselves were all in evolution.

Understanding Animal Protection

Concern for animals has sparked a considerable body of literary, historical, philosophical, legal, scientific, and cultural studies that focus on the human-animal relationship. However, in the late 1980s, the animal protection movement itself, and its popular reception, began to attract the attention of scholarly analysts. This accumulated scholarship focuses on the movement’s social composition, its recruitment and mobilization methods, its overall accomplishments, and general attitudinal surveys about the treatment of animals in American society.

The body of relevant scholarship concerning the social composition of the humane movement and its activities is limited. Nevertheless, a few conclusions are common to virtually all of the extant studies. The most striking is that women are more likely to be participants in animal protection work than are men. Indeed, levels of female participation in humane work appear to be as high as in any other social movement not explicitly tied to feminist objectives. Women have played a significant role in the formation of most of the newer organizations, and a 1976 survey using a national sample of 3,000 persons reported that 2 percent of women had supported an animal organization while only 0.6 percent of men had (Kellert and Berry 1981).

In the light of such findings, it is worth noting that the rise of animal protection in the nineteenth century coincided with a period of sustained vitality within American feminism. Thus, one might plausibly speculate that the post–World War II campaigns for sexual equality have helped to place issues tied to care, concern, and nurture on the public and political agenda. While the principal organs and agents of modern feminism have largely failed to embrace the issue of animal suffering and exploitation, many feminists have found the cause on their own. A number of authors have argued that nurturing and caregiving values are higher priorities for women, and still more have attempted to draw explicit links between feminism and animal protection. In fact, by the early 1990s, the feminist ethic of caring emerged as an alternative to the liberation- and rights-oriented perspectives of Singer and Regan (Adams 1990; Donovan and Adams 1996).

Extant research also indicates that the majority of active animal advocates are white, with middle- and upper-class backgrounds. They appear to be more highly educated than most Americans, and tend to live in communities with populations of 10,000 or more. A high percentage of animal advocates have companion animals in the home and they are generally not affiliated with traditional religious institutions. Many consider themselves atheists or agnostics (Plous 1991; Richards and Krammich 1991; Jamison and Lunch 1992; Herzog 1993; Shapiro 1994).

A 1990 survey based on controlled sampling was typical. The researchers found their sample to be 97 percent white, 78 percent female, while 57 percent were in the 30–49-year age group (compared to 21 percent for the United States overall). Animal advocates proved to be highly educated in comparison with the general population (33 percent had higher degrees compared with 7.6 percent of all Americans), and financially well off (39 percent had incomes of $850,000
or more, compared with 5 percent of the national population, although it should be noted that educational and income levels are strongly correlated. Seven out of ten respondents reported having no living children, while nine out of ten had companion animals (compared with about four out of ten in a national sample). In fact, respondents had an average of 4.7 animals each, about five times the national average (Richards and Kranich 1991).

How and why do people come to the cause? Here, too, academic studies have begun to provide some insights into the recruitment of adherents. Resource mobilization has been a dominant theory of social movement development. As its name implies, resource mobilization theory posits that movements emerge when an adversely affected or dissatisfied population gains enough momentum to attract or combine the resources necessary to advance its own interests through organization and protest (McAdam 1982). Such explanations of movement dynamics usually rely on the study of recruitment networks: in the civil rights era, for example, churches were the earliest and most significant sites of conscription and engagement.

Resource mobilization theory has been judged inadequate for the study of the so-called “new social movements,” which pursue quality-of-life or lifestyle objectives as distinct from the material or class-based goals of more traditional social movements. Resource mobilization, its critics charge, overlooks the cultural components of social movement formation, and its inattentiveness to identity, culture, and meaning as factors in leading people to join movements has led scholars to the new social movement framework (Morris and Mueller 1992). New social movements draw supporters whose own basic rights are secure and who are typically well integrated into their society. Examples include the anti–nuclear power, environmental, disarmament, and alternative medicine movements. It is proposed that animal protection falls among them. These causes tend to link people who share certain views about reforms needed to improve modern life. Their movements aim for changes in the political system as well as in the systems of cultural production within the society. In other words, they seek fundamental changes in social consciousness (Melucci 1985). However, delineating the character of such movements does not answer a key question about their emergence and expansion. If the new social movements do not recruit and mobilize from within preexisting networks, then how and why do people enter and participate?

Why do some people seem to care more about animals than do others? Indeed, why do they care enough to join campaigns for animal rights and well-being? Considerable progress toward comprehension and assessment of the animal protection movement has come with the emergence of studies that combine research on the social psychology of attitudes toward animal use with theories about mobilization and organization. Childhood experience, social conditioning, the manifestation of an empathic style, and identification with the oppressed have all been considered as factors in the development of regard for animals (Shapiro 1994).

One of the few sociologists to write extensively about the animal protection movement, James Jasper, proposes that greater attention be paid to the social-psychological identity formation of activists. In the model he proposes, one or more greater or smaller “moral shocks” (discrete events, experiences, or realizations) raise a sense of outrage or responsibility within individuals. These shocks spur them to seek out or form organizations (Jasper 1997). The animal protection movement, then, does not bring new supporters into the work by exposure through a preexisting social network like a church, women’s rights group, or union. More typically, it “collects” them from a pool of citizens within whom some critical experience or insight has sparked a sense of empathy with animals. There is no apparent self-interest for those involved in the work, yet animal protection, like other new social movements, also appears to confer psychological benefits. Many animal activists experience alienation from a wider society that does not value animals as much as they do. For such people the emergence and rapid mobilization of a movement that unites like-minded individuals, that investigates and challenges the abuse and suffering of animals, and that attempts to enculturate the principles of animal protection within society has considerable allure (Shapiro 1994).

Some believe that attitudes acquired in childhood can account for individuals’ disposition toward animals and their protection; accordingly, animal protectionists have laid a great emphasis on humane education of children. A 1984 survey stressed the significance of childhood experience on distinguishing individuals’ attitudes toward animals, and the developmental origin of concern for animals has begun to attract attention (Kellert 1985; Myers 1988). Despite a growing number of studies that focus on humane education, however, we know very little about its effectiveness and impact.

While underutilized, the community study approach has also helped to shed light upon the social composition of the humane movement. Just as importantly, however, community studies have made it possible to explore the outcomes of animal protection campaigns in a number of cases. These studies frame the efforts of activists and their opposition interactively, taking into account the evolutionary character of specific campaigns and of humane work as a whole. For instance, Einwohner’s study of a statewide organization suggests that the importance of cultural assumptions about protesters, as well as the targeted practices and behaviors, are as vital to the assessment of the movement’s outcomes as is a study of its tactics, organizational strategy, and structures of opportunity. Grove’s study of confrontations over animal
experimentation in a North Carolina university town explores how stakeholders on either side acted to redress certain perceived deficits in their approach to the issue. For example, the animal activists emphasized more rational and dispassionate lines of argument, while researchers drew on emotional appeals in their defense of the status quo (Einwohner 1997; Grove 1997).

Both Einwohner’s and Grove’s studies confirm the potential of studies of local and regional contexts to produce insight into the dynamics of contention over animal use. In shorter case studies of community-level challenges to biomedical research, Jasper and Poulsen suggest that the animal movement can quickly lose its advantage when targeted institutions decide to fight back with equal tenacity. Jasper and Sanders conclude that, where both sides avoid strongly polarized disagreement over basic principles, compromises can be achieved (Jasper and Poulsen 1993; Sanders and Jasper 1994). A full appraisal of animal protection and its accomplishments during the past half-century will require many more such investigations. Not just the recent history, but the future of animal protection work, may be clarified by careful attention to the substance and legacy of such case studies.

It seems clear that the 1960s legacy of critical skepticism and cultural radicalism created a favorable context for the growth and spread of new social movements such as animal protection. Disaffection with American foreign policy and with racial and sexual discrimination at home led many Americans to question the authority and honesty of government and institutional actors, a tendency that infused most of the post-1960s movements. While animal protectionists have rarely adopted wholesale critiques of the American political economic order, the movement has often relied on rhetoric and assumptions that identify animals as victims of rampant commercialism, greed, vanity, and the coercive power of big institutions. Like other post-industrial, post-citizenship causes (environmentalism and anti-nuclear activism, for example), animal protection carries with it an implicit ambivalence about science and technology and frequently has drawn on the potent and popular stereotype of the uncerning, cold, and dispassionate scientist.

However, this attitude, commonly called anti-instrumentalist, does not in itself define the movement. In fact, humane advocates have often counterpoised their skepticism of science with enthusiasm about the possibilities of technology to ameliorate the circumstances of animals. For example, advocates have relied on the development of knowledge through science to advance arguments concerning the replacement of animals in research, testing, and education; to critique the reliance on hunting as a wildlife management policy; to reduce animal overpopulation; and to promote alternative food-animal husbandry systems.

1990–2000: Consolidation

By 1990 national media coverage of animal rights protests had apparently peaked, leading to speculation that the movement was losing the public’s attention and waning in influence (Herzog 1995). Certainly, the novelty of the movement’s provocative challenges to the use and mistreatment of animals wore off, undoubtedly leading media decision makers to the conclusion that the cause, no longer “new,” was less deserving of special coverage. The high level of local grassroots activism that had characterized the 1980s subsided, and several national activist organizations, tied to the movement’s growth in the previous decade, dissolved or waned in influence. Some participants in the work, accustomed to seeing large numbers of people at events and extensive media coverage, worried about the health of the animal protection movement. Others asserted that the animal rights movement was in ideological retreat (Francione 1996).

Such judgments overlook the fact that movements cannot perpetually be novel or operate at constantly high levels of protest activity. Even the most enthusiastic adherents tire and may curtail their levels of participation due to fatigue, and it is difficult to hold the interest of the public and the media over the long term. Intense interest, and the commitment to seeing an issue resolved, usually recede as the complexity of certain issues, and their imperviousness to quick and easy resolution, become more obvious. The philosophy of animal rights, an ideology largely defined in terms of moral absolutes, did not make evolution of the animal movement from a novel protest force to a mature contestant in the political marketplace any easier. Animal advocates have begun to develop other descriptive rhetorics that are more pragmatic and inclusive.

As a result, in the 1990s the animal protection movement shifted into other, less dramatic, and less obviously newsworthy channels of activity. For example, some of the battles between animal users and animal defenders moved into the political, legislative, and regulatory arenas. These confrontations called for new kinds of knowledge and action, often more subtle and nuanced than street-level protests and less likely to attract the notice of the mass media. For instance, humane advocates have succeeded in the establishment of basic frameworks for regulating the use of animals in certain contexts and in some of their campaigns to strengthen earlier “foothold” legislation such as the AWA, obtaining incremental advances in a steady pattern. As the issues and the arenas of debate and action evolved, they drew new and different players into animal protection work.

Among recent accomplishments, attorneys representing various humane organizations scored victories in cases relating to wildlife management, species preservation initiatives, wildlife import-permit challenges, standing to sue, and open-government/public-participation laws. Legal advo-
In the mid-1990s the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) eliminated the face branding of cattle because of animal welfare concerns. In 1999 the USDA took the virtually unprecedented step of forcing a consent agreement upon a controversial private laboratory, resulting in the promised relinquishment of chimpanzees to other facilities after a number of serious animal welfare violations had been reported (Spira 1995; Brownlee 1999).

In general, the movement has enjoyed greater success in reshaping cultural attitudes than in securing laws. Every movement produces culture, and the animal protection cause has done especially well in the broad diffusion of its values. While it might be the case that straight news coverage of animal issues has declined, these issues are more likely to be mentioned in popular cultural forms such as television entertainment or magazine features than was the case twenty years ago. Concern for animals has been increasingly represented within a variety of cultural forms, including literature, television, music, and art. During the past twenty years, it has become strongly associated with successive generations of youth culture. Through this sequence of acculturation, the movement has helped to normalize a number of practices and beliefs that support the animal protection agenda.

The embrace of humane lifestyle choices has been one significant result of this process. Animal advocates have taken the pursuit of principles embodied in the 1960s slogan “the personal is political” to considerable lengths. The embrace of humane products, ones that involve no (or less) harm to animals and the environment, has been a core principle for animal protectionists during the past fifteen years. Over time, exposure to humane ideology typically prompts its adherents to become highly conscious of the ethical implications of their wardrobe, diet, entertainment, household, and other lifestyle choices. Humane advocates, as purchasers of vegetarian, “cruelty-free,” and environmentally safe products, have come to constitute an increasingly important market segment. The “green consumerism” of the 1990s both encouraged and relied upon marketplace expressions of affinity with animals. Such patterns of consumption have caught on outside the animal protection movement itself, as other Americans, exposed to relevant information and sensitized to humane values, changed their lifestyles. The success of supermarkets and other retailers attuned to these values reflects the longer-term influence of campaigns waged in the 1970s and 1980s.

Similar choices outside the realm of food and household product purchases have also become more popular. Those who object to the presence of animals in circuses can now patronize troupes that eschew their use. Students who wish to choose nonanimal alternatives, whether in the high school cafeteria or the veterinary school classroom, now find it easier to do so. Even haute couture has condescended to meet the demand for elegant but cruelty-free fur.

Judging the success of a social movement is a notoriously difficult exercise. A simple verdict of success or failure in any specific category of effort is usually inadequate for the assessment of animal protection as an ongoing social and political endeavor. There are different forms of success: political success, mobilization success, campaign success, economic success, and success in the realm of public opinion. Beyond this, dichotomous assessments of “success” and “failure” are often inappropriate in the assessment of a complex and ongoing process of struggle and debate (Einwohner 1997). A broad evaluation of animal protection’s relative accomplishments must include an understanding of the ever-changing terrain wrought by shifts in public taste and opinion. Other factors that must also be considered include:

- the relative embeddedness of the practices under scrutiny,
- countermeasures undertaken by the targeted interests,
- negative publicity wrought by
misguided activism,
• changes in the political economy,
• technical advances that change opportunities and threats, and
• many other advances and reversals that occur over the long term.

Goals must necessarily change as conditions and opportunities change and issues are disputed, negotiated, and transformed by subsequent debate and action.

With these considerations in mind, one should not overstate the effectiveness and sophistication of animal protectionists’ tactics or the general caliber of their leadership. The movement’s history provides compelling examples of expenditure of funds and effort on strategically pointless gestures and/or campaigns with little attention to long-term strategy or follow-up campaigns. In the early 1980s, for example, Mobilization for Animals (MfA) organized a year-long campaign against the nation’s seven primate centers and conducted major protests outside four of the seven facilities. Yet MfA and its collaborators never developed a follow-up strategy; ironically, the major outcome of the protest was an increase in funding for the primate centers in the wake of the demonstrations. The 1990 March for Animals drew 25,000 people to Washington for a protest, but there was no larger strategy developed beyond holding the event itself. A last-minute legislative agenda, which produced little or no follow-up, was a failure. In the end, groups opposed to the animal activist agenda exploited the event to get their story out and the media coverage was mostly negative. Six years later, many of the same groups staged a follow-up event that drew only several thousand supporters. While some argued that the turnout was low because the event was badly organized, the 1996 gathering effectively ended attempts to convert animal activism into some sort of mass movement.

It is also important to note that optimistic predictions about the demise of certain forms of animal use during the past two decades have usually not been borne out. Although the movement made significant progress toward the goal of deglamorizing fur in the 1980s, the fur industry has survived and continues to attract consumers. Its ability to cut prices in the short term, shift production to cheaper overseas facilities, and deploy advertising resources to promote its product as an affirmative choice have allowed the industry to survive during even the worst of times. Veal consumption may be down, but it is not out. Americans eat a little less red meat than they used to, but poultry consumption has risen dramatically, resulting in more animal suffering overall. Internationally, intensive animal agriculture and meat consumption have been increasing fast. Not even in the field of animal testing, which drew so much attention in the 1980s and where evidence indicates that animal use has declined substantially, can continuing progress be taken for granted. In 1999 animal organizations had to fight off a product-safety initiative launched by environmental groups and sponsored by the federal government that would have led to an expansion of animal testing. After two decades of work on alternatives, it was still necessary for humane advocates to persuade other stakeholders that different and better testing, not more animal testing, was the appropriate course for the program to chart.

Current Context
The animal protection movement may have growing popular appeal, but this has not necessarily been translated into commensurate political success. In the political arena, the power of interests tied to animal exploitation has prevented the passage and implementation of many initiatives. Frequent tensions between federal and state authority have limited the chances of success for some proposals, especially those relating to wildlife issues. Only a small percentage of the many bills to halt or curb animal suffering introduced during the past half century in the U.S. Congress have actually passed. Many have not even gained a hearing, let alone a vote. Despite the frequent complaints of the regulated parties, the legislative and regulatory restraints on animal use remain modest. The quality of enforcement is at times questionable, and funding for administration of animal protection programs is also limited. For instance, at the time of this writing, federal Wildlife Services, (known until 1997 as the Animal Damage Control program), which underwrites the extermination of predators, enjoyed a budget of $40 million, while the AWA, designed to protect laboratory animals, got just one-fourth of that amount.

Efforts to translate substantial popular concern for animals into legislative and regulatory progress have been stymied by the fact that political success in animal protection depends not on the breadth of public support but on the movement’s influence within the networks responsible for policy-making about animals. As it happens, movement access to these networks is relatively poor. In general, the proponents and beneficiaries of animal use dominate such networks, while animal advocates and organizations struggle to improve their access (Garner 1998).

It also remains the case that, despite humanitarians’ efforts to place concern for animals in its own right into public discourse, a number of the most successful initiatives have relied on secondary and tertiary arguments tied to human interest or to civil liberties. The campaign against youthful acts of cruelty has emphasized the potential for escalating sociopathic behavior and interpersonal violence on the part of the perpetrators. The campaign against dissection has underscored the right to conscientious objection on the part of students coerced to participate in the practice. Campaigns against factory farming and animal research industries have emphasized the potential harm to humans of the products that may result from those institutions and their activities. The need to place emphasis and priority on con-
Considerations unrelated to the integrity and well-being of animals themselves appears to be an essential feature of many successful campaigns.

One of the most serious obstacles faced by animal protection has been its difficulty in forging viable and enduring alliances with other movements. This deficiency has been most evident in the pursuit of legislative objectives, but it has manifested itself in other arenas as well. Public health organizations, for example, have generally resisted overtures from animal organizations when it comes to the reform of product testing requirements. Relations with the veterinary community, which could provide considerable technical expertise as well as substantial moral support for the movement’s goals, are often strained. Animal protectionists have also neglected to cultivate ties with universities, which could be a source of potentially useful scholarship, expertise, and societal credibility. Finally, it has proved difficult for humane groups to establish reliable cooperation with environmental and wildlife conservation organizations. Admittedly, coalition building is a two-way street, and it is not clear that animal protectionists can readily overcome the dismissive attitude of other interest groups, whose concern for animal protection issues is not deep enough to underpin a strong alliance solely on the basis of animal welfare interests.

The Next Ten Years

The engagement of animal protection with environmentalism looms especially important, as environmentalism has emerged as the pivotal foundation of new social movements worldwide. Other movements’ prospects for general success rest to a significant degree on their ability to include the language of environmentalism in their own rhetoric. Among all new social movements, environmentalism elicits the most support and the greatest degree of consensus (Martig 1995). Movements grow and increase their political power by forging alliances with one another and developing broader societal networks (Zald and McCarthy 1987). Among other implications, the broad public base of support for both environmentalism and animal protection suggests that the reconciliation of differences between the animal and environmental movements should be a high priority for both. One potential conflict pits environmentalism’s focus on animals as populations that need conserving (or preserving) from extinction against animal protection’s interest in animals as individuals that need protection from suffering. Another potential conflict arises from the tendency for environmental groups to seek solutions in appropriate human intervention (they are still ready to trust human ingenuity). Animal advocates usually offer some variation of a call for humans to leave Nature alone to her own devices (they distrust what humans do in the name of preservation).

In the coming decade, the farm animal issue would seem to pose the most interesting and challenging test of the animal movement’s capacity for alliance building. Until the last few years, humane organizations have been virtually alone in attempts to challenge factory-farming practices in the political arena. Unfortunately, the movement has been unable to penetrate the relevant political decision-making networks, which are dominated by industry-based groups with substantial power and influence (Garner 1998). However, the mainstream environmental movement, traditionally indifferent to the suffering of animals on factory farms, has begun to address intensive animal agriculture from the perspective of concern over environmental despoliation resulting from increased quantities of animal waste. The practices of industrialized agriculture are also drawing increased attention from legislative and regulatory bodies. It remains to be seen whether these convergent interests can lead to long-term cooperation aimed at the reform of the agricultural sector, where more than 90 percent of all animal abuse and suffering occurs.

Some models of movement development suggest that, at a critical stage, some adherents who believe that little or no progress is being made or that change is not occurring fast enough, may turn to extralegal and/or to violent tactics. In recent years there has been an apparent increase in the number of illegal actions directed against those who make their living through the use of animals. Most amount to property damage, cast by its perpetrators as a form of economic warfare against those who exploit animals. On some occasions, however, the targeted individuals and institutions have been the subject of threats to life and limb. Such threats undermine the moral basis of the modern animal movement, which holds that all sentient beings (presumably including humans) should not be subject to abuse or threat. In a democratic and pluralistic society, the boundaries of acceptable protest, direct action, and civil disobedience may be difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the animal protection movement cannot countenance violence towards either animals or humans. As a matter of historical fact, threats of bodily harm and acts of destruction intended merely or mainly to intimidate or harm others are nearly always counterproductive in the long term and will always undermine efforts to build a humane society (as both Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. understood).

Conclusion

During the first phase of revitalization (1950–1975) that followed World War II, animal protectionists sought to reinstate the broad question of the proper treatment for animals on the national agenda. New and compelling philosophies of human responsibility toward animals entered into public discourse. In the middle period, between 1975 and 1990, the movement gained popular support, and triggered changes in attitudes and behavior (buying patterns, for exam-
ple) that continue to register broadly within American society.

The evidence of concern for animals within popular American culture strongly suggests that the humane impulse has made significant inroads into popular consciousness at the beginning of the new millennium. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, millions of Americans came to view the mistreatment of animals, in various contexts, as a social evil that merits attention. Grassroots action and targeted campaign work generated unprecedented pressure for reform within most areas of animal use. Animal protectionists tried to capitalize on public interest and concern by pushing for legislative gains. This effort to realize legislative objectives continued during the consolidation phase of 1990–2000. Animal organizations and their supporters have established themselves as an interest faction in political debates that affect the well-being and future of nonhuman animals and have penetrated some of the institutions where relevant policy decisions are made.

At the same time, cruelty to animals remains peculiarly subject to social definition. Some of the humane movement’s greatest challenges involve the regulation or suppression of socially sanctioned cruelties, many of which remain largely outside the scope of anticiuelties laws and administrative standards. Animal advocates cannot likely succeed in bringing sweeping reform on their own. The future development of the animal protection movement will depend on the ability of its leaders to identify and take advantage of social trends and to build appropriate alliances with other movements whose goals converge with the objective of a humane society, one that is compassionate, sustainable, and just toward all of its inhabitants.

**Literature Cited**


# Appendix
## Milestones in Postwar Animal Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDED</th>
<th>LEGISLATION PASSED/AMENDED</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Animal Welfare Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Humane Society of the U.S.</td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>Society for Animal Protective Legislation</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>Friends of Animals</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humane Slaughter Act (HSA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty Without Cruelty</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bald and Golden Eagle Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td></td>
<td>Endangered Species Act (ESA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laboratory Animal Welfare Act (LAWA)</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Fund for Animals</td>
<td>United Action for Animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Animal Protection Institute</td>
<td>Canadian Council on Animal Care</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>International Fund for Animal Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Welfare Act (AWA) amendments</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Greenpeace</td>
<td>Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act</td>
<td>Diet for a Small Planet published</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td>Decompression chamber banned for euthanasia in California</td>
<td>Marine Mammal Protection Act (MPA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Liberation published</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Animal Rights International (ARI)</td>
<td>AWA amendments</td>
<td>American Museum of Natural History protests The Question of Animal Awareness published</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting (CASH)</td>
<td>Horse Protection Act</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Fur Seal Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Sea Shepherd Conservation Society</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Undersea Railroad” releases porpoises in Hawaii</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientists Center for Animal Welfare formed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF)</td>
<td>HSA amendments</td>
<td>Indian government bans rhesus monkey exports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Medical Research Modernization Committee</td>
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<th>ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDED</th>
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</table>
| **1979**  
Committee to End Animal Suffering in Experiments (CEASE)  
Metcalf-Hatch Act (authorizing pound seizure) repealed in New York State  
Packwood-Magnuson Amendment to the International Fishery Conservation Act  
Coalition to Abolish the Draize Test launched  
The Animals’ Agenda launched  
Research Modernization Act introduced in Congress  
Animal Liberation Front (ALF) raid, first in the United States, at New York Univ. Medical Center  
Vegetarianism: A Way of Life published |  | |
| **1980**  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)  
Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PsyETA)  
Student Action Corps for Animals (SACA)  
Action for Life conference launched  
Animal Factories published |  | |
| **1981**  
Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM)  
Trans-Species Unlimited (TSU)  
Mobilization for Animals (MfA)  
Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (AVAR)  
Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT)  
Primarily Primates sanctuary  
Silver Spring Monkeys confiscated from IBR |  | |
| **1982**  
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)  
Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG)  
National Alliance for Animal Legislation (NAA)  
Feminists for Animal Rights (FAR)  
Veal ban campaign launched | MMPA reauthorized | |
| **1983**  
In Defense of Animals (IDA)  
The Case for Animal Rights published  
A Vegetarian Sourcebook published |  | |
| **1984**  
Humane Farming Association (HFA)  
Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)  
Pound seizure in Massachusetts repealed  
ALF raid at Head Injury Clinical Research Center, Univ. of Pennsylvania  
Modern Meat, focusing on antibiotics in meat production, published |  | |
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organizations Founded</th>
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<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)</td>
<td>AWA amended to include focus on alternatives and control of pain and distress</td>
<td>ProPets Coalition launched Hegins pigeon shoot campaign launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last Chance for Animals (LCA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign for a Fur Free America and Fur Free Friday launched</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture and Animals Foundation (CAF)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great American MeatOut launched</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal funding for Head Injury Clinical Research Center suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Farm Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge Committee for Responsible Research (CCRR) initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Animals' Voice launched Diet for a New America published Jenifer Graham case filed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doris Day Animal League (DDAL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Avon Corporation ends its animal testing Yeal Calf Protection Bill hearings, U.S. Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>United Poultry Concerns</td>
<td>AWA amended California referendum bans mountain-lion hunting San Mateo County spay/neuter ordinance passed</td>
<td>March for the Animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Ark Trust</td>
<td>Cambridge, Mass., bans LD50 and Draize tests</td>
<td>Stockyard “downer” campaign launched</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>NIH Revitalization [Reauthorization] Act mandates development of research methods using no animals</td>
<td>Marie Moore Chair in Humane Studies and Veterinary Ethics endowed at Univ. of Pennsylvania First World Congress on Alternatives and Animals in the Life Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arizona banned trapping on public lands (public initiative) Oregon referendum bans bear baiting, bear and cougar hounding</td>
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<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>USDA ends face branding under pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spay Day USA launched</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Colorado referendum bans body-gripping traps</td>
<td>Massachusetts referendum bans bear baiting, hound hunting, body-gripping traps, and reforms Fisheries and Wildlife Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington referendum bans bear baiting and hound hunting bears, cougars, and bobcats</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Arizona referendum bans cockfighting</td>
<td>Missouri referendum bans cockfighting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California referendum bans body-gripping traps</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>Harvard Univ. announces launch of animal rights law course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hegins pigeon shoot terminated</td>
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