Kansas Officials Act against Puppy Mills

Last June, acting on the recommendation of Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox, Kansas Attorney General Robert Stephan agreed to a raid on a Topeka puppy mill. Nearly 100 dogs were determined to be in danger due to inadequate housing, filthy conditions, and lack of treatment for various illnesses.

The raid was carried out by agents from the attorney general’s office, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, police and animal-control officers, veterinarian Debbie Anderson, State Inspector Shon Koenig, and Wendell Maddox.

Maddox described the facility as one of the worst he had ever seen. “The most horrendous sight was inside a house on the premises where we found about 15 puppies. The floor was covered from wall to wall with their waste, in some places up to four inches deep.

“It was extremely hot on the day of the raid,” Maddox added. “But many of the dogs had little or no water in their dirty, algae-covered bowls. Three dogs were nearly dead from heat stroke and had to be revived.”

Each dog was examined as it was removed from the house or from the dirt runs and wire-bottomed cages on the property. The dogs suffered from a vari-

Boycott of Puppy-Mill Dogs Urged

Last May, The HSUS and two California legislators held news conferences in Sacramento and Los Angeles to call for a national boycott of dogs raised in puppy mills, which principally flourish in Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.

Speaking at the news conference, HSUS President John A. Hoyt said, “During investigations of these puppy mills, our investigators have found dogs living in horrendous conditions. These dogs are forced to produce litter after litter until they are killed because they are bred out and useless to their owners.”

Hoyt also charged, “The pet industry has acted as though these dogs are merely commodities to be shipped and marketed like refrigerators or toasters. And consumers unknowingly buy sick dogs. This is inexcusable.”

Hoyt said The HSUS was asking consumers to tell officials in puppy-mill states that they will no longer support
New Kansas Law Draws Fire from California Activists

Legislation aimed at protecting research facilities, agriculture operation, and puppy mills was passed and signed into law at the last moment of the Kansas legislative session earlier this summer. The Farm Animal and Research Facility Protection Act, S.B. 776, introduced earlier in the session, got new life after a wave of activity and criticism regarding puppy mills in the state. Ironically, instead of solving the problem, legislators enacted a law that helps cover it up.

The act establishes penalties for damages at research facilities ranging from misdemeanor to gross misdemeanor depending on the dollar amount of the damage. But the most appalling aspect of the law is that it makes it a felony to take pictures or video footage at these facilities without the consent of the owner. That means it now illegal for individuals or even the media to document conditions at puppy mills, among other places.

According to Wendell Maddox, another devastating provision in the law restricts the investigation of alleged acts of cruelty at these facilities to governmental agencies, even though humane societies in the state have statutory authority to enter such places for several years.

The signing of the bill drew immediate outrage. One group of citizens from California, which is the nation’s largest pet-retail state, traveled to Kansas to deliver a truckload of dog biscuits along with the message, “We’ve got a bone to pick with you,” to the governor.

Attorney General Robert Stephan and Gov. Mike Hayden called their own press conference at which Stephan referred to the group as “barkers” and said “any self-respecting Kansan should tell them to go to hell.”

Stephan’s position was especially disappointing because he has been a strong supporter of animal protection in the state. He also issued a rather curious opinion that “this law will not prevent animal activists from documenting inhumane conditions at puppy mills,” and asserted that “the law only applies to animals used for food, fur, or fiber production, agriculture, testing, or education.”

Maddox says the law clearly refers to “facilities where dogs and cats are bred for sale,” which would seem to contradict Stephan.

There is no question that the plight of the animals trapped in puppy mills continues. But we have done a tremendous amount of work in the last several months to alleviate some of the suffering. We are taking positive steps and making great strides, even though there is much to be done.

The puppy-mill issue is appalling on its own. But it is also symptomatic of an even more far-reaching problem: the insensitivity shown to animals by those who exploit them for profit.

Animals deserve our respect, care, and concern. And we should carry an even greater responsibility toward animals when we use them to our own ends.

You would think, for example, that a commercial pet-breeder would, at the very least, ensure that his animals live in clean surroundings, provide them with protection from the elements, feed them a nutritious diet, provide clean water, give them exercise, allow them to socialize, and keep them in good health. Even these basic needs are ignored.

When an animal, any animal, is considered nothing but a commodity, it surely will suffer. It’s as true for the victims in puppy mills that it is for racing greyhounds, animals sold to labs, animals raised on factory farms, exotic pets, circus animals—the list, unfortunately, is endless.

But the exploiters are not insensitive. As you’ll see in this report. The HSUS remains committed to the animals that suffer in the name of someone’s bottom line. And we trust in you to continue to support our efforts.

by Wendell Maddox

In this report, you’ll be reading quite a bit about puppy mills. It’s not a new or unusual subject. In fact, my last Director’s Comment column referred to the commercial pet-breeding industry’s continued madness in producing genetically flawed and diseased animals.

Director’s Comment

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M ake “The Beautiful Choice” for animals. Buy cosmetics and personal-care products displaying the “Beautiful Choice” logo. This logo tells consumers that the manufacturer has pledged not to test its products on animals. For more information, write: The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

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IOWA—H.B. 567 would increase the penalty for certain violations of the state’s anticruelty law from a misdemeanor to a felony. It failed to pass out of committee.

S.F. 2240 would give the authority to greyhound track operators to set up and operate adoption programs for retired racing greyhounds. It passed, but no funding has been allocated. This law comes on the heels of a bill passed in 1989 mandating an adoption program.

KANSAS—H.B. 470 would have reduced the state-required license fee for nonprofit animal shelters from $150 to $75, amended to exempt USDA-licensed puppy mills and animal-care facilities. It did not pass. Several other attempts were made to amend various bills and remove the licensing requirement for puppy mills, but all failed.

MISSOURI—H.B. 947, sponsored by Rep. Patrick Dougherty, and S.B. 609, sponsored by Sen. Irene Trepppler, would have required felony penalties for those convicted of involvement in cockfighting. Both bills passed out of committee, but neither reached the floor for a vote. Dougherty and Trepppler have pledged to reintroduce them in the next session.

H.B. 1401, sponsored by Rep. Dougherty, would have required state licensing of puppy mills and animal-care facilities. It failed to pass out of committee.

H.B. 116 would have allowed dog owners to administer rabies vaccinations to their pets. It failed to pass out of committee.

S.B. 496 was aimed at legalizing dog racing. This bill was withdrawn, but a number of other bills that would legalizing a variety of gambling activities were introduced in both houses. After much debate, none passed.

NEBRASKA—L.B. 150, sponsored by Sen. Merton Dierks, would upgrade the state statute to create a broader definition of cruelty to animals and give specific guidelines to law-enforcement officials. It cleared the Agriculture Committee, but further action has been postponed indefinitely.

Puppy-Mill Boycott continued from page 1

Join us in San Francisco for the HSUS Annual Conference. For program and registration information, please write to: The HSUS Conference, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The 1990 Annual Conference Holiday Inn Golden Gateway San Francisco, CA October 25-27

Legislative Resolution 342, introduced by Sen. Don Wesley and Sen. Ernie Chambers, will study the state’s trapping laws and the use of steel-jawed traps and will examine changes to the state statutes to restrict the use of traps. It is scheduled for a hearing in September or October of 1990.

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you’re gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the Society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

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Address_____________________________
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Mail in confidence to Murdough S. Madden, Vice President/Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.