WellBeing International
WBI Studies Repository
Fall 1989

NERO Fall 1989

Follow this and additional works at: https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/newengrn

Recommended Citation
https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/newengrn/21

This material is brought to you for free and open access by WellBeing International. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the WBI Studies Repository. For more information, please contact wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org.
Veal and Swine Farm Deaths Investigated

Responding to a report in mid-April that 28 veal calves had been found dead behind a barn in Richford, Vt., NERO Program Coordinator Frank Ribaudo investigated and discovered that the calves, part of a franchised veal-calf farming operation, had died over a six-month period. Ribaudo also uncovered evidence of the widespread use of antibiotics to keep the nearly 100 veal calves on this farm from getting sick while being raised in small stalls and in almost total darkness.

The owner of the veal farm had started his operation following the federal government’s dairy-farm buy-out program several years ago. He attributed this high calf-mortality rate to his inexperience in the business, and local officials did not file charges against him.

While investigating the veal-farm deaths, Ribaudo was asked to assist officials with a major farm-cruelty case.

Upon entering Hog-Heaven, a swine farm in Highgate, Vt., authorities discovered 21 dead pigs among the 139 living in overcrowded pens. Many of the animals were eating the carcasses. One pig suffering from a broken leg had to be euthanized by a veterinarian. Ribaudo noted that “there was no food available. It looked like the farm had been abandoned.” He photographed the live and dead animals as evidence of cruelty, for legal purposes.

Swine-farm owner John Reynolds was charged with 21 counts of cruelty for letting his pigs starve to death. Reynolds reportedly told local authorities that, since he couldn’t make enough money raising the pigs because of low pork prices and high grain prices, he had to choose between shooting the pigs and letting them starve. Reynolds plans to close his operation.

Six HSUS Rewards Help Investigations

Shortly after the NERO announced a $1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone cruelly treating any animal used in a pulling contest, several individuals contacted Program Coordinator Frank Ribaudo and met with him to detail cruel training methods. “Even though the reward offer hasn’t led to any arrests yet, we expect to get a break before long, now that other humane groups have offered to match the reward,” Ribaudo explains. “The information I’ve obtained from informants has been extremely valuable. Some individuals are looking for financial gain. Others have called with helpful details because we’re doing something positive to remedy the problems—the reward money is secondary.”

From its earliest days, The HSUS has offered several standing rewards for conviction in specific cruelty cases. In addition to the regional pulling-contest reward, The HSUS offers several others: continued on page 4
Helium Balloon Bill Deflated, Regional Efforts Continue

Despite the failure to pass of a Connecticut bill that would have prohibited the launching of 10 or more helium-filled balloons at any given time, the NERO will continue its effort to halt the practice throughout Connecticut and elsewhere in New England.

Balloons can be very harmful to wildlife, especially sea turtles, whales, and sea birds. Many marine animals mistake latex and mylar balloons floating on the water for jellyfish and other food. A balloon and its string can choke an animal or become lodged in the intestines where it blocks the passage of digested food.

Working with the Connecticut coordinator of the Fund for Animals, Regional Director John Dommers was able to persuade a Hartford group to cancel the launch of 2,000 balloons earlier this year. Several other planned launches by schools, churches, and community groups have also been cancelled after the organizations were contacted by the regional office. Dommers notes, “There are several alternatives to balloon launches that aren’t dangerous. They’re listed in our legislative testimony.” Anyone may receive a free copy of this list by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the NERO.

On an optimistic note, Florida has passed a law prohibiting the release of helium balloons in any large quantity. This law will become effective November 1, 1989.

Ribaudo Commended for N.Y. Rescue Placing 150 Animals

John Dommers (left) praised Frank Ribaudo for his Animals Farm Home rescue.

In cooperation with Connecticut Video Productions studio, Inland Video has produced and released three new video programs.

New Videos Offer More Variety, Cost Less than Slide Shows

“What’s your problem?” is an all-encompassing quick answer. Is there such a thing as an animal-protection law that doesn’t work? states Dommers. “Gov. Brennan (of Maine) and Gov. Celeste (of Ohio) vetoed similar bills. The HSUS’s fur campaign video, produced in Conn., Succeeds in N.H.

Goats such as these are often used in cult animal sacrifice, says Paulhus of SERO.

The good news about hunter-harassment bills is that Connecticut’s 1989 legislation attempt failed. The U.S. Supreme Court has also upheld a ruling by a U.S. district judge in Hartford, Conn., that a 1985 Connecticut law making it a crime to interfere with hunters is unconstitutional.

New England groups:

• Mystic, Conn.—Marc Paulhus, SERO director, conducted a major presentation at the annual conference of the New England Federation of Humane Societies on the use of animals by cult groups. John Dommers co-presented a workshop on fund-raising with Fritz Sabbow, director of the New Hampshire Humane Society. Frank Ribaudo presented a video review featuring new programs available from The HSUS.

• Concord, N.H.—Regional staff members spoke in opposition to a bill that would provide matching state funds to study the feasibility of building a state-run zoo. Dommers and Ribaudo cited the many problems that came with the Zoo in Hudson, N.H., to close, including poor climate, decreasing revenues, and high operating costs.

• Augusta, Maine—Despite strong opposition from The HSUS and local groups, Gov. John McKean allowed a coyote-hunting “award” bill to become law. The HSUS noted that the so-called award is a bounty in disguise. “Bounties just don’t work,” states Dommers. “Gov. Brennan (of Maine) and Gov. Celeste (of Ohio) vetoed similar bills in 1985. Missouri, too, repealed its outdated bounty law. It looks like time is marching backward in Maine on this one.”

AROUND THE REGION

Michael Fox, director of The HSUS’s Center for Respect of Life and Environment, produces new video at the Connecticut Video Productions studio.

New Englanders for Respect of Life and Environment (NERO), a group of animal-protection societies in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, has been actively involved in the state’s legislative activities. "I’ve never witnessed such extraordinary cooperation among so many groups on one project!”

Special thanks are due to the following New England groups:

New Hampshire—New Hampshire SPCA, Cochecho Valley SPCA, N.H.

Federation of Humane Societies

Maine—Boothbay Regional Humane Society, Coastal Humane Society, Franklin County Animal Shelter, Lewiston-Auburn Shelter


** Guide to Dog and Cat Behavior and Psychology,” “Animals, Nature and Religion,” “Steps toward a Humane Sustainable Agriculture,” and “Silent World.” Each is $20 (slide shows were $50).

The HSUS’s fur campaign video, graphically documenting the cruelty of steel-jaw traps and so-called fur-farming operations, is available for only $10 in VHS video format. This program has been a valuable tool in local and state campaigns to ban traps in New England. NERO is also currently assisting in the production of a video focusing on cruelly-investigation techniques.

The HSUS. He has also worked with Dr. Michael Fox to convert several slide presentations to VHS cassettes, including ** “What’s Your Problem?”

Why did you become involved with animal welfare? “I think it’s the only logical thing to do.”

What’s your problem? "I asked him. "Tell me about your problems." He said something about his family and his friends. I listened and then I asked him another question: "What’s your problem?""
**Towels for Wildlife**

Soon after a request for towels was issued by the Seward Sea Otter Rescue Center in Alaska, WEBS 108 FM of Bridgeport, Conn., launched a towel-collection drive. Thousands of towels for cleaning oil-soaked sea otters were donated by schools, businesses, community groups, and individuals, collected by the radio station, and shipped to Alaska at no charge by Federal Express.

When the NERO set up its own towel drive in cooperation with WEBS 108 FM, John Dommers contacted the Seward Sea Otter Rescue Center and learned that no more towels were needed. The question of what to do with the remaining cartons and bags of towels delivered to the radio station was raised by station officials, and the NERO suggested the towels be donated to wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release programs in the region. Regional staff agreed to pick up the towels and distribute them to the North American Wildlife Association in East Lyme, Conn., the Nature Connection in Madison, Conn., Natural Balance in Carver, Mass., and other nature center wildlife-rescue programs. Each of these groups operates on a volunteer basis with a small budget, and they greatly appreciated the donation of towels.

The HSUS awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to WEBS 108 FM for its outstanding effort to help animals and the people who work to rescue them.