To Legalize Dog Racing

Promoters Step Up Efforts To Legalize Dog Racing

Dog racing is one of America's cruellest spectator events, largely because of the training methods used, which include the chasing and tearing apart of live rabbits. Greyhounds, the dogs used in professional racing, are trained for the track in an activity called coursing. In coursing a live rabbit is set free in an enclosed field and two or more young, hungry dogs are released to chase it. The rabbit zigzags around the enclosure with little chance of escape. When caught, the rabbit is torn apart and snapped by the dogs.

After five or six coursings the dog is advanced to the schooling track where a live rabbit is hung by its back legs from a mechanical lure (above left) awaiting the release of the lure. The dogs are set to chase the lure, with little chance of escape. When caught the rabbit is torn apart and snapped by the dogs.

Dog track promoters have stepped up their efforts to establish new greyhound race tracks throughout the United States. HSUS is convinced it is no use letting them in. There is no way to control or monitor the racing dogs, so the tracks must be set up in states where racing is already legal. The dogs are raced in open fields (opposite page), predominantly in the Southeastern United States. The dogs are urged to chase the lure (above left) to their teeth into the rabbit (above right) to bite anything that moves, including people.

Although private veterinarians and local humane societies in the vicinity of training farms report a high volume of greyhound euthanasia, HSUS suspects some breeders and trainers kill the animals themselves to save veterinary fees and to avoid chastisement by shaking their heads over the extraneous animals.

Greyhound racing is legal in nine states. Promoters boast that they are planning or have active legislation to legalize the so-called sport in 11 other states. Legislatures in West Virginia and California are now actively considering legislation who don't know the first thing about dog racing. The dog who falls behind the mechanical lure, with its head dangling inches from the ground. The lure is whipped around the track with the dogs in hot pursuit. Its eyes bulging and chest pounding, the screaming rabbit is pulled around the track again with fresh dogs in pursuit.

Dog breeders and trainers believe the taste of fresh blood excites the dog into chasing the lure more with determination than ever seen before. The dogs are trained on a live rabbit, with little chance of escape. When caught, the rabbit is torn apart and snapped by the dogs.

Approximately 50% of the greyhounds bred for racing are killed before they ever see a track because they fail to demonstrate competitive characteristics.