HORSES FACE INJURY, DEATH IN SENSELESS SUICIDE RACE

From the starting hill 150 feet back, the official's pistol cracks and the thunder of pounding hooves builds rapidly. Within seconds, twenty horses and riders fly over the edge of the steep incline known as Suicide Hill. Clouds of dust billow from the face of the hill as the frantic horses descend at breakneck speed, sometimes tumbling and crashing into each other, to the bank of the Okanogan River some 200 feet below. The water explodes as the first horses hit the river.

The riders who have been able to hold on so far use stout quirts and plastic baseball bats to beat the water, and sometimes their horses, as they charge across the rocky bottom of the river. The frenzied pace quickens as the contestants emerge at the opposite side of the river and then gallop full-speed to the rodeo arena and the finish line.

Instinctively following the group are two horses that had fallen on the hill; their fallen riders are already being brought across the river by one of the boats there to rescue riders who might be too injured to survive the river.

Billed as the "premier" event of the Omak Stampede in Omak, Washington, the Suicide Race began as a publicity gimmick in 1935. The idea was conceived as a means of getting free publicity for the small-town rodeo. It worked, and since then, the Suicide Race (continued on page 2)

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• Case Against Oregon Research Animal Dealer Stalled
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Situation Worsens As Siletz Saga Continues

In September 1984, local humane officials, the United States Department of Agriculture, and The HSUS West Coast Regional Office raided the Siletz Game Ranch in Lebanon, Oregon, and charged its owner, Robert Thomas Fieber, with 54 counts of animal cruelty.

Since our last report, the situation has deteriorated further. Fieber complained to the media that he was being victimized by local officials, and reports continued to surface of animals escaping from his facility. Finally, in March 1986, Fieber was ordered to divest himself of all of his animals within 120 days. The court ordered him not to sell any of the animals and not to remove any from his property without a prior court order.

In July 1986, Char Drennon, WCRO director, was notified that Fieber had apparently been moving some of his animals to property in Idaho. Idaho County residents living near the area were concerned for the safety of their families and livestock. Following the escape of a lion, which was killed by neighbors, the local sheriff ordered Fieber to move his animals to a more secure location—a game farm near Lewiston, Idaho. As we go to press, Fieber seems to have done so.

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Horses Race Injury, Death in Senseless Suicide Race

Race has been widely publicized. While the Suicide Race has brought a measure of fame and fortune to Omak, most people have not considered the dangers of the race or the suffering it causes. Every year riders are hurt, some seriously. Many of the thousands of visitors are left in awe of the spectacle. But the riders say that they would not witness a pileup on Suicide Hill if they did not see it themselves. Similarly, Dantzler could overestimate the risks involved. He is the major sponsor of the Suicide Race, which he oversees. It is sponsored in part by Coca-Cola, Chief Executive Officer; WRANGLER COORS JEANS, Executive Officer; and others.

Situation Worsens as Siletz Sage Continues

This horse ripped open a stitched wound from the previous day's race.

I had hoped I would be able to report something good about the Siletz Sage in Lebanon, Oregon, in this issue. To recap briefly, James Hickey is a USDA-licensed animal dealer who was convicted in 1985 of violating more than 100 federal laws that are tied to research institutions on the west coast. As reported in the last WCRO Report, Hickey was charged with 71 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act, USDA/APHIS finally set a hearing date of August 26, 1986. Mr. Hickey has continued to operate in the months since he was charged. Then, just a few days before the hearing, his attorney, Mr. Hickey's attorney, was dropped.

The USDA has already written a strong protest to Coca-Cola Company, the major sponsor of the Suicide Race, and requests that all the horses be Operators of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Address your letter to: COCA-COLA, 310 N. Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, Robert C. Galuska, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer; WINSTON /SPEARS, Regional Office in Washington, DC.

I was able to visit the scene a few days later, and the conditions were not promising. The animals were being used to advertise the new Coka-Cola, the major sponsor of the Suicide Race, and the owners were allowing them to be handled in a manner that was not consistent with the standards of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

The USDA/APHIS Office in Washington, DC, has received full information updates on the case. The Office has held a hearing, and the decision is expected to be announced in the coming weeks. The Office has also been working with local and federal authorities to ensure that the animals are treated appropriately.

Situation Worsens as Siletz Sage Continues

Meanwhile, Linda Shepard, director at Central Coast Humane Society of Oregon, was monitoring the situation on Fieber's Oregon property. On property, there she found the watering system not working, the animals untrained and underfed.

This case was the impetus for passage of a new Oregon law that mandates health and care standards for all animals used in research. The law also requires that animals be returned to their owner after the research is completed. The USDA is working with state and local authorities to ensure that these standards are met.

Situation Worsens as Siletz Sage

The PETS program is a two-week intensive training course for animal control officers and other working in the field of animal care.


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A JOINT EFFORT

The General Federation of Women's Clubs and The HSUS have begun a two-year "Cooperative Program for Animals." Each club in the GFWC may choose one or more of six animal-related issues to work on: Companion Animals, Wildlife Conservation, Endangered Species (the GFWC International President's special project), State Legislation, International Wildlife Protection, Kids and Kindness.

If a club chooses to pursue an animal issue, The HSUS will work closely with them to ensure success. The HSUS has prepared a detailed packet of information and materials on each issue.

RECOGNITION FOR A SPECIAL TEACHER

The WCRO is proud to announce that Fenna Gatty, a kindergarten-through-fourth grade science teacher at Searles Elementary School in Union City, California, has received special recognition from the National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE), a division of The HSUS. She was chosen as a finalist in the selection of the 1986 National Humane Education Teacher of the Year.

Do you know a special teacher? NAAHE is now accepting nominations for the 1987 National Humane Education Teacher of the Year Award.

To be eligible for consideration, the nominee must be a practicing classroom teacher in kindergarten-through-grade twelve who regularly employs humane education techniques and philosophy as part of class lessons.

To receive a 1987 Humane Education Teacher of Year nomination form, contact the West Coast Regional Office. Nominations must be received no later than January 17, 1987.

INDIVIDUALS DO COUNT

Many times over the years members have contacted the WCRO with the same question—"I really want to help educate others, but what can one person possibly do?" Judi Kukulka, WCRO program coordinator, tested two ideas this summer and was pleasantly surprised by the results.

Each summer The HSUS offers free fliers and posters that warn how dangerous it is for people to leave their pets in parked cars in warm weather.

This year, Kukulka contacted all 17 libraries in Sacramento County. She spent one full day visiting as many of them as possible, 10, and sent the remaining seven a letter. All ten libraries visited agreed to display a poster and distribute fliers. Four of the libraries that were sent a letter also agreed.

Kukulka next made a list of car dealerships in Sacramento County and sent a letter asking them to insert a flier in the glove compartment, or new car warranty package of the cars they sell, and to display a poster in their service area or showroom. A number of dealerships agreed. Toyota of Sacramento used 200 fliers in just fifteen days and requested an additional 500.

Both projects took a minimum time and money, and over 2,800 pieces of literature have been seen by or distributed to the public. Just imagine how many people could be reached if all of you who are able would help with this important campaign next year.

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