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HSUS Fight against Puppy Mills Brings Results

A priority for The HSUS is the elimination of puppy mills, many of which still flourish in the Midwest region. We are making progress. In the Fall 1990 issue of the MWRO Report we told you about some of our efforts. We can now give you updated information on one of those cases.

In June 1990 the SSLC Kennel in Topeka, Kans., was raided by agents from the state attorney general’s office, representatives of other state agencies, and MWRO Regional Director Wendell Maddox. As a result of charges stemming from that raid, the owners of the kennel were convicted of cruelty to animals and violation of the state’s animal dealers act—the first conviction under that law since it was passed. They were sentenced to two years of probation, 500 hours of community service, and $16,000 in fines and restitution. They are not allowed to keep animals as pets or operate a business dealing with animals during their probation.

Investigations and raids in Kansas continued. In August 1990 a kennel in Arkansas City was raided and 30 dogs were seized. The owners were charged with violation of the animal dealers act and cruelty to animals.

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HSUS Stops Coyote Killing at Airport

Late last summer Kansas City (Mo.) International Airport officials discovered that they had a “problem”: during the construction of new runways, coyotes had moved onto the airport’s grounds. They decided to eliminate the animals.

After one coyote was trapped with a snare and killed by an airport-security officer, Wendell Maddox and Norma McMillen, president of People for Animal Rights, asked airport officials to stop killing coyotes and instead find out how coyotes were getting onto the grounds. The officials agreed to have an investigation conducted.

Maddox and HSUS urban wildlife specialist Guy Hodge discovered large gaps in an airport fence as well as holes at the base of the fence that coyotes had apparently dug. They recommended that the breaks be repaired and that flashing lights and noisemaking devices be installed to scare the coyotes away.

Airport officials had asked the USDA

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Midwest Puppy Mills

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On October 5, 1990, an Ottawa kennel was targeted; 126 dogs were seized. The owner was charged with a nine-count violation of the animal dealers act and cruelty to animals. The Boone County sheriff’s department raided a kennel in Edgerton and seized more than 106 dogs.

On October 31 agents from the state’s agriculture department and the state’s conservation department raided a kennel in Madrid, Iowa, was investigated in January by agents from the Boone County sheriff’s department and the state high-way patrol, Tom Colvin, president of the...
The HSUS tries to keep you informed about important legislation being considered so that you can let your state senators and representatives know where you stand on bills that would help—or hurt—the cause of animal protection.

Earlier this year State Sen. Harry Wiggins introduced legislation in Missouri that would have required government-funded animal shelters to surrender unclaimed strays to research facilities. The HSUS has long opposed that practice, known as pound seizure.

Wendell Maddox met with Senator Wiggins and explained The HSUS’s position, stressing that the issue of pound seizure ought to be separated from the question of whether animals should be used in biomedical research. He also pointed out that pound seizure tends to undermine the confidence placed in humane societies and animal-control facilities by the public. Maddox added that a recent HSUS telephone survey of more than 50 Missouri shelters had revealed that only one shelter would be willing to release its animals to a research facility.

As a result of having talked with Maddox, Senator Wiggins agreed to withdraw the bill. He told Maddox that the bill had been intended to provide the research community with a cheap source of animals and that he had been advised that such legislation was necessary (by whom, he didn’t say). He also said that he had not realized that the bill would be rejected by animal-protection organizations.

Senator Wiggins has since withdrawn the bill.

The HSUS has also been prominent in the fight for legislation that would eliminate the abuses in the puppy-mill industry. In May 1990, when The HSUS announced that it was urging consumers to stop buying dogs bred or brokered in six midwestern states, President John A. Hoyt said that the boycott would continue until those states enforced or passed legislation regulating the industry. Kansas had such legislation in place and had begun to enforce it vigorously, but other states in the region lagged behind.

The 1991 legislative session has brought new hope. State Sen. Merton L. Dierks of Nebraska introduced L.B. 282, aimed at regulating and licensing commercial breeding facilities, pet stores, and animal shelters. A new program would be administered by the state department of agriculture, which would inspect such facilities at least once a year.


Although Iowa has regulated commercial breeders for several years, proposed rule changes in the state’s Animal Welfare Code would provide for the seizure and impoundment of mistreated or inhumanely kept animals at shelters and commercial breeding facilities.

Other bills that would affect animals are described below. Because the status of legislation can change quickly, please contact the MWRO as soon as possible if you have questions about any of the bills.

**MISSOURI**—S.B. 116, S.B. 117, and H.B. 44 would redefine the crime of animal fighting and create felony penalties. Under the state’s current law, cockfighting is not illegal. H.B. 152 would legalize pari-mutuel dog racing in the Ozarks.

**NEBRASKA**—L.B. 191 would establish criminal penalties for those convicted of harassing hunters. L.B. 312 would protect farm animals and research facilities from terrorist activities.

**IOWA**—S.F. 167 would create a low-cost spay/neuter program for which Iowa pet owners with low or fixed incomes would be eligible.

**KANSAS**—S.B. 78 would transfer the responsibility for licensing and inspecting animal-breeding facilities and animal shelters from the state’s livestock commission to its department of health and the environment.

S.B. 175 would exempt dog- and cat-breeding facilities from the state’s Farm Animal and Research Facility Protection Act. That law, passed in 1990, made it a felony to enter a dog- or cat-breeding facility, photograph it, or videotape it without permission from the owner—and thus made it difficult, if not impossible, to investigate puppy mills.

H.B. 2281 and H.B. 2522 would abolish the requirement that animal-breeding facilities licensed by the USDA become licensed by the state. Such facilities would be required to register with the state.

H.B. 2514 would remove the responsibility for licensing and inspecting animal-breeding facilities from the livestock commission and assign it to a new commission, to be created for the purpose. It would also amend the animal dealers act to give enforcement agencies broader powers.