SERO Thwarts Attack on Horse Drugging Law

Racehorse trainers and some track veterinarians tried to weaken Florida's "antidoping" law once again this year. Fortunately, the Southeast regional staff realized the danger and mounted an aggressive campaign to thwart their efforts.

Legislative proposals sponsored by Rep. Ron Silver and Sen. Tom McPherson would have allowed the prerace use of any drug as long as it was declared "therapeutic" by a licensed veterinarian. This would have legalized the use in racehorses of corticosteroids and anabolic steroids, among other substances, prior to competition.

Until the early '80s, Florida was among those states having the most permissive drug rules. The situation improved somewhat after Florida racing was featured in a CBS "60 Minutes" expose and national attention was focused on the need for strict regulations against the racing of horses on drugs. The state's current law bans the prerace administration of all medications except one painkiller, phenylbutazone, and a diuretic, furosemide. (The HSUS opposes even the use of these drugs in racing, but the legislature years ago caved in to horse-continued on page 4

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Dolphins Need More Legal Protection

The capture and display of dolphins has led to growing controversy in three southern states. Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina are now considering restrictions on the removal of dolphins from the wild and better regulations to protect those already in captivity.

The battle is perhaps most evident in Florida, where dolphin protection is seen as an issue to enhance the election-year image of Gov. Bob Martinez. Yet the governor's concern has not prompted the state agency charged with regulating the care of captive dolphins to do a better job. During the past year, the Dept. of Natural Resources has all but dismantled its meager inspection program.

The HSUS attempted to correct the situation with a bill before the Florida legislature to restrict dolphin captures and protect all captive marine mammals. More dolphins are removed from Florida waters than from any other coastal state, and more are confined in Florida tourist-continued on page 2

Racing horses with injuries masked by pain-reducing medication can delay healing or even result in a horse shattering a leg and causing a pileup on the track.
Dogfighters Busted in Two States

A humane society seminar in Mobile, Ala., last March yielded unexpected results—the breakup of an alleged dogfighting ring. During a March 8th drug raid, deputies of the Mobile sheriff’s office were surprised to find, in addition to a small quantity of drugs, over 70 pit bulls staked out on the property. SERO Director Marc Paulhus and Investigator Ken Johnson, in town to conduct an animal cruelty workshop, were recommended by the Mobile SPCA to law officers to help obtain a search warrant for dogfighting. When deputies returned to the premises with Paulhus and Johnson, only 31 dogs remained, several of which bore battle scars. The dogs and numerous other items related to dogfighting were confiscated; the owner was arrested.

Using information gathered in the Alabama raid, authorities in Columbus, Miss., made arrests at two other locations for dogfighting. Those defendants have since pleaded guilty to lesser charges.

This pit bull was confiscated with 30 others during a drug raid in Mobile, Ala.

Dolphins

Contrasts than anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, after intense lobbying by the operators of Sea World, Seaworld, and other marine parks, the bill was stripped of any state regulation of captive marine mammals.

The ensuing outcry has forced the governor and cabinet to become involved. The Dept. of Natural Resources has been ordered to develop whatever protection it can under current law and to work with the federal government for greater enforcement of its regulations.

The Mississippi legislature also proposed a measure to ban the removal of dolphins from their coastal areas. As in Florida, Mississippi’s efforts were stymied by those who prefer the caprice and display of performing dolphins and by the federal government’s claim to sole authority over marine mammals.

South Carolina faces a different dilemma. Animal-protection groups are trying to stop the development of the state’s first marine park. Plans call for the facility to house a large number of dolphins and other marine mammals.

The available information on captive dolphin mortality is shameful. Over one third of all dolphins captured or born in captivity during the 1980s died by the end of the decade. Federal minimum-cage standards are woefully inadequate. Though dolphins may live as long as 45 years in the wild, they have an average life span in captivity of less than 10 years. Many dolphins die of stress-related illnesses, poisonings, and preventable injuries.

Dolphins, continued from page 1

New Laws Benefit Animals in Georgia and Florida

The Southeast Regional Office has scored major victories in two states during the 1990 legislative season. While Georgia has taken its first step to ensure a humane death for unwanted shelter animals, Florida now requires a guaranty of the health of dogs and cats sold within the state.

It took three years, but the Georgia legislature finally enacted a law to require animal shelters in the state to use humane methods for the euthanasia of unwanted dogs and cats. This means that shelters can be prosecuted if they kill animals by such barbaric methods as drowning, poisoning, electrocution, smothering, or the injection of paralytic drugs.

The owner of the Alabama pit bulls is facing felony dogfighting charges. He has already lost custody of the dogs following a combined effort of the Southeast Regional Office, the Georgia Coalition for Animal Protection (GCAP), and Rep. Cheryl Cope of Dekalb County.

Gov. Joe Harris signs the “humane euthanasia” bill supported by Marc Paulhus.

New laws will benefit animals in Georgia and Florida. This pit bull was confiscated with 30 others during a drug raid in Mobile, Ala.

This calf, born in captivity, has one in three chances of dying within ten years due to stress-related illness or preventable injuries.

The public’s desire for entertainment should not supersede the needs of animals.

The Southeast Regional Office has scored major victories in two states during the 1990 legislative season. While Georgia has taken its first step to ensure a humane death for unwanted shelter animals, Florida now requires a guaranty of the health of dogs and cats sold within the state. Also, if an animal becomes sick, dies, or displays a congenital or inherited defect, the seller must refund the related veterinary bills up to the purchase price and offer a refund or exchange if the buyer chooses not to keep the animal.

Until this law passed, new pet owners could incur unexpected veterinary bills totaling hundreds of dollars, while the pet store or private breeder denied any responsibility. The pet owner often ended up financially strained and heartbroken.

Déjà vu all over again. Bills that exempts small backyard breeders who sell no more than two litters or 20 puppies and kittens per year from licensing requirements passed both state legislatures. These “in-home breeder” laws are pending in at least 35 statehouses. House lawmakers in Georgia and the Florida Senate are considering bills to protect research facilities and farming operations from animal “terrorists.” At least 35 states have passed hunter-harassment laws to protect armed hunters from non-hunters. We can argue that proponents of these measures groups simply desire legitimate investigation and stifle free speech, can cite only a few examples of illegal activities. The fact remains that these bills are pending in at least 35 statehouses. It’s a distressing sight when our efforts have greatly benefitted animals.

The public’s desire for entertainment should not supersede the needs of animals.
Annual "Dog Elimination Day" Eliminated in Georgia

The tiny town of Vienna, Ga., created a furor recently with plans for conducting its annual Dog Elimination Day. Town police were instructed to patrol the streets on that day and shoot any dogs suspected of being strays. Although news accounts reported the killing of stray dogs began 18 years ago, humane societies and animal-control agencies in the state and many town residents were unaware of the practice.

Calls flooded the Southeast Regional Office imploring us to prevent the slaughter. Investigator Ken Johnson contacted town officials to persuade them to adopt an alternate plan. In the end, animal-control officers from five nearby counties were organized by Dan Rogers of the Thomasville Humane Society to roundup unwanted animals. A total of 17 stray dogs and puppies were collected by the cooperating agencies and taken to area animal shelters to be adopted or humanely destroyed.

Town officials have given us their pledge that Dog Elimination Day will never happen again. They have promised to contract for animal-control services with a nearby shelter or to develop their own program under our guidance.

Horse Drugging

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Our success in defeating this year’s bill may have prevented unscrupulous elements from gaining full legal authority to use steroids on racehorses, but it has not corrected the problem. The Dept. of Business Regulation, which oversees the Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering, issued a June 8th emergency ruling to allow the prerace administration of corticosteroids.

The HSUS has written to the office of Gov. Martinez demanding that the emergency rule be rescinded. The governor has the authority to overrule or replace appointed agency heads. If he fails to act, we will pursue other legal means.

Cat Killings Spur Felony Cruelty Bill

Dekalb County resident Mitchell Munoz was arrested last year for the torture and killing of 77 cats and kittens. State Court Judge Linda Warren Hunter has now sentenced Munoz to five years in prison and ten years’ probation, along with psychiatric counseling throughout.

The case prompted The HSUS and the Georgia Coalition for Animal Protection to propose legislation that would make such extreme acts of animal cruelty a felony. Though the bill did not pass this session, strong interest was shown by key legislators. Rep. Buddy Childers, chairman of the Health and Ecology Committee, placed the bill in a study committee and agreed to sponsor the resulting legislation. Other lawmakers contacted us to offer their support.

Cruelty is not only an act, it is also a pervasive attitude; it is generally not focused on a single victim or species. By protecting animals against wanton violence, we protect ourselves.