Walker County Raid Reveals Massive Cruelty

“[It was] the grossest thing I have ever seen in all my years with the USDA.” That’s how a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) veterinarian, Dr. Hugh Hendrix, described a dog dealer’s operation in northwest Georgia.

On January 26 representatives of the SERO and two local humane societies, state agriculture officials, local police officers, and Hendrix raided the property of Raymond David Cook and his father in Walker County. More than 150 dogs were on the 88-acre site. The animals, mostly hunting dogs, were apparently being fed only stale bread and the decaying carcasses of deer, cattle, and pigs. Some dogs roamed free, but others were chained or penned in areas with no visible food or water. By the end of the day Cook had been charged with animal cruelty.

The horrific situation came to light soon after New Year’s Day. The Humane Society of Northwest Georgia received a complaint about the condition of Cook’s dogs. When members of the group visited the property with a sheriff’s detective, they were shocked. They immediately asked the SERO for help. “We had never worked a cruelty complaint involving that many animals before and hardly knew where to begin,” said the group’s past president, Linda Woodham.

According to SERO Program Coordinator Laura Bevan, difficulties quickly arose. “Although the sheriff’s department had helped the local group check out the complaint, it was less enthusiastic about filing charges or confiscating animals,” Bevan said. “It took a lot of talking to continue on page 3

This seven-month-old puppy was confiscated during the Walker County raid. Its hind legs were so bowed as a result of malnutrition that it had to hop to move around.

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HSUS Opposes Appointments To Commission

Members of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission are generally chosen from among the ranks of hunters. Because 97 percent of the state’s residents do not engage in the “sport” of hunting, the SERO is taking part in a campaign to give nonhunters a voice in deciding the future of Florida’s wildlife.

Over the years the commission’s duties expanded beyond the regulation of hunting and fishing to include the protection of nongame animals and their habitats. However, two recent appointments to the commission caused members of animal- and environmental-protection groups to fear that it was retreating from its responsibilities.

Those new appointees, Tampa attorney Joe Spicola, Jr., and Gainesville publisher James Rowe, are both hunters and are both thought to lack the kind of education and experience required to deal with environmental or biological issues. Two of Spicola’s first votes were to reject continued on page 3
Wolf-Hybrid Ban Proposed For S.C.

The HSUS believes that wolf hybrids are unsuitable as pets and has recommended that the law be amended to ban them. Following a severe attack on a young girl by a wolf hybrid, South Carolina lawmakers heeded that advice and began considering a bill that would prohibit the ownership of such animals. Although they rarely exceed 5 percent of the population, they maintain a self-sustaining capacity to reproduce, and their presence increases the risk of serious human injury.

The legislation, sponsored by State Rep. Bob Bright, of Beaufort County, would make it a misdemeanor to own a wolf hybrid. The penalty would be a jail term of up to six months, a fine of $1,000, or both. We are helping the South Carolina Animal Control Association with its campaign to gain the passage of the bill.

Wolf hybrids rarely conform to people’s expectations of pets. They can’t be house-trained, they escape from their enclosures, and they are likely to destroy property and display predatory behavior toward other animals as well as small children.

In the end, it is the wolf hybrid that suffers. When its owner discovers that it cannot be controlled, it is dumped at a human shelter, opened by the state agriculture department to provide for the disposal of the carcasses that were apparently used for dog food. These animals were taken by the Douglas County Humane Society, which assisted in the raid. Despite veterinary care, 2 dogs died after being rescued, and the medical problems of another were so debilitating that it eventually had to be euthanized.

Marc West, the county humane society’s president, said that Cook has given the group permanent custody of the surviving dogs, all of which she intends to place in loving homes.

Walker County Case

by Marc Paulhus

Hunters enjoy an extraordinary amount of influence over state wildlife agencies. Although they rarely exceed 5 percent of the population, they maintain a self-sustaining capacity to reproduce, and their presence increases the risk of serious human injury.

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Game Commission

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programs recommended by the commission’s staff to protect the state’s dwindling populations of gopher tortoises and other wildlife species. The group has demanded that it be rejected. They asked Gov. Lawton Chiles to choose appointees who were more knowledgeable about wildlife biology or ecology.

SERO Director Marc Paulhus has ad- vocated better appointments to the commission for years. According to Paulhus, “Commissioners have sometimes acted to ensure hunting opportunities for a tiny constituency even at the expense of ad- equately protecting endangered or threat- ened species. They have often demon- strated indifference or even hostility to- ward those who advocate biodiversity and wildlife preservation.”

The massive lobbying campaign mounted by the five groups succeeded in preventing Spicola’s confirmation. The WERO will continue to urge Chiles to se- lect appointees who will respect and pro- tect all of Florida’s wildlife and respond to the concerns of all its citizens, not just to those of a vocal minority.

Clay County Humane Society Changes for the Better

Congratulations to the Clay County (Fla.) Humane Society! In the past two years it has worked to transform itself into one of the nation’s most progressive societies. Its most recent accomplishment is the opening of a low-cost spay/neuter clinic.

In late 1988 a SERO evaluation of the county animal-control facility uncovered a host of serious problems. Unfortunately, the local humane society had for years been helping only a minimal percentage of the community’s neediest animals because of lack of resources.

A meeting of the Clay County Humane Society’s board of directors resulted in the hiring of a new executive director, closed its shelter, opened its sterilization clinic. The society’s executive director, Brian Cronin, said that the clinic has proved its value already by treating more than 350 animals in its first month of operation. The county’s animal-control shelter was not forgotten. The society’s lobbying was instrumental in securing county funding for a major addition to the shelter. A new shelter manager was hired, and funds have been allocated for a full-time cruelty investigator.

In July 1989 Laura Bevan spoke at a meeting of the Clay County Humane Society and urged its members to look beyond the walls of their animal shelter. Bevan recommended that the society open a spay/neuter clinic and thus reduce the number of homeless animals in the county, not house just a few.

Since then the society has hired an ex- ecutive director, closed its shelter, opened an animal-cruelty hotline, and, on April 13, held the grand opening of its sterilization clinic. The society’s executive director, Brian Cronin, said that the clinic has proved its value already by treating more than 350 animals in its first month of operation. The county’s animal-control shelter was not forgotten. The society’s lobbying was instrumental in securing county funding for a major addition to the shelter. A new shelter manager was hired, and funds have been allocated for a full-time cruelty investigator.

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Make plans to attend an animal-protection seminar September 5-6, 1991, in Brunswick, Ga. The event will be hosted by the SERO and the Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia and promises to be informative, interesting, and fun. Contact the SERO or call the Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia at (912) 264-1191 for more information about the seminar. We look forward to seeing you there!
**RACE HORSES**—For the second year in a row The HSUS successfully fought off attempts to weaken Florida’s prohibition of the prerace drugging of racehorses. Key legislators were contacted and urged not to pass amendments permitting track veterinarians to administer “therapeutic medications” to horses before a race.

Our position has always been that sick or injured horses require care and rest and should not be raced again until they have recovered or their injuries have healed. Had track lobbyists prevailed in their attempts to weaken the antidoping law, Florida would be the racing state with the most permissive drug policy.

We are also awaiting an administrative hearings officer’s decision on our challenge to an emergency rule enacted by the Florida Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering. The HSUS contended that the rule is illegal because it allows the prerace use of corticosteroids, powerful painkillers that enable horses to race despite their illnesses or injuries. We presented a strong case and are optimistic about the prospect of victory.

**SANTERIA**—Three incidents in Miami, Fla., have resulted in the first felony charges of animal cruelty to be filed against Santeria followers for sacrificing animals.

A total of 26 people were arrested while participating in Santeria ceremonies. In the largest case, police officers were called to a residence by neighbors who thought they heard children screaming. When the officers arrived, they found goats being sacrificed. The Humane Society of Greater Miami assisted local law-enforcement agencies in the raids.

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**Reflect for a moment . . .**

**HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?**

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you’re gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist you in planning a will.

**Please send will information to:**

Name _____________________________
Address ___________________________
City _____________________________ State ____________ Zip code ________

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

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**Easter Chicks Cause Woes**

Some Mississippians saw red this Easter when promoters of a Biloxi arts and crafts festival announced plans to hand out 2,000 dyed baby chickens to children. The distribution of artificially colored or baby “Easter pets” is illegal in 24 states, but not in Mississippi.

The SERO worked with the Coast Coalition for Animals and the Environment to publicize the many pitfalls of giving day-old chicks to children. Often the tiny animals die as a result of rough handling or improper care. A child may be traumatized by the death of a chick or given the impression that animals are disposable toys.

Although we were unable to halt the giveaway, the promoters of the festival agreed to warn parents of the difficulties involved in raising chicks. Windup toys were offered to the children as alternative gifts.

In the end, our fears were borne out. Within days of the festival the local humane society began receiving calls from parents whose families no longer wanted their chicks or were upset because the animals had died. We hope that the tragic episode will encourage state and local legislators to enact laws banning such giveaways.

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**HSUS Animal Care Expo ’92 Scheduled**

Plan now to travel to Las Vegas, Nev., February 2–5, 1992, to attend a one-of-a-kind expo for animal-sheltering, -care, and -control professionals. Sponsored by The HSUS, Animal Care Expo ’92 will feature seminars, demonstrations, and the latest in practical, contemporary, and humane equipment and services. Special emphasis will be given to environmentally friendly and energy-efficient products and supplies. Contact the SERO for more details.

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**The Regional Report is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Southeast Regional Office, 1624 Metropolitan Circle, Suite B, Tallahassee, FL 32308; (904) 386–3435. Marc Paulhus, Director. The Humane Society of the United States is a charitable, tax-exempt animal-protection organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., regional offices, and an education center in Connecticut. © 1991 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved.**