Vermont Farm Raided; Animals Confiscated

On the evening of February 1, 1990, the Merry-All Farm for Animals, Inc., in Hardwick, Vt., was raided by authorities from the State Police, Vermont Federation of Humane Societies, Vermont Volunteer Services for Animals, Lucy McKensie Humane Society, and local veterinarians. Officials found animals in dark, dimly lit, overcrowded conditions, covered with feces and urine. Many were in small cages or tied to walls with short chains. Dogs were also found in cubby holes beneath the floor in a farmhouse and a barn. In all, 93 dogs, 13 horses, 3 cows, and various pigs, goats, and other farm animals were rescued from the property. The animals were distributed to shelters throughout the state and are currently awaiting final disposition.

Dorothy and Raymond Thompson, owners of the Merry-All Farm, were cited for cruelty to animals. Merry-All Farm has been in existence since the early 1980s. For the past three years, the farm has been under pressure from humane officials and the Vermont Department of Agriculture. In April 1988, NERO Investigator Frank Ribaudo participated in an announced inspection with the Department of Agriculture to view the premises and observe conditions. It was obvious that the Thompsons made ardent attempts to prepare for the inspection, but even with prior notice, dogs were in crowded kennels or chained to walls with two-foot chains.

For three years, Merry-All Farm has been continued on page 2

This dog, chained inside a Volkswagen bug, was only one of the 93 dogs and other livestock confiscated from the Merry-All Farm last February.

INSIDE

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N.H. Horses Returned from Connecticut

Responding to a call from Cocheedo Valley Humane Society Director Barbara Carr, Frank Ribaudo traveled on November 19 to the Amfran Packing (horse slaughter) Plant in Plainfield, Conn., to save five standardbred horses that had erroneously been put up for sale at a private auction in Northwood, N.H.

Fifty-eight horses from the bankrupt estate of a large New Hampshire standardbred and quarterhorse stable were sold earlier that week on the auction block. Some of the horses were owned by the estate, the rest had been boarded by private parties, but all were put up for sale. All registration papers had been lost mysteriously in a fire, cutting the sale and potential breeding value of the animals and attracting bargain hunters.

Nine horses had been selected for adoption to private homes through private funding. Four were transported the day of the auction; the other five were to be shipped at a later date. However, these five standard-continued on page 4
NERO Teaches Animal Issues on Campus

NERO has had a busy winter and spring responding to requests from the public for information about endangered-species and animal-protection issues. Frank Ribaudo conducted several courses at area schools and universities, covering many of the issues that fall under the heading “animal protection.” Large audiences of college students were drawn to his course at Southern Connecticut State University, March 21, entitled “Animals Rights,” and to his Hartford University program, March 29, entitled “Endangered Species: Do Animals Have Rights?”

“One of the knots I have to frequently untangle is an air of confusion the media often creates on animal rights,” Ribaudo said.

“Many students think that you are either for them or against them.

“If I don’t make any other point in my presentations, I want the students to realize that they need to merit each issue individually and then make up their minds on how much they can endorse that concept. It’s not whether you want to protect animals or not, but to what degree.”

NERO Opens New Building at Norma Terris Center

For the past 12 years, NERO and the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHHEE) have been housed under one roof at the Norma Terris Theatre Education Center in East Haddam, Conn. With the expanding activities and staff size of both organizations, more space was needed. A prefabricated, modular building was approved, to be erected 100 yards from the center, keeping with the concept of a regional humane complex.

On March 26 we opened our new doors.

“times, it seemed this dream would never happen,” said Frank Ribaudo, program coordinator and interim director. The unfortunate resignation of former director John Dommers came at the worst possible time. Animal suffering does not recognize building projects or moving problems. I’m just very pleased that this office has finally reached the level where animal-protection issues can once again be given our full attention.”

You are welcome to visist the new regional office during our office hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Effective Networking Catches Florida Animal-Cruelty Fugitive

In November 1989, Cruelty Investigator Jack Johnson was working on a basic investigation-training video, which will be directed at animal-control and humane-society officers. The video’s objective is to teach agents fundamental skills associated with cruelty investigations and animal-protection issues. It will serve as a step toward the additional and more formalized training necessary for today’s officers.

The New England office coordinated field-footage shootings with Connecticut Video Productions, based in Old Saybrook, Conn., during the winter and spring months.

The HSUS and NERO would like to extend special thanks to the Connecticut Canine Control Division, Municipal Canine Control Officers Association, The Rhode Island Animal Control Association, the Cranston, R.I., Town Hall employees, and many others for their help in the production of this educational tool. The video will be made available through the HSUS headquarter and regional offices, possibly as soon as this summer.

NERO invites you to come visit its offices in the new building at the Norma Terris Humane Education Center.
breds mistakenly came up on the auction block and finally found themselves at the packing plant in Connecticut.

On the morning of Sunday, the 19th, Ribaudo enlisted the cooperation of the Amfran plant foreman, and they located the horses and arranged for their board until transportation was available to return them to New Hampshire. The horses are scheduled to be part of a 4-H project to help teach children the proper care for horses.

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**“Inside Report” Features Animal Pulls in New England**

Frank Ribaudo's ongoing, four-year assignment investigating animal pulls received some national attention late last fall. A news team for “Inside Report,” a television news show based in Miami, Fla., spent two and a half days with Ribaudo, traveling throughout New England to look into alleged cruelties associated with animal-pulling contests.

Horse-, pony-, and ox-pulling footage was taken all over New England, along with interviews with the pullers themselves. The show was first distributed nationally in September 1989 to local television stations, and it has since been repeated due to its popularity. For a copy of the program, please send a blank tape for copying to NERO.

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**AROUND THE REGION**

**RHODE ISLAND**—Working with representatives from the Friends of Animals in Providence, NERO supported legislation to regulate animal pulls in the state. The bill was modeled after Maine's state law, which was enacted in 1988. It will not cure all the hidden and obvious abuses that NERO has uncovered, but it is at least a step in the right direction.

**MAINE**—Dr. John Grandy, HSUS vice-president of wildlife and habitat protection, wrote to Governor John McKernan on April 17, 1990, requesting a halt to the Caribou Reintroduction Program. Since the onset of this program in December 1986, The HSUS has received substantial comment from concerned members in New England regarding high animal mortality due to transportation, predation, stress, brainworm disease, and other factors that have plagued the project. The HSUS supported the concept of reintroduction, but the continued failure and resulting suffering and death of Newfoundland caribou must stop.

**MASSACHUSETTS**—A bill to allow recreational deer hunting at the Quabbin Reservation in Belcherstown was approved by the Natural Resource Committee and is now headed for the Senate floor for a final vote. NERO has opposed this action since its onset last fall, and we will continue to do so.

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**N.H. Horses**

continued from page 1

Ox-pulling footage, as well as horse pulls and pony pulls, were shot all over New England by the television news show “Inside Report” last fall.

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NERO serves the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The office operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

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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 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.