(No. 45) -- Congress Approves Humane Slaughter Bill

Humane Information Services, Inc.
Congress Approves Humane Slaughter Bill

Both the Senate and House of Representatives of the 95th Congress of the United States have approved the "Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978," which will improve the humane handling and slaughtering of many more millions of animals than at present to provide meat and meat products for consumers in this country, which also will be the equivalent of over five million head annually presented to provide meat and meat products of many more millions of animals than at the present.

The Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 affects only meat packing establishments owned by the federal government, such as the Army and Navy. The law just passed by Congress requires that all meat inspected and approved under the Federal Meat Inspection Act shall be produced from livestock handled and slaughtered in accordance with humane methods named in the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act. This will affect practically all commercial meat packing plants in the United States.

Likewise, foreign plants exporting meat products to this country, which also come under the meat inspection provisions, will be required to observe the same humane handling and slaughtering provisions that apply to United States plants. The meat equivalent of over five million head annually is imported by the United States, and the volume of imports has been increasing steadily. This imported meat comes from about two dozen countries scattered throughout the world, with Australia being the largest supplier.

The methods used in slaughtering and pre-handling these food animals in many foreign plants are extremely crude and inhumane. Ritual slaughter is specifically exempt in the 1958 Act and is not affected in any way by the new law.

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, now deceased, who had served as a member of both the AVMA Information Services and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, had worked untiringly for his bills in both the 49th Congress and in the present 95th Congress.

Other members of Congress who have been especially helpful in obtaining this legislation are Representatives R. Poage, of Texas, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the House of Representatives (Mr. Poage was author of the original Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 and is a longtime supporter of humane legislation); Representative Thomas S. Foley, of Washington, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee (Mr. Foley is well known for his continuing excellent work in the field of animal protective legislation); and Senator Bob Dole, of Kansas, who introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

MEMORIAL TO DR. THOMSEN

In speaking before the entire assembled House of Representatives on September 19, just prior to a unanimous vote in favor of the bill, Congressman Brown included in his remarks the following tribute to Dr. Thomsen, who considered the treatment of food animals the greatest humane problem in the world:

"In addition to Mr. Poage's efforts and the efforts of numerous humane organizations and individuals, I would like to again acknowledge the work of the late Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, formerly president of the AVMA Information Services. Dr. Thomsen worked for years for the passage of the legislation and for the improvement of animal protection in general. This bill should be viewed as a fitting memorial to Dr. Thomsen and a living reminder of the efforts of humane groups everywhere."

The legislation now awaits the signature of President Carter and will take effect one year thereafter.

THE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER

This article was written in cooperation with Mr. Fred B. Johnston, a member of the Advisory Board of the University of California, Berkeley. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has published in the July 1, 1978, issue of its journal a new "Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia." The report is prefaced by the following statement: "In 1977, at the request of the AVMA Council on Research, the Executive Board of the AVMA appointed a Euthanasia Review Panel consisting of 6 veterinarians and 1 public representative. The purpose of the panel was to update the report of the 2nd panel, published in 1972. Advances in biomedical science and technology as well as changes in the magnitude and kinds of needs for euthanasia have been considered in developing the 1978 report."

Included in the new report is a brief discussion of the decompression chamber, not unlike the discussions included in the 1972 report and the report of an earlier (1962) AVMA panel. In short, the 1962 panel had witheld its approval of decompression; in 1972 a new panel recommended decompression "provided the equipment is properly constructed, maintained, and operated." After having made the statement that "Rapid decompression is a satisfactory procedure for euthanasia if provided the equipment is properly constructed, correctly maintained, and proficiently operated," the 1978 panel goes on to say, "Because many difficulties have been discovered in using decompression and because there is a general lack of understanding of how hypoxia affects animals, other methods of euthanasia are preferable."

Quite a few months before the 1978 panel's report was published, the Humane Information Services engaged in lengthy correspondence offering the panel evidence of the inhumaneness of the decompression chamber. The letter acknowledg­ ing some of this correspondence was received with no evidence of a willingness on the part of the panel to discuss or debate the facts with us.

The 1978 AVMA panel report briefly explains how decompression produces hypoxia as a means of euthanasia. It devotes a portion of the single paragraph to a generalized expression of the effects of decompression to the fact that aircraft pilots flying at high altitude and exposed to a low pressure environment frequently experience euphoria and that this is followed by depression of the central nervous system. A similar statement was made in the 1978 panel's report. The implication of the sentence is that dogs, cats, puppies and kittens in the chamber experience, not apprehension, alarm, fear, discomfort or pain, but "a sense of well-being is taken during August by the California legislature in outlawing the use of this device for the destruction of dogs and cats."

...
MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS have been received from...

Miss Anna M. Fregeley, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, "In remembrance of a wonderful 'wild' old 'Little Grey'--just out of kittenhood. Never shall I forget her little face--it truly was sublime. She suddenly 'disappeared'--we searched and searched but never could find out what happened."

Miss Doris Haley, Belleville, New Jersey, "In memory of my cat 'Toby,' who did 'light up my life.'"

Ms. Madeline Orlolo, Sydney, Australia, "In memory of Barry, my cat. He was a chipper Peruvian, who just disappeared after five years. I had found her as a kitten when I was stranded at Quito, 1989, just a shadow. She turned into a glorious little put, and never to know what happened to her to her heart."

Those whose names follow made contributions in memory of

Frederick L. Thomsen:
Mrs. R. O. Meloio, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Thomas J. Burke, Niles, Ohio.

Animal Books and Materials Wanted

Let's say you bought Peter Singer's book Animal Liberation, read it, loaned it to friends, and then put it on the shelf where it will gather dust from now on. How much better would it be made of it in the Humane Information Service's modest library? We will be grateful for any books dealing with animals or human subjects which you no longer have much use for. We particularly need nonfiction works on Medicine, animal welfare, pests, dog and cat diseases, gossips, etc.

We can also use back copies of animal welfare and humane publications. For example, we would very much like to have a complete set of Dog magazine and a copy of Ruth Harrison's book Animal Machines. Members who previously sent us a set of encyclopedias and an unabridged dictionary are now asked to know that they are in frequent use.

Miss Helen L. Linn, packages containing a wealth of excellent materials on various human subjects, all nicely categorized in file folders, also several very useful books. Her generous contributions, which we really appreciate, prompted us to include this article appealing to our other members for similar donations.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

Our members and friends are naturally anxious for news of the appointment of an executive director of Humane Information Services who will carry on the work begun by our late president, Dr. Thomsen. We want to assure everyone that our search is continuing for a really capable and dedicated person to fill this position. It is hoped that by the first of the New Year a decision will have been made. Please bear with us.

In the meantime our office is busy catching up with unanswered correspondence which had gathered during the past year or so during which we had insufficient clerical help. We now have more employees and are working quickly. If you are among those who wrote us a long time ago and have received no reply as yet, we sincerely apologize and hope you won't be hearing from us. Until we can bring all our records and correspondence up to date, please mark the envelope "Urgent," and will see that it is cared for promptly.

Our field investigations continue to require our assistance, particularly in shelters and pounds, which are badly need of correction. In many instances the inadequacies of such facilities are so drastic that they may be considered inhuman. Our community was put in touch recently of one puppy held for 30 days, throwing them into an abandoned mine. Still another place electrically torches young puppies until the ear notched cord which does not hinder the animal seriously, and the current passes through the animal's body. All these conditions have received your recommendations, and we have been responsible for a number of improvements.

LEGISLATION

Our sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc. (NAHL), has been continuing its activities in the legislative field despite the death of its prestigious founder, Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, who also served as president of Humane Information Services.

The acting president of NAHL and a member of its board of directors is one of the most well-known and indefatigable workers in the humane movement, Mrs. William A. Thompson, and her many friends and co-workers know her.

Charlotte Parks has been very actively directing the programs of NAHL during the present 93rd Congress of the United States. Contacts have been made with the appropriate officials and in certain cases testimony has been presented at hearings in support of or in opposition to the following bills as noted:

An Act to Protect Public Lands, H.R. 39 (Dallal) and S. 1500 (Metcal-Burkin), which would preserve a sufficient amount of this pristine, unmatched wilderness and wildlife under the unrestrained commercial exploitation.

Anti-Trapping, S. 818 (Williams) and S. 223 (Bash). Appeals have been made for hearing.

Endangered Species. In an effort to preserve the integrity of the Act of 1973, NAHL has made several appeals to members to oppose weakening amendments and requested simple re-authorization of the Act.

Federal Loans to Municipalities for Recreational-Site Spas Clinics, H.R. 3601 (St Germain). There are similar bills, but NAHL supports H.R. 3601 because it provides for training of paraprofessionals.

Alternatives to Live Animals in Experimentation and Testing, S. 1548 (Grimes). Appeals were made for early hearings.

Miss Barbara S. Clapp, Claremont, California.
Miss Maria Davyes, Bolton, Ontario, Canada.
Mrs. E. Hayden Wilson and Pets, Brandon, Florida.
Mrs. June B. Hoyle, West Roxbury, Massachusetts.
Mrs. Lucille Hunt, Pewaukee, Wisconsin.
Miss Helen L. Linn, Westfield, New Jersey ("also Stokely, both friends whom I never met").
Louis Maresca, Hawthorne, California.
Mrs. J. H. Thomsen, St. Petersburg, Florida.
Miss Catherine M. O'leary, West Roxbury, Massachusetts.
William Reed, St. Petersburg, Florida.
Mrs. Horace L. Richardson, Family, Safety Harbor, Florida.
Mrs. Linda J. Rodriguez, San Jose, California ("also my dog at Nicky, who died of leukemia on November 26, 1979.").
Mrs. Nancie Lee Saral, Mountain View, California.
Mrs. Julia-Jean Stokes, Miami, Florida.
Miss Harriet and Mrs. Margaret Hayden, Alachua, Florida. ("also our beloved dog Toby, who died September, 1977.").
Miss Judith Volk, Nashville, Nebraska.
Mrs. Mildred R. Wien, Boonton, New Jersey.

BAN on Use of Live Iarves. S. 3132 (Baya) and H.R. 13022 (Anderson-Whitehurst).

Protection of predators from indiscriminate killing. H.R. 9615 (Broadhead), H.R. 1021 (Forzynsky) and S. 1140 (Hart).

Bobcat, Lynx and River Otter. Prop 72 (Endangered species) has been rescinded because of pressure from state game departments. NAHL protested this.

Wild Horses and Burros. H.R. 10587 (Roncallo) would permit individual ownership. NAHL urged deletion of individual ownership and elimination of the maximum of four, and requirements for sable standards of food, water, shelter, medical and general maintenance, application to both Bure of Land Management and adopters.

Tule Elk Refuge. For many years the Committee for Preservation of the Tule Elk, under the leadership of Beulah Edmiston, has been working to obtain refuges for these rare and indigenous animals. The several small refuges in California have been obtained. Present law prohibits any elk from being sent out of state, this being reconsidered. NAHL has proposed a Tule Elk Refuge Act throughout, by appealing to appropriate authorities in support.

All of the above is, of course, in direct work by the Humane Information Services on the bill recent approved by Congress known as the "Hum Methods of Slaughter Act of 1976" (see table on page 11).

Correspondence on any of these or other bills or any humane legislation may be directed to Mrs. William A. Parks, Box 608, Beech Ridge Road, York, Maine 03909, or the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., 249 East 42nd Street, New York, New York 10017.
Expressions of sympathy...

have been received by Humane Information Services from many, many of our members and
friends in all parts of the world following the death of Dr. John F. Thom sen, on Nov. 3, 1978, of his beloved
children and partners in all the work which
he began with such inspiration and dedication.

"We were saddened to read of Dr. Thom sen's death—but glad he did
not have a long illness. He did a wonderful job while on
earth, and he will be missed. One has to look at the cheerful
side when we have the privilege to serve."—Dr. and Mrs.
Frank Macleod, St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada.

"What a loss! May Doc's fine work and contributions to the
relief of animal suffering continue and grow."—Mrs. Virginia C.
Purdy, Brooklyn, New York.

"I'm quite sure Doc's spirit will soon be back with a new body
to help on the good work someplace."—William Reed, St.
Petersburg, Florida.

"We were saddened to learn of doc's death. He was such a de
evoted humanitarian to this city and his time and energy so generous-
ous to so many, that we will sorely miss his influence. We love
animals and know our loss. We are so glad that you
made a sacrifice to have so much to do with the humane movement."—Mr. and Mrs. Margot Valentine, Litchfield, Connecticut.

"It is good to know that Doc's work will be carried
on, and that the good work will be continued.
All of us here in this section of Pennsylvania who
are on your mailing list extend deep sympathy to your organiza-
tion on the loss of this compassionate getter and
worker who did so much for the humane movement."—Mrs. E. G. Melio, Allentown,
Pennsylvania.

"I first wrote to Dr. Thom sen about five years ago as Educa-
tion Coordinator for the Peninsula humane Society, San Mateo,
California, and received a very friendly reply and have been sent
material lies in his continuing work by other s—soured by the
basics which he laid down in his many articles and
conclusions.
So Doc's work will be continued..."—Mrs. F. M. F. Finlay, San Francisco, California.

"Words cannot express our sorrow regarding the passing away
of Doc. We corresponded occasionally over the years, and although
we differed on some opinions I feel that we agreed on many more issues.
Doc was so generous with his time and energy, I think he would agree with our little efforts to solve the
population explosion."—Mrs. and Mr. Elmer F. Gucek, Chicago, Illinois.

"I was deeply distressed to read of the loss of one of your valued
workers—but sincerely hope that you will be able to carry on
as before in spite of it."—Miss Margaret A. Jackson, Philadel-
phia, Pennsylvania.

"To me it is gratifying to know that the noble work of Dr. Thom sen is being continued. I believe that he covered the entire
field of animal abuse more thoroughly than any other individual."—Smiley Fowler, Greensburg, Indiana.

"Your special issue, 'Human Information Services Mourns Death of Doc F. Thom sen,' is an inspiring testament to the
humanitarian. Doc's greatness is evident in his article showing
his admiration for Fred Myers. Doc accepted him as his human
teaching partner. Your assurance that 'Report to Humane
Organizations' will be published as a tribute to Dr. Thom sen is
advantageous as the last I saw of Dr. Thom sen, his
main thrust was of a unifying objective is most reassuring."—Mrs.
Mildred A. Wiern, Boonton, New Jersey.

"I am deeply moved on learning of the death of Dr. Frederick Thom sen, an outstanding
humanitarian. Doc's greatness is evident in his article showing
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"Your latest mailing came today, and I am gratified to have a
photograph of Dr. Thom sen. The world abounds in hidden heroes and
heroes who never make the headlines."—Miss Madeleine O'May, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"I had no way of knowing of the death of Dr. Thom sen until the
June issue of your Report to Humane Organizations was received.
What can one say that hasn't already been said—these special people
are forever missed. My thoughts are with you all. St. Paul,
said: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the
race, I have kept the faith.' These things Doc. Thom sen did—he has
done well, and may his soul be with the..."
DECOMPRESSION FROM PAGE 1

feeling of well-being or elation" (Webster's definition of euphoria). What nonsense! How absurd. In the absence of evidence in all our years of study of the decompression chamber to indicate that animals were under- or overpressurized, when the euphoric interpretation was criticized by Humane Information Services at a leg of the AVMA meeting in 1972, Dr. Martin Passarella, Jr., appearing on behalf of the American Humane Association, responded with a long explanation of how the compression rates recommended by the panel had been worked out, he said, when a party of mountain climbers at 18,000 feet found themselves experiencing a "hi-gh." What has that got to do with decompression for "euthanasia"? The panel's 1978 report states that "Inconscioussness occurs within 10 seconds in dogs exposed to simulated pressure altitudes of 80,000 to 100,000 feet." This after having implied that the dog experiences euphoria before losing consciousness. Are we to conclude then that during the time interval from when the pump is activated and the dog collapses, the dog is in fact experiencing euphoria? We think not, and we think such references make the credibility of the material following the Imposter Panel's recommendations questionable.

One of the more "advantages" is certainly not to provide the public with new "evidence" or arguments. Any veterinarian who has the opportunity to observe the chambers in actual operation has reported that: (a) Despite direction to the contrary, veterinarians and others, in most cases have no backup means for providing acceptable euthanasia for animals which even proponents of the method admit are usually subjected to, including young and sick animals. Generally, they are all run through the machine. (b) Most chambers fail to provide for decompression for evidences of catarrh, etc., which might have obstructed air passages and thus prevented inhalation of such animals for other means of euthanasia (which are rarely available anyway).

Compliance with the "rapid decompression" as a satisfactory procedure for euthanasia, ..." Now, the fact is that if operated according to directions the chamber is not "rapid," but "slow." According to our information, the largest decompression unit manufactured has a chamber that is sizable enough to take a firm position on the contrarecommendation of this method for animals under four months of age and animals with respiratory complications; secondly, not to consume the machines to come up with new "evidence" or arguments. Thus, the AVMA report was prepared. The principal reasons for this were a more definite conclusion that the inhumaneness of decompression are: (1) more information that has been made available; (2) the great emphasis which now is placed on "proper maintenance and operation" of the chambers, and (3) the frantic efforts of some (a development advocated by some) to paint the decompression chamber to come up with new "evidence" or arguments.

We will help all we can in these efforts, we will shortly make available copies of our original two-part publication, our supply has not been depleted, and we think such references make the veterinarians exposed to their propaganda, who have little or no contact with the animals and themselves, frequently wind up adopting the same myths.

We reiterate our conclusion regarding the decompression chamber as taken from our report published in 1972: "Rapid decompression definitely is not a humane method of euthanasia for some animals, particularly in cases where the machine is not properly constructed and operated. Animals below four months of age, and those that are underweight, sick, and so forth, in such a way as to make them subject to sinus and inner ear infection or difficult to give to the public awareness. We hope our members will keep us informed of any efforts in their own areas to stop the use of decompression for "euthanasia." We will help all we can.

CAMPAGNS AGAINST DECOMPRESSION Humane Information Services urges humane groups to accelerate their campaigns against decompression. We will help in these efforts, we will shortly again make available copies of our original two-part publication, our supply has not been depleted. All our copies will be printed in a more convenient size for enclosing with correspondence, etc., and our original 1978 report will be included in the next issue of Report to Humanearians.