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Auction Barns Contribute To Animal Suffering

The meat you may serve for dinner tonight most likely comes from an animal that has been processed through an auction barn. These "animal warehouses" accept animals from ranchers and others to sell for slaughter, through a bidding process.

Animals are paraded through the sale ring. If they don't move fast enough, they are hit with canes and clubs.

Cattle are continually terrified by the improper use of whips to move them from holding pens.

The HSUS Gulf States Office is conducting an ongoing investigation and inspection program of auction barns. We find that animals are continually exposed to stressful and, often, outright brutal treatment.

The frightening journey for many animals intended for food purposes begins when they are trucked from the ranch to the auction. Transporiting vehicles often lack protection from weather extremes and exhaust fumes. Cattle are overcrowded and forced to travel for hours without rest. If an animal falls and is injured while being loaded, it usually is still sent on its way regardless of the pain it is suffering.

At the auction barn, animals frequently are not provided with sufficient feed, water, or shelter. The most appalling cruelty occurs when auction-barn employees move the animals to and from the sale floor. Because they want to move the animals as quickly as possible, employees use clubs, whips, and electric prods which inflict pain and frighten the bewildered livestock. Our investigator has seen animals beaten mercilessly across the face and spine in efforts to move them more quickly.

The HSUS confronted these auction-barn owners and asked local prosecuting attorneys to file cruelty charges unless such brutal practices were halted. Our actions have improved conditions at many of these auctions.

Because there are so many auction barns throughout our region, we ask all caring people and local humane societies to visit their nearby sale barns. If you observe cruelty, write a letter of complaint to the auction-barn owner, with a copy to your local prosecuting attorney, local newspaper, and The HSUS. Together we can help to end this cruel treatment of animals!

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HSUS Pushes Strong Livestock Legislation

Following last year's massive horse starvation case in Falls County, Texas, The HSUS Gulf States Office began working for remedial legislation. Welcome encouragement came from Gov. White's office in the form of promises that he would "seek legislative solutions."

Throughout the year, Regional Director Bill Meade met with representatives of the governor's staff and other humane groups concerned with the problem. The purpose of the meetings was to find a way to prevent and to deal with any future disasters like that which occurred in Falls County.

Three proposed bills came out of these meetings. One would set standards for livestock transportation and auction barns. The second proposed a task force to deal with future disasters involving livestock or horses. The third bill would give enforcement powers to legitimate humane-society investigators. These bills, if enacted, would be a giant step towards the proper care, treatment, and protection of all horses and livestock.

Unfortunately, Gov. White's promise to seek legislation has not yet been fulfilled. After the governor's office reported that they did not have enough time to work on the issue, Bill Meade wrote a strong letter reminding the governor of his promise.

Currently, The HSUS is seeking legislators to sponsor and work for the bills in case Gov. White does not act. Although disappointed at his inaction so far, we still hope these badly needed bills will be introduced and passed.
In the wake of new state laws forbidding dogfighting, some pit bull owners are turning to another activity called dog pulling. Pit bulls are hitched to carts and forced to pull extremely heavy weights (over 4,000 pounds). Each dog must pull the cart 15 feet within 60 seconds. If the dog succeeds, 200 pounds are added to the cart for the next pull.

The HSUS Gulf States Office is concerned this intense strain on a dog may cause injury and possibly death from stress and overwork. Animal spectators have reported seeing dogs used as live bait during training to get the dog focused and conditioned to respond to the far-higher lures used during competition. Our investigator will be visiting these pulling contests in our region and will watch for possible cruelty or injury inflicted upon animals.

Decompression Killing
Halted in Houston, Texas

Decompression chambers were once considered by some people to be a humane method of killing unwanted animals. In recent years, however, more and more facts have come to light which show that decompression causes animal suffering.

During decompression, animals are placed in a steel drum from which the air is withdrawn. Anoxia results, and the animal dies from lack of oxygen. The problem with decompression, however, is that although the air is withdrawn, the pressure from the outside continues to build, resulting in outer pressure equalizing inside body cavities of the animals. This often results in extreme bloating, inner ear damage, and possibly death.

The HSUS Gulf States Office and Houston (Texas) animal societies had for years urged the city—run shelter to drop this method and to start using humane injections for euthanasia. Unfortunately, the city’s attitude was, at the time, that there was no other option. But given the evidence that such a practice was cruel, the HSUS decided to investigate a recent San Antonio charreada.

In this particular case, the court ruled that the humane society should perform regular inspections to ensure minimum health and sanitary standards are met. A final judgement is to be handed down after one year’s operation under this probationary ruling.

This pit bull is lured with an animal hide to pull a weight of over 4,000 pounds. Pulling contests can cause stress and overwork to the participating dogs. As with dogfighting, the animals can suffer the consequences of man’s egotism and desire to gamble.

Court Rules on Arkansas Puppy Mill Case

Our last Gulf States Report described a puppy mill in Jacksonville, Arkansas, which was charged with cruelty to animals. The Pulaski County Humane Society brought the charges with the HSUS giving guidance and support. The puppy mill was overcrowded and had severe problems with sanitation related to poor cleaning procedures. The puppies were sold in a hutch pet store owned by the same person.

HSUS Investigator Bernie Weller has traveled out four-state region in an ongoing search for these cruel puppy breeding factories. They normally must be licensed by the USDA and meet certain standards. Often these standards are not enforced strongly enough.

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Around The Region

• SULDELL, LOUISIANA—The Animal Assistance League received a new 312-square-foot cat room donated by Von and Bertha Cox. The shelter was also air conditioned and refurbished throughout to make it attractive and pleasant to visit.
• NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS—Scholarships for teachers to attend the annual humane education workshop at the Stephen Fostet (Austin) State University will be available through the Roger Montgomery Humane Education Fund. Contact the Humane Society of Nacogdoches for details.
• WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS—In mid-1984, Wichita Falls Animal Control was awarded HSUS Accreditation jointly with the Humane Society of Wichita County. In making this award HSUS recognized the combined efforts and unique cooperative approach of the two organizations to solving animal problems in their community. Congratulations to both organizations!
• HARRISON, ARKANSAS—Completion of a new building project at the Ozark Humane Society was made possible by a donation of insurance and wiring by a local business and a vocational school. The new shelter manager has worked hard to improve the facility.
• HOUSTON, TEXAS—The Houston SPCA hired two ‘emotion coaches’ to help screen prospective pet adopters. Their important task is to try to determine whether a prospective owner is truly able to furnish a pet with a good, long-term home.

In this charreada event, the steer’s tail is twisted routinely until the animal falls on its side. Such events, as in American rodeos, are cruel and without redeeming value. The HSUS continually works to expose this type of animal abuse.

Oklahoma Pushes Strong Laws For Animals

An ambitious effort is underway in Oklahoma to organize statewide support for three important animal-welfare bills. The proposed bills are a mandatory stay-—and—reserve requirement for shelter adoptions, anti-cockfighting legislation, and anti-pound seizure measures.

The stay—rescue bill, known as the Dog & Cat Sterilization Act, has the greatest potential to reduce future killing of surplus pets. Inasmuch as the law is effective, all pets adopted from shelters, a big reduction in the animal overpopulation can be achieved in coming years. Representative Anderson and Senator Watson have agreed to sponsor and work for this important bill.

Our Gulf States office has also been working throughout the region to have anti-cockfighting legislation introduced. We are happy to report that Senator Foster and Representative Sage of the bills.

The HSUS opposes all forms of rodeo on the grounds they cause intentional animal suffering for no purpose other than to entertain people and make money.

HSUS Condemns Charro Rodeo

Under the guise of preserving and promoting the image of the Mexican cowboy, charreadas, or Mexican rodeos, are held in several Texas cities each spring. These rodeos feature a Mexican cowboy riding a horseback, chasing a steer, and getting the animal’s tail. Then, by twisting and pulling the tail, the animal dies.

Our HSUS Gulf States Office received complaints about these activities and investigated a recent San Antonio charreada. We warned the Charro Association that if cruelty was observed, we would ask the Bexar County District Attorney to prosecute under the state anti-cruelty laws. The warning was effective apparently because the charreada was greatly toned down, and the performers got fed deficient diets to obtain meat of the “right” light color for gourmets. Many animals are given diets of growth hormones and antibiotics. These drugs and chemicals end up as residue in meat consumed by the public.

When the animals leave the “factory farm” their lives become even worse. They are often denied days of travel without sufficient rest, water, or food. The federal 26-hour laws covers only trains, while today almost livestock is shipped by truck. The slaughter plant is the last degradation for these animals before they end up neatly and attractively packaged in plastic crates in our grocery stores. Apparently, even the Humane Slaughter Act is not effectively enforced in smaller plants, and poultry have no protection under this law.

It is clear the current mass production of animal meat cannot continue without grave consequences. Irrigators who raise feed for livestock consume over half of the nation’s water supply. Six billion tons of top soil are lost yearly to erosion because of deforestation. High consumption of meat and animal fat has been shown by the National Academy of Science to encourage disease in consumers. All of this has dictated HSUS policy of promoting the concept of “eating with conscience” and eating only humanely raised meat products, or by eating no meat as an individual. These actions can contribute to the gradual elimination of factory farming and all its cruelty.

This issue of our Report highlights some of the suffering inflicted on animals raised and used for food products. Unfortunately, the auction barns we describe are only the tip of a huge iceberg of cruelty and suffering.

Livestock destined for our tables face a wide array of hardships from the moment they are born. Female baby chicks are debarked, and male chicks killed because they don’t produce eggs. Baby seal calves are killed, skinned, and fed deficient diets to obtain meat of the “right” light color for gourmets. Many animals are given diets of growth hormones and antibiotics. These drugs and chemicals end up as residue in meat consumed by the public.

This is a fast lane to the butchery and a life of suffering for the animals. They are often fed and force-fed diets designed to obtain meat of the “right” light color for gourmets. Many animals are given diets of growth hormones and antibiotics. These drugs and chemicals end up as residue in meat consumed by the public.

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Gulf States Office Relocates, Expands Program

Regional Director Bill Meade announced in December 1984 the receipt of several major gifts that allowed The HSUS to purchase a larger headquarters in Corpus Christi, Texas, for the Gulf States region.

In making the announcement, Meade thanked the Earl C. Sams Foundation of Corpus Christi for their initial gift, which helped get the project underway. Others among our membership have graciously sent additional funds to help. Gifts are still being sought, however, to help cover the total cost. By owning our office, almost $10,000 will be saved in yearly rent.

In opening the new office, Bill Meade outlined the beginning of two-day training programs, available immediately, at no cost to any humane-society officers or animal-control personnel. The programs consist of two, 2-hour sessions each day. First topics scheduled are (1) forming a humane society; (2) starting humane education programs; (3) investigating cruelty cases; (4) fund raising and membership expansion; (5) getting legislation passed; (6) forming a low-cost spay/neuter program; (7) evaluation of euthanasia methods; and (8) proper design for new shelters.

We have arranged special room rates of $25 a day for one or two people in a comfortable motel facing beautiful Corpus Christi Bay. To arrange a two-day training session of your choice, simply call us at (512) 854-3142.

The new HSUS Gulf States Office is located on the third floor of the Congressional Plaza condominium office in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Please send will information to:
Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City _____________________________ State______
ZIP code______________________

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

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 which will assist in planning a will.

The Gulf States Regional Report is a publication of
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The Gulf States Regional Office serves the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. The office operates Monday through Friday and is closed on federal holidays.

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