Animal Birth Control Can Be Humane and Effective

Animal birth control is here! Early this year Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick and Dr. John W. Grandy, HSUS vice president for wildlife and habitat protection, made a whirlwind tour of New Jersey to discuss the control of animal populations through immunoc- contraception (the stimulation of female animals’ immune systems to produce antibodies that prevent fertilization). Kirkpatrick is a pioneer of animal immunoc- contraception and a vaccine that triggers it, which consists of porcine zona pellucida (PZP), a part of sows’ ova. In February he and Grandy described the new technique at a meeting at Coventry Farm attended by Princeton Township officials, journalists, and MARO supporters.

The surplus of dogs and cats is not the only animal-overpopulation problem. Each year the nation’s zoos must decide how to deal with their surplus animals. Some zoos have sold animals to middlemen who supply gun clubs with live targets. Bow-and-arrow and shotgun hunting to reduce deer herds are dangerous in densely populated communities, and sport hunting has a dismal record of controlling deer populations. Both officials and the public have been seeking safer, more-humane, and more-effective methods of controlling deer (see the Director’s Comment).

Kirkpatrick developed the new technique in collaboration with Irwin K. Liu of the University of California at Davis and John Turner of the Medical College of Ohio.

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Austenberg Receives Service Award

MARO Director Nina Austenberg was recently honored at the Long Branch Hilton in Long Branch, N. J., with a distinguished service award from the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association. In presenting the award, Dr. Robert Shomer said, “From the Psalms, ‘One must prevent pain in any animal,’ and from the Torah, ‘A man must not eat his meal before giving food to his cattle.’ Nina Austenberg fulfills the measure of these commands and sees to it that others do so as well. For her mercy and compassion and her many alliances with our profession in fulfilling that which to her is no longer choice but a way of life, we confer this merit award.”

In accepting the award, Austenberg said, “Before many people heard about animal rights, there was Bob Shomer, fighting to ban the steel-jaw trap in New Jersey—a leader in this fight in our country. Before many heard about animal protection, there was Syd Rosenberg, building bridges for

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Physiologist Jay Kirkpatrick (left) talks about deer control with New Jersey Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden and Princeton Township Committeeman Frederick Porter.
Humane Control of Wildlife Guide Now Available

As we humans continue to encroach on the natural habitats of wildlife, the problems that arise from that coexistence present increasing challenges. Humane animal-control tactics that pose no threat to the environment are fast becoming preferred options. A collection of such tools is now available in a single volume: Pocket Guide to Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities and Towns, edited by Gary R. Hodges of The HSUS. The guide describes humane methods of animal-proofing homes and controlling over 20 species of wildlife in urban areas. It was published by The HSUS with the generous assistance of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, whose grant to support urban wildlife programs also allowed us to develop an exhibit for a series of seminars, “Humane Solutions to Problems with Urban Wildlife.” You may order copies of the guide from the MARO for $5 each. Enclose a check payable to The HSUS with your order, and please allow four weeks for delivery.

New Pet Laws Are Passed

According to Ed Blotzer of the Western Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pittsburgh has passed laws that require theitters of puppies and kittens to be registered with the city’s animal-control division within five days of birth, limit each household to owning 10 dogs and cats, and establish that there is to be no fee for litter registration; increase the fines for the owner of a dog that bites someone while it is running loose from $75 to $350 for the first offense and from $350 to $1,000 for subsequent offenses; and impose stricter standards on breeders and kennels.

Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities and Towns are fast becoming preferred options.

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Animal Birth Control

Kirkpatrick and Turner began trying to use hormones as a contraceptive for animals 15 years ago but abandoned that approach after discovering the effects of PZP. The vaccine is administered via a dart from a tranquilizer gun or a blowgun. The dart injects the contraceptive and soon falls out. Kirkpatrick and his associates are encouraged by the success rate of the vaccine in wild horses—93 percent of the mares injected with it did not become pregnant. He said that they or others are testing the vaccine on animals at the Cologne, Germany, zoo, a hybrid orangutan at the To­ledo, Ohio, zoo, bison at the San Francisco, Calif., zoo, wild horses on Assateague Island in Maryland, feral donkeys at Vir­gin Islands National Park, and a variety of hoofed animals, including Sika and Axis deer, at the Bronx, N.Y., zoo.

The vaccine permits animals to main­tain their normal social structures; fe­males mate but do not get pregnant. It

Austenberg was on to praise the ef­forts of veterinarians, humane societies, legislators, Kean College, through which New Jersey animal-control officers are certified, Newark Star-Ledger columnist Lois Stevenson, and Fred Stevenson. “I look forward to many more decades of building bridges for animal protection,” she said.

Refuge Bill Reintroduced by New York’s Rep. Bill Green

The HSUS is very pleased to announce that Rep. Bill Green of New York has reintroduced H.R. 1693, the Refuge Wild­life Protection Act, as H.R. 330 in the 102nd Congress. The legislation would end commercial and recreational hunting and trapping on national wildlife refuges and restore those lands to being the wildlife sanctuaries they became—and were meant to remain—when the refuge system was established.

H.R. 330 has 41 cosponsors in the new Congress. The HSUS asks its members to aid in the effort to gain more cosponsors for the bill. Please write to your representative (The Honorable ___ , U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515) and ask him/her to become a cosponsor of H.R. 330. It is especially important for the following members of the House to get that request from their constituents because they were cosponsors of H.R. 1693 in the last Congress: Reps. William J. Coyne, Thomas M. Foglietta, and Peter H. Kostmayer of Pennsylvania; Frank J. Guarini, Frank Palone, Jr., and Jim Saxton of New Jersey; and Major R. Owens, Charles B. Rangel, Stephen J. Solarz, and Ted Weiss of New York.

If you have any questions about what to write or whom to contact, you can call The HSUS at (202) 452-1100 or contact the MARO.

Fur Industry Shrinking Due to Drop in Sales Internationally

Residents of Westchester County and Albany, N.Y., may have seen billboards announcing, “You Should Be Ashamed to Wear Fur.” The New York State Humane Association in New Paltz joined forces with The HSUS in posting the billboards to publicize the atrocities in the fur industry.

According to a recent article in the New York Times, the fur industry is shrinking—animal-rights advocates appear to be suc­ceeding. Even Canada has been unable to fend off the pressures that have cut deeply into the fur business in other parts of the world, including Western Europe. In

HSUS Offers Reward

The HSUS is offering a reward of up to $2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone who organizes dogfighting events, dogs, promotes dogfights, or organizes dogfights, or officiates at dogfights. For more information, call The HSUS at (202) 452-1100 or contact the MARO.

Activist List

The MARO is developing a list of people interested in attending legislative hearings, protests, and town meetings. If you wish to be kept abreast of such events, please send your name and phone number to the MARO. Write the words “Activist List” on the envelope.

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 exposition 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 MARO for more details.

Montreal, the center of the Canadian fur industry, hundreds of jobs have been lost. By some estimates, in 1992, the number of animals trapped or shot for their fur in Canada will be half as large as it was in 1987. About 20,000 Canadian trappers have quit the business, and many of the 5,000 who remain are barely covering their costs.

Veterinarians Arthur Bueker and Syd Rosenberg flank Nina Austenberg as Robert Shomer presents her with an award for distinguished service from the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association.

Austenberg Honored

Austenberg went on to praise the efforts of veterinarians, humane societies, legislators, Kean College, through which New Jersey animal-control officers are certified, Newark Star-Ledger columnist Lois Stevenson, and Fred Stevenson. “I look forward to many more decades of building bridges for animal protection,” she said.

For more than a decade, activists have protested against a hunt held every year at the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey. Rep. Bill Green of New York has reintroduced the Refuge Wildlife Protection Act in Congress.
DIRECTOR’S COMMENT

by Nina Austenberg

In November 1988 I had a letter from Quentin Schlieder, director of the Morris County (N.J.) Park Commission, asking me to serve on a wildlife advisory committee that would discuss deer damage, hunting, and alternatives.

Initially I was not happy with the makeup of the committee, which seemed to be weighted in favor of sport hunting. The other members were Charles E. Zafonte of the Morris County Park Commission, Hallie Connolly Aubin of Connolly Environmental, John Donahue of the Morristown National Historical Park staff, hunters’ representative Michael Ezzi, Harold Farrand of the Morris County Agricultural Development Board, Joseph Florio of the Jefferson Township Council, Stanley Simmis of the Morris Township government, Craig Witty of the Morris County park police department, and trial attorney Gary C. Algerier, who served as chairman of the committee. I quickly learned that our no-nonsense chairman would be honest and fair.

For nearly two years the committee met monthly or more often. We traveled to every park in the county and assessed the deer damage. Besides interviewing park personnel and park neighbors, the committee heard from representatives of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife, the New Jersey Farm Bureau, and animal-protection groups as well as interested county residents. We accumulated boxes of newspaper clippings, reports, studies, and transcripts of testimony.

Ultimately the committee was split on almost every issue. The most significant outcome was a unanimous decision to try to control the deer population at Frelinghuyzen Arboretum through immunocontraception as soon as it was feasible to do so. The Morris County Park Commission led the county park systems of the nation by writing a $10,000 check to launch the project. Algerier was outstanding in his even-handed chairing of the committee. Schlieder, Zafonte, and the other members of the Morris County Park Commission get gold stars—and a special “thanks” for their sincere interest and unbiased participation in the discussions.

Although the committee didn’t agree on many things, the dialogue was healthy, and it sharpened my thinking. I respected the other members’ dedication and effort. I was eager for us to finish our report and stop the seemingly endless series of long, late meetings, but sometimes I miss the spirited discussions, the lovely vegetable sandwiches provided by the Morris County Park Commission, and the chance to watch the seasons change at the beautiful arboretum where we often met.

Unlicensed Facility Cited

In February the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that Adelphi University of Garden City, N.Y., had agreed to the issuance of a cease-and-desist order and to pay a $2,500 civil penalty without admitting or denying USDA charges. The USDA had charged that during the period from December 2, 1987, to February 13, 1989, Adelphi operated as a research facility without being registered. The USDA had also charged that the university held its rabbits in housing that was poorly ventilated and not substantially impervious to moisture, that the primary enclosures were not clean and sanitary, and that there was no established program for the removal and disposal of animal waste.

A Good-bye to A Champion of Animals

Sometimes we lose someone who is not family but whom we regard as family. State Sen. Christopher J. Jackman was that kind of person. His “Hi, girls!” greeted us warmly in the halls of the New Jersey statehouse, and his efforts on behalf of animals were untiring.

At his funeral service, past New Jersey governors flanked his casket, as did legislators in both major parties—a testament to Christy’s nonpartisanship.

On many Saturdays and Sundays he met with animal protectionists to discuss strategy and legislation. Nobody will ever replace Senator Jackman. In 1981 he was awarded an HSUS certificate of appreciation on the assembly floor by the society’s president, John A. Hoyt.