MILLIONS OF HOGS, CHICKENS SUFFER IN FOOD PRODUCTION

The average American consumed seventy pounds of pork products and more than eighty eggs last year. Although most consumers might prefer to think that their pork chops and hams came from pigs raised in some bucolic setting, the truth is the majority of hogs born each year spend part of their lives in some sort of confinement situation that results in unnecessary stress and suffering.

The West Coast Regional Office has found that few consumers are aware of the increasingly restrictive conditions under which the modern laying hen is maintained. It is ironic that, while egg consumption has actually dropped over the past ten years, the intensive management of laying hens has increased. In fact, the industry continues to overproduce eggs, often leading to the disposal of millions of eggs in order to stabilize prices.

The Humane Society of the United States is concerned with a number of humane issues having to do with the rearing of hogs. These include unnecessary confinement, early weaning (before the age of five weeks), tail docking, and castration without local anesthesia. Piglets are often placed in stacked cages or elevated platform decks in controlled-environment housing when they are weaned. Many of these piglets will have been weaned as early as three weeks, an extremely stressful practice that allows the sow to be rebred sooner. Although stacked decks save space, they are often overcrowded, causing stress and suffering. Decks are often situated over manure collection pits, or, as in the case of battery cages, over another pen of piglets.

The pigs are grouped into “finishing”

(continued on page 2)

Sows are often held in narrow gestation crates in environmentally controlled buildings for their entire productive lives.

INSIDE

- Research Lab Opposed
- Washington Pound Seizure Update
- Legislative Activity

Trophy Hunters Take Aim at Mountain Lion

Thanks to Governor Deukmejian’s veto of S.B. 76, as reported in the Spring 1986 REPORT, California’s mountain lions face an even more desperate future. This year the Fish and Game Commission will again hold hearings around the state to set game mammal hunting seasons. Mountain lions are now considered game mammals, and unless strident objections are voiced, may be hunted for trophies in the coming year. According to a recent press release, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has submitted a proposal that would allow trophy hunters to shoot as many as 210 lions in accordance with a state policy that requires the diversified use of wildlife, including sport hunting where appropriate.

Once again, the department and certain special interest groups are trying to convince the Fish and Game Commission that allowing trophy hunting will aid in wildlife management and help to protect livestock and the public. They argue that hunting will help to maintain mountain lion populations in a healthy, self-sustaining condition for the future; protect important habitat for the mountain lion and its primary prey, the mule deer; and help to manage the “mountain lion resource” to maximize public benefits and minimize problems and conflicts.

According to Char Drennon, director of the WCRO, “It is man who continues to
Hogs Suffer (continued from page 1)

pens when they reach a weight of approximately 50 pounds. Generally, the pigs have only six square feet of floor space each. The concrete floors are usually entirely slatted, which contributes to lameness and injuries. As the pigs rapidly grow to a market weight of 210-220 pounds, the pens become extremely crowded and fouled. Because of the resultant stress on the pigs, they move and develop the aberrant behavior of tail biting and cannibalism.

Pregnant sows are kept in individual gestation crates, narrow metal-barred pens with solid or slatted metal or concrete floors. The crates allow the sow no freedom of movement or environmental stimulation. Sows living under these conditions can suffer from obesity, leg and other problems due to lack of exercise.

Farrowing crates are also in widespread use. In these crates sows give birth and nurse their newborn piglets in close confinement in pairs with prior and subsequent continuous confinement or tethering in gestation stalls, the entire husbandry of sows, both to auction and slaughter, are compromised. Cages measure no more than ten inches by twelve inches by fourteen inches, and the wounds leading ultimately to cannibalism.

Tail biting and cannibalism. As the pigs rapidly grow to a market weight of 210-220 pounds, the pens become extremely crowded and fouled. Because of the resultant stress on the pigs, they move and develop the aberrant behavior of tail biting and cannibalism.

The current widespread practice is debeaking, which is performed on chicks when they are neonatal. The United Egg Producers, a trade association of the egg industry, has recommended the use of carbon dioxide for humane disposal of unwanted chicks.

The WCR0 is working in conjunction with the newly formed Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation, which, headed by Sharon Negri and a distinguished board of directors, has been established to generate an increase in public awareness of the need to protect our magnificent mountain lions. The WCR0 is also starting the “Coyote Cans” letter writing campaign. If you are interested, details and petitions are available from this office.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The HSUS has launched a campaign to help end this suffering of hogs and laying hens. You can help in any one of a personal commitment not to eat bacon-and-egg breakfasts until more humane production standards are adopted by the pork and egg industries. Urge your friends and neighbors to make a personal commitment to support and vote for measures to make your community more humane.

The extreme restriction of the birds’ movements causes osteoporosis—thinning of the bones—and increases susceptibility to stress. Inadequate lighting and maintained cages can cause extensive feather loss and foot injuries. The problems are compounded by the absence of personal attention to the wounds leading ultimately to cannibalism and death. To prevent such aggressions, please write to your local animal welfare organizations and the HSUS asking for humane alternatives. Animal control should be the only humane policy of the HSUS.

Director’s Comment

BY CHAR DRENNON

The usual method of disposing of unhatched fertile eggs and surplus chicks (especially males) needs immediate reform. The current widespread practice is crucifying or suffocating the chicks in garbage bags.

There are alternatives to most existing battery cage systems. Researchers have found that debeaking is not necessary when stocking densities in battery cages are lowered and when birds are selectively bred for low aggression. Lowered cage densities and a nutritionally balanced diet are effective in preventing cannibalism and possibly feather loss and breast blisters.

A low sodium diet combined with light restrictions (six hours per day) has been used to reduce hens for a second laying cycle without the forced molt trauma. The United Egg Producers has recommended the use of carbon dioxide for humane disposal of unwanted chicks.

That deep litter laying operations are superior for their widespread use they are used. Rogers will be assisting me with special emphasis on the increasing legislative demands. The WCR0 is grateful for the telephone calls and letters from legislators, law enforcement personnel, animal-control agencies, local humane societies and HSUS members telling us that, “if you hadn’t become involved,” those animals wouldn’t have been fed, that cruelty case won, or that bill passed.

My thanks to Senator David Roberti, who appointed me to be a public member of the State of California’s Animal Health Technician Advisory Board. More and more Animal Health Technicians (AHTs) are working in humane societies and animal-control shelters, and their presence means a higher standard of care for the animals. The HSUS helped write the bill allowing AHTs to work in shelters.

We were very pleased to have been given an appreciation award by the Performing Animal Welfare Society for our fine animal control training, for our work and support of Assemblyman Sam Farr’s AB 1620, which is now law. The law states that the California Department of Food and Agriculture shall conduct a one-time inspection and shall conduct one of the buildings, dubbed the “Coyote North- west Animal Facility,” be devoted to psychological experimentation. Long considered by many experts (even within the medical research community) to be the research discipline that causes the greatest suffering for the least amount of gain, psychological experimentation—under the guise of finding the key to human psychology—continues in many laboratories across the country. The “testing” in these laboratories runs the gamut from emotional traumatization to outright physical torture. Conclusions from these tests are usually better reached by analyzing actual human clinical data or studies of animals in their natural setting.

Mountain Lions (continued from page 1)

Mountain lions are now considered game mammals and may be hunted for trophies in the Mountain Region. The mountain lion population in California is in an endangered situation. The WCR0 is working in conjunction with the newly formed Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation, which, headed by Sharon Negri and a distinguished board of directors, has been established to generate an increase in public awareness of the need to protect our magnificent mountain lions. The WCR0 is also starting the “Coyote Cans” letter writing campaign. If you are interested, details and petitions are available from this office.

1987 is already overflowing with projects and plans to help the animals. We’re happy to welcome Kurt Lapham to our office as an additional field investigator for special emphasis on the increasing legislative demands. The WCR0 is grateful for the telephone calls and letters from legislators, law enforcement personnel, animal-control agencies, local humane societies and HSUS members telling us that, “if you hadn’t become involved,” those animals wouldn’t have been fed, that cruelty case won, or that bill passed.

Working in cooperation with the Haven Humane Society, the WCR0 has notified hundreds of people in the Redding area of the March 6th Commission hearing. The third and final hearing will be held on April 10th in Sacramento, and the Commission is planning to make a decision by that time.

Also, please write to your elected representatives urging their support of the Assembly Member Tom Bates’s newly introduced bill AB 407, which would reestablish the mountain lion “protected” status (see Legislative column, page 4). Write to Governor Wilson, the California State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814 and the Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, voicing your objection to mountain lion trophy hunting, and letting the Governor know that you disagree with the budget message of S.B. 76 in 1985, in which he stated, “It is unnecessary to statutorily treat the mountain lion differently from other game animals.

HSUS Fights Plans to Build Research Lab

In addition to $40 million recently approved by the state legislature for new laboratory construction, the University of California at Berkeley is now asking for $14 million to fund a two-level, mostly underground research facility that will be situated on the downtown campus.

Of particular concern is that one-third of the building, dubbed the “UCB North- west Animal Facility,” be devoted to psychological experimentation. Long considered by many experts (even within the medical research community) to be the re-

Research Region

PORTOLA, CALIFORNIA—Responding to complaints that impounded animals were being neglected and mistreated, the Plumas County Sheriff’s officers ordered all dogs removed from the city of Portola animal control shelter and issued a demand that all seriously ill or animals to city officials. Portola City Councilperson Frances Roudebush, who has been opposed to the city’s animal control standard, subsequently requested an evaluation of the facility by the HSUS West Coast Regional office. WCR0 investigator Eric Sakach completed an indepth evaluation of the overall program in February. A report of his findings with recommendations has since been sent to Roudebush for review.

The HSUS provided assistance and the Plumas County Sheriff’s Department for their concern and swift action.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In December of 1986, following an eleven-year battle by animal rights groups, the King County Council voted to stop the sale of animals for research from their county facility. The shelter had been selling approximately 1,600 animals a year for research and teaching purposes, mainly to the University of Washington’s laboratories in Seattle. An intensive letter-writing campaign supported by the Proactive Animal Welfare Society, led by Lynn Greaves, generated a great deal of public debate over the issue. The WCR0 contacted HSUS activists in the area, and in a letter to Audrey Gruger, Chair of the County Council, Chare Sakach noted that, in order for any compromise to be successful, it must have the full support of citizens; releasing pets to research laboratories would only counteract the good works of shelter personnel.

The fight to ban pound seizure continued in Washington. This county facility supplies Washington State University with 500 to 700 animals yearly. At a meeting of Spokane Animal Care & Control, Eric Sakach, field investigator for the WCR0, presented testimony to the Spokane County Commission in support of ending the practice. According to Sakach, “It’s not the function of animal control to be a cheap source of supply of pets for research laboratories,” At this time, the decision to ban pound seizure in Spokane County is still under consideration.

(continued on page 4)
NEW LEGISLATION

Although the 1987 legislative sessions are just now gearing up, we are already looking forward to working on several worthwhile animal bills around the region.

As many of you probably already know, the WCRO maintains a separate mailing list for members who wish to become more actively involved in animal welfare issues by writing or calling their elected representatives. Our success with this list in California has been tremendous; however, due to a somewhat limited response from members, and shorter legislative sessions in the northwest, we are not able to report the same in Washington and Oregon. Since our response from members in the northwest on cruelty issues and news reports is so good, we know the interest is there.

We would really like to build up our activist list; letters and calls to state representatives from constituents make a great difference when fighting legislative issues. If you would like to join our Activist Team, please contact the WCRO.

■ CALIFORNIA:

S.B. 10—Senator Alan Robbins. Requires public animal shelters to provide helpful information to the owners and finders of lost pets and to maintain a “Lost and Found” list. Write to your state senator urging his or her support of this bill.

A.B. 128—Assembly Member Jack O’Connell. Prohibits dogs, and any animals except livestock and working dogs, from being carried in the backs of trucks unless they are in a transport container or safely cross-tied. Write to your assembly member urging his or her support.

A.B. 467—Assembly Member Tom Bates. Restores the protected mammal status of California’s mountain lions, making it unlawful to hunt them as trophies (see story, page 1).

A.B. 1358—Assembly Member Nolan Frizzell. Under present law, humane societies and animal control agencies can own veterinary spay/neuter clinics as long as there is a licensed DVM as manager. This outrageous bill would make it illegal for any person or agency to own or lease a clinic except licensed veterinarians. Let the sponsor of the bill, the California Veterinary Medical Association, 5231 Madison Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95841; phone (916) 344-4985, and your Assembly Member and Senator know we don’t appreciate this attack on nonprofit agencies which are providing needed low cost services.

■ OREGON:

H.B. 2463—Introduced at the request of the Humane Society of the Willamette Valley. This bill will upgrade dogfighting from a Class A Misdemeanor to a Class C Felony, and make it a crime to attend a dogfight, or advertise equipment for the training and handling of fighting dogs. Please write to your state representative and ask him or her to support H.B. 2463.

H.B. 2403—Will remove an existing exemption on breeding and rearing gamecocks in Oregon for the purposes of out-of-state fighting, making it unlawful. Will also raise the penalty for animal fighting from a misdemeanor to a felony. Write to your state representative and ask him or her to support this bill.

■ WASHINGTON:

Three bills have been introduced in Washington that, combined, will give the state a strong new anti-cruelty statute, making it unlawful to cruelly overwork, torture, or torment any animal or deprive any animal of necessary sustenance. Write to your state senator, and tell him or her you are in favor of the new anti-cruelty statute, and ask for support of its passage.