Cockfight Raided!

Injured, dying birds lay outside while families inside laughed and cheered as roosters fought to the death. It was the scene found by our investigator, Bernie Weller, and the Texas Rangers in a recent cockfight raid near Sullivan City, Texas. Nearly three hundred people attending the illegal event were arrested and charges were filed against participants seen violating state laws. The raid culminated an HSUS investigation launched after the Society was tipped that a big cockfight would be held.

Unfortunately, cockfighting occurs every weekend in many parts of our Gulf States region. Our recent investigations have revealed the so-called sport is spreading at an alarming rate.

People involved in cockfighting defend it as a traditional, wholesome sport. In reality, it is a brutal, bloody contest, often ending in painful death, that appeals to the most despicable instincts in mankind. Director Bill Meade has stated that his regional office will give priority to working for legislation in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma that would outlaw these spectacles. Meade said, "This cruelty reaches far beyond the roosters that are ripped apart and killed. The children and young people involved are learning a philosophy which implies that the destruction of animals is justified if it entertains humans."

It will be no easy task to outlaw cockfighting. The cockfighters will spring to the defense of their cherished sport. They will call it a tradition. They will say it is a harmless activity. They will even claim the roosters like to fight. Victory, therefore, will not come easily. It will require all the help and support we can get. And that means you!

If you want to help stop this cruelty, call our office immediately at (512) 854-3142 for guidance. We will tell you what it takes to achieve anti-cockfighting legislation in your state.

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HSUS Opposes Amarillo Pigeon Shoot

Pigeons, with broken or clipped wings, are released in front of a group of "brave gentleman hunters." Guns blast away, and the mutilated bodies of hundreds of pigeons flutter to the ground. This is typical of a pigeon-shoot event.

In Amarillo, Texas, St. Anthony's Hospital decided this would be an excellent fund-raising event. Tickets would be sold for hundreds of dollars each and everyone—except the pigeons—would have great fun.

The HSUS, alerted by Amarillo citizens, learned of the plan and wrote Father Joseph Tash, coordinator of the event. We asked him to consider that killing for entertainment is not an appropriate fund-raising activity for a respected hospital. We suggested that many other activities could be substituted for the pigeon shoot.

Dr. Amy Freeman Lee, one of Texas' most respected humane leaders, wrote a powerful letter to Father Tash opposing the shoot. She said, in part, "It is a specific responsibility of clergy to encourage human beings to cease to rape and ravish His garden and, instead, to nourish and cherish it. Every aspect of the universe is God's creation, and what we do to the least of His creatures, we do unto Him. We have the inescapable responsibility to practice reverence for life—all life."

The Animal Rights Association of Amarillo took a public stand against the shoot and distributed thousands of flyers opposing it.

Sadly, the pigeon shoot went ahead as planned. Dr. Amy Freeman Lee and The HSUS have now taken additional steps to get the hospital's commitment not to repeat the event. There is a good possibility the cruel event will not be held again.
Arkansas is one of seven central states that HSUS investigators feel has the greatest number of "puppy mills." These operations are mass dog-breeding kennels that sell puppies wholesale to the pet industry. Often had conditions include overcrowding, filth, and lack of proper veterinary care. Often, puppy mill owners lack concern for their animals because they are in business strictly to make money. A recent newspaper exposé by Patrick Kelly of the Arkansas Democrat prompted the United States Department of Agriculture to step up its inspections of these facilities in Arkansas. Effective USDA action could produce results and, hopefully, reform.

Additionally, representative Art Givens will be introducing a bill to regulate puppy mills and thus bring additional state protection to thousands of puppies and adult dogs. The HSUS is working with the Pulaski County Humane Society for passage of this badly needed legal protection.

This puppy mill in Arkansas was discovered by a newspaper reporting team. Animals inside the converted chicken coop were not allowed out of their tiny cages. Some were crippled and the building was dark and smelly. The HSUS and Arkansas societies support legislation with standards to prevent such cruel exploitation.

 Attempts to Abolish Animal Holding Period Defeated
If Oklahoma universities and researchers had gotten their way, stray animals held in shelters could be sold for biomedical experimentation without a state-required holding period to allow owners time to look for the pets. Sadly, Oklahoma is one of only six states that, by existing law, require agencies to turn lost and homeless animals over to laboratories and schools. The law mandates that the animal be held at the shelter for 96 days before release for experiments. New legislation, proposed by Representative Widner and Senator Sherlock, would have taken away this protection from the animals by eliminating the holding period.

The HSUS Gulf States Office launched a massive letter-writing campaign encouraging Oklahomans to write their state representatives to oppose the bill. Many responded to The HSUS's effort and the bill was soundly defeated.

Pound seizure is a bad practice because it destroys the public's faith in their local animal shelter. Next year, The HSUS hopes to unite Oklahoma humane societies in support of a bill to totally end pound seizure in the state.

In the aftermath of Texas' most massive horsestarvation case, The HSUS is continuing to work for a solution that will prevent any recurrence of such a tragedy.

Readers will recall, that during early 1984, thousands of horses in Falls County, Texas, died while in the hands of owners who said they could not afford the necessary feed, water, and medical care. The horses were being held for slaughter when severe winter freezes destroyed much of the grazing land, creating a serious feed shortage.

The HSUS was the first humane society to urge the Texas governor and his attorney general to intervene with a thorough investigation, adequate assurance, and enforcement of the state anti-cruelty laws. Our own investigators spent days on the scene surveying the herds of horses and urging local and state authorities to take legal action against the principals in the case. It was about this time that donations of food began to arrive and feeding of the animals got underway. The big problem faced by HSUS investigators was the failure of local authorities to act. Authorities claimed there was no irrefutable proof to show a judge which horse owners had deliberately failed to provide food for their animals. Appeals to state officials were blocked equally firmly. Attempts by HSUS to get persons who had witnessed acts of neglect to sign complaints got nowhere. Finally, when a grand jury held a hearing and considered the evidence presented to show cruelty and neglect, the verdict was that "animal suffering had occurred, but criminal intent could not be established." This grand jury conclusion effectively ended any hope of successful prosecution.

The herds of horses have been sold off since that time. It is essential now, however, that everything be done that can be done to prevent this kind of tragedy happening again. The HSUS Gulf States Regional Director Bill Meade has proposed to Texas humane groups that all work for an emergency response plan by state agencies to handle major livestock catastrophes. He has been in touch with Governor White's office to set up a meeting, which will probably include most interested humane groups and in- ventors of such disaster. Although this meeting, which will probably in- volve representatives of the humane industry and in- dividuals in Texas, will be scheduled within the next sixty days.

Louisiana Enacts Felony Dogfight Legislation
Dogfighters will face fines up to $5,000 and imprisonment up to three years under new dogfighting penalties established by law in July 1984.

Dogfighting is a deeply-rooted, illegal activity in Louisiana and humane groups have had to fight hard for the new law. Without these stiff penalties, dogfighters could just continue to operate, paying the small fine as a cost of operation.

The HSUS Gulf States Office contacted every state representative who was hearing the bill and urged his/her support. An Action Alert was sent to HSUS Louisiana members asking them to write the Governor for his support.

The task ahead now is for humane groups in the state to work for strong enforcement of the new law. This can be done by publicity and follow-up of all tips about dogfighting activity. With a concerted effort, this cruel "sport" can be substantially reduced, or even stopped totally.

An Update
New Orleans, Louisiana—The Louisiana SPCA is holding free puppy training classes and canine behavior workshops for all SPQA members and pet owners. These classes help owners avoid behavioral problems and learn obedience training.

"You outsiders just don't understand that people here are different," it is truly re­markable when you have heard this statement made to justify animal cruelty.

This attitude wrongly implies activities causing pain to an animal in one community would be painless when performed elsewhere.

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Animal-welfare leaders and individual humanities came away from the recent HSUS —sanctioned and Barnett Sike —sponsored annual conference with renewed determination and dedication. One of the most inspirational in recent years, the workshop provided attendees with facts and ideas to help animals. Nearly one hundred individual chibi since seven states attended what has become an annual event held at different locations across the state.

Since the workshop, a number of societies have reported they returned home and began to make changes benefiting animals. The Pulaski County Humane Society in Arkansas transferred its mission statement to the most humane method of euthanasia. The Mississippi Animal Rescue League in Jackson success in getting pound seizing banned from two cities. Other societies wrote to tell us how they have been inspired by the activities and educational programs, and fund-raising projects.

Next spring's workshop will be in Wichita Falls, Texas, on March 16 & 17, 1985. Mark your calendar now and be there!
HSUS Seeks Changes at Snake Farm

Snake farms are one example of the worst type of animal exhibit—the roadside menagerie. They attract people by exhibiting animals as if they were a freak show. Compared to true zoological parks, the atmosphere is low-grade and carnival-like, and the animals are often caged in crowded, substandard quarters.

HSUS Field Investigator Bernie Weller discovered one of these operations in La Place, Louisiana. This snake farm had provoked so many citizens to file complaints that we determined an HSUS inspection was warranted.

Weller found a monkey housed in a dark, stinking cage. He saw a pig confined in an area littered with cement blocks and metal pipes. Much of the available water was dirty and stagnant. Weller's frank assessment was, "This place has some of the worst conditions I've seen anywhere."

Following the investigation, we contacted the United States Department of Agriculture, which licenses the facility. We were shocked to learn that USDA felt the snake farm met required minimum standards for those species of animals covered by the Animal Welfare Act. Part of the problem is that farm animals and reptiles are not covered under this federal law.

The HSUS has requested USDA to take a closer look at this snake farm, keeping in mind the conditions we reported. USDA has responded positively and has asked our investigator to accompany them on a future inspection. We will continue to work for improvements at this roadside zoo.

The water appeared dirty and stagnant; no flow of fresh water could be detected. Unfortunately, reptiles are not covered under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

At a "snake farm" in La Place, Louisiana, this pit is filled to overflowing with alligators. The water appeared dirty and stagnant; no flow of fresh water could be detected. Unfortunately, reptiles are not covered under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

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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.

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Address ____________________________
City ______________ State ___________
Zip ____________________________

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.

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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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