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Bloodless Bullfight Stopped

A so-called bloodless bullfight scheduled to be held in Long Beach, California, on September 24-26, 1976, was stopped by The HSUS and the city prosecutor, Mr. Robert Parkin. California law forbids such bullfights unless held in connection with a religious festival. The fight's promoters sought to use the religious loophole by advertising the fight was going to be held in honor of the Patron Saint of Los Angeles. They also said the net proceeds from the event would be donated to local Roman Catholic groups. HSUS contacted the city prosecutor, urging him to take action to stop the fight. HSUS also sent an agent to Long Beach in an attempt to persuade local officials of the Roman Catholic Church to publicly repudiate the event, which never even had an informal endorsement by the Church. The city prosecutor issued a legal opinion declaring the event, if held, would violate the California Penal Code. After unsuccessful appeals through two tiers of courts, the promoters called off the event.

Whale Study Bill Approved

Rep. Leggett's bill, H.R. 15445, that directed the Department of Commerce to make a comprehensive study of certain whales for the purpose of developing adequate conservation measures passed Congress on October 1.

The Bill was delivered to the White House for presidential approval on October 6. It was signed on October 17.

Sen. Williams Moves to Ban Horse Export for Slaughter

On August 27, 1976, Senator Harrison Williams (D-N.J.) succeeded in adding an amendment to S. 3084, the Export Administration Act, which would have banned the overseas shipment of horses for slaughter. Although the amendment was accepted by the House, the Act itself was not enacted due to Administration opposition to provisions dealing with the Arab boycott.

No Import of Seal Skins This Year

HSUS and other animal welfare groups have prevailed, and no seal skins from South Africa can be imported from the 1975 harvest. The Fouke Fur Company had applied for a permit to bring in up to 70,000 such skins annually. They were denied permission this year because the quota was exceeded. However, now that the 1976 harvest is over, Fouke will try to import the new skins as soon as possible. In the meantime, HSUS is suing the U.S. Government saying that they cannot allow this importation at all. The suit contends, among other things, that the harvest is inhumane, the management program is inadequate, and nursing baby seals are being clubbed. All of these things are in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

HSUS Suit Halts Cruel BLM Roundup of Wild Horses

In August, 1976, The HSUS and the American Horse Protection Association won a permanent injunction from the United States District Court in Washington, D.C., stopping the planned roundup of up to 260 wild, free-roaming horses by the Bureau of Land Management from its Challis, Idaho, wild horse range.

The Court found that the BLM had failed to take steps to mitigate injuries and possible death to the horses during the roundup and lacked accurate herd population data to determine whether any roundup was necessary.

Florida County Moves Against Greyhound Training Practices

The use of live rabbits in the training of greyhounds is being challenged by a Pinellas County, Florida, prosecutor. A criminal charge of cruelty to animals has been filed against greyhound kennel owner, Thomas J. Crawford. The misdemeanor charge alleges that on July 28, 1976, Crawford did "unlawfully torture, torment and unnecessarily kill a rabbit by allowing greyhounds to chase it and catch it." According to published accounts, the charge represents a rare challenge to the practice of using live animals in the training of greyhound racers, and may be the first attempt in Florida to curb the practice with criminal action. Previous attempts to halt the practice by legislation have been unsuccessful due to the heavy opposition of racing interests.

New Animal Welfare Amendments Go Into Effect

On July 21, 1976, several important provisions of the Animal Welfare Act Amendments of 1976 went into effect. This bill, passed in April, 1976, provided that certain provisions would take effect in 90 days. These include:

1. Health certification for dogs and cats shipped interstate.
2. Minimum age limit on shipping dogs and cats.
3. Restrictions on shipping animals C.O.D. (C.O.D. shipments are permitted only if the shipper agrees to guarantee payment for the care and return of stranded animals. The carrier must return such shipments if the animals are not claimed within 48 hours after the consignee is notified of their arrival.)
4. Bans on the promotion of such animal fighting ventures as dog fights. In addition, cock fights are now to be prohibited unless permitted under State law.

Dr. Fox, ISAP Director, Testifies on Humane Commission Bill

Dr. Michael Fox, Director of HSUS's Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, testified on behalf of H.R. 11112 before the House Agricultural Committee's Subcommittee of Livestock and Grains. If enacted, H.R. 11112 would establish a Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals to provide in-depth study in a number of areas of crucial importance to the humane community. Dr. Fox testified that the humane community should be adequately represented on the proposed Commission.

FCC Denies HSUS Rodeo Petition

In July, 1976, the Federal Communications Commission issued an opinion on a petition for rule making filed by HSUS in March, 1971, which sought a ban on the TV broadcasting of rodeos. The HSUS argued that such broadcasts are contrary to the overriding public policy against cruelty to animals and deceived the public as to the nature of the contest being viewed because rodeos commonly use artificial devices to prod and torment otherwise complacent animals into appearing wild. At minimum, HSUS contended, promoters should be forced to disclose to the public that such methods are being used. While the FCC denied the petition on First Amendment grounds and for insufficient evidence of deception, Commissioner Washburn filed a dissenting opinion stating that a FCC inquiry into the deceptive use of prodding devices would be appropriate. Commissioner Washburn saw no difference between the use of such devices to make broken animals appear wild and rigged quiz shows. The opinion left the door open for HSUS to gather more evidence and present a stronger case for deception in the future.

HSUS Program Coordinator Testifies on MMPA

Between September 27 and September 30, 1976, oversight hearings on the administration of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) were held by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee's Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment. At the hearings, Patricia Forkan, HSUS's Program Coordinator, urged Congress to retain the MMPA's original goal of zero mortality of dolphins, arguing that "it is incredible that we would consider the killing of this highly intelligent, sentient animal acceptable at all." The controversy revolves around the tuna industry's "incidental" taking of dolphins in the course of fishing operations. The industry is lobbying Congress to enact legislation that would effectively circumvent a recent court decision that would have halted the killing of dolphins.

The Department of Commerce, in order to comply with that court decision, has announced that as of October 22 no more setting on dolphins will be allowed this year.

Forkan Testifies on Wolf Bill

Patricia Forkan, HSUS Program Coordinator, testified before the House Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment in support of H.R. 11581, introduced by Rep. Whitehurst (R-Va.). The bill would require the Secretary of the Interior to make a comprehensive study of the wolf for the purpose of developing adequate conservation measures, and would provide for a moratorium on hunting wolves until the study is complete. Ms. Forkan expressed concern at "the constant pressure put on the remaining wolf population." Furthermore, she urged the lawmakers to adopt some strengthening amendments such as penalties for violating the moratorium and removing the exemption for private hunters. It is highly unlikely that the bill will be acted upon this year.

California Legislative Action

During the 1975-1976 session of the California Legislature, a broad spectrum of animal-related laws were enacted. They ranged from increasing penalties for dog fighting to allowing Animal Control facilities to accept credit cards. In still other action, the Legislature added elephants to the Endangered Species list, brought the State Fish and Game laws into accord with the Federal Marine Mammal Protection Act, and permitted dog bite cases to be heard in Municipal as well as Superior Court.

Charitable Lobbying Provision of the Tax Reform Act of 1976

Among the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 are several which would allow tax-exempt organizations to carry on, within specified dollar amount limits, lobbying and other activities to influence legislation without losing their tax-exempt status. The Act thus sets a more precise, quantitative standard for the amount of allowable lobbying a tax-exempt organization can carry on without its tax-exempt status being endangered. Existing law contains a rather vague standard for allowable lobbying, which tends to restrict legislative activity by humane and other tax-exempt organizations out of fear of crossing the ill-defined line.

Bad News for Lab Animals

President Ford signed the Toxic Substances Control Act which requires pre-market testing of chemicals and other potentially harmful substances. Although this is a positive step as far as human and environmental safety is concerned, it also means that many more animals will be subjected to lethal tests in the laboratories. During the last Congressional session, HSUS was asked by Congressman Richard Ottinger (N.Y.) for backup data regarding his proposed amendment to the Act which would require the use of alternatives to animals wherever possible. HSUS provided information about tissue cultures, computer models, etc. which are viable and inexpensive alternatives, and supported his proposed addition. Unfortunately, the amendment was soundly defeated and the new law has no special provision requiring the use of alternatives.