

# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

## Joint Resolutions for the 1990s

*Animal-protection groups address critical issues*

**O**n page 24 of this issue of the *HSUS News* you will find a list of resolutions recently developed by The Humane Society of the United States, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This list is intended to focus on six areas of concern that we regard as being of critical importance as we enter the decade of the 1990s but to be one that is by no means all-inclusive. Indeed, there are a number of other issues, perhaps of equal importance to one or more of our organizations, not addressed in these joint resolutions. These statements may not fully represent any one group's particular view on the resolutions as presented but rather represent what we were able to affirm in concert.

Once these resolutions were finalized, a letter was addressed to more than 5,000 animal-advocate organizations of varying persuasions inviting them to join us in endorsing these statements. Approximately 100 organizations have formally done so, while others are still in the process of bringing these resolutions to the attention of their governing bodies. A number of organizations, for varying reasons, have chosen not to endorse these resolutions.

Contrary to the views of some, the development and publicizing of these resolutions (a full-page ad with a list of endorsing organizations appeared in the *New York Times* on January 29) were intended neither to call attention to the differences among animal-activist organizations nor to suggest that the positions set forth in these resolutions were the only acceptable or viable positions regarding these matters. Rather, at a time when there exist in the public arena much confusion and uncertainty regarding the positions being taken by various groups relating to the use of animals for certain purposes, it was our desire to state clearly and succinctly where

at least a few organizations stood on these questions. Some groups, it would seem, do not fully share our views and, for reasons of their own, choose not to endorse these statements. We respect their right not to become endorsers and in no way wish to imply that their declining to do so should be viewed negatively.

It was also our intention to refute a position being taken by numerous animal-user groups, especially the medical research community, agribusiness, and the furriers: that animal activists are terrorists. Nothing is further from the truth, regardless of whether such activists choose to be identified as animal protectionists or as animal rightists. Indeed, the incidence of violence and terrorism associated with animal activists' efforts in this country is both rare and isolated. But because such has happened occasionally and may, we suspect, sometimes be staged or encouraged by our adversaries, the terrorist scare is being used to discredit all animal-activist groups. It is for this reason that the three organizations developing these resolutions felt it appropriate and necessary to state clearly and unequivocally the historic position of the animal-protection movement and the operative policies of our respective organizations, i.e., that "we oppose threats and acts of violence against people and willful destruction and theft of property."

It is our hope that as we address the many areas of concern affecting the protection and welfare of animals during the decade ahead, we may increasingly do so with a common voice and a concerted effort. Few, if any, persons believe that a monolithic animal-protection/rights movement is either possible or desirable. However, it may yet be possible for us to join hands on those occasions when our common concerns are far greater than our differences and our collective strength greater than our individual efforts. ■



John A. Hoyt, President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Hoyt".