ADOPT-A-TEACHER
The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), The HSUS's youth-education division, extends appreciation to the thousands of individuals and organizations that participated in the Adopt-A-Teacher program in 1992. Special thanks go to the donors listed here, who each adopted 80 or more teachers and enabled 2,500 or more children to receive KIND News every month during the school year.

1992's Special Donors
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Reflect for a moment... how can I help animals even when I no longer share their world...?

Through your request for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you are gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal protection and strengthens the society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

Please send: Will information
Name
Address
City State Zip
Mail in confidence to: Murdough S. Madden, Vice President,Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2000 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

New Day for Wild Horses
Immuncontraception project begins in Nevada

On a shimmering cold day last December, The HSUS and the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) opened a new chapter in the management of the fabled wild horses of the American West. In a remarkable collaboration between researchers, the BLM, the University of Nevada at Reno, and The HSUS, 130 wild mares were rounded up, treated with an immuncontraceptive vaccine, and returned to their home ranges in the high desert of northeastern Nevada.

The immuncontraceptive vaccine, which promises effective and safe wildlife-fertility control, was developed under the sponsorship of The HSUS by the research team of Jay F. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., John W. Turner, Ph.D., and Irwin K. M. Liu, DVM, (see the Fall 1991 HSUS News). For six years free-ranging horses on Assateague Island, Maryland, have been treated with the vaccine; only twice has a treated mare produced a foal (the same mare both times). None of the mares treated with the vaccine has shown health problems or changes in behavior.

The Nevada wild-horse contraception project will test three versions of the immuncontraceptive vaccine. One group of mares was given a two-shot treatment, administered in a three-to-four-week period. This treatment, used for the first five years of the Assateague research, virtually assures successful contraception for this group of mares. However, because the treated mares must be held for the interval between shots, which is both costly and potentially stressful to the horses, the other two groups were vaccinated with one-shot preparations.

Perhaps even more important than the potential scientific gain is the shift in attitudes toward wild-horse management symbolized by the Nevada project. For decades The HSUS and others have battled the BLM and livestock interests to assure humane treatment of western horses and to secure the horses' fair share of the public lands' natural resources. In our view the BLM has often initiated wild-horse-population reductions based on political pressure from livestock interests rather than on sound scientific data on horse populations and range conditions. "Surplus" horses removed from the wild have been put up for adoption or sent to ill-conceived "sanctuaries" or have languished for months in temporary holding facilities. All parties have agreed that none of these solutions has proven completely satisfactory.

The turning point came in June 1991 at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, when testimo-
ny by Dr. Kirkpatrick and HSUS Vice President, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, John W. Grandy, Ph.D., brought immunocontraception to the attention of Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada. Senator Reid immediately recognized the potential application of the immunocontraception research to western wild horses, the majority of whom live in his home state. With his support Congress provided funds to the BLM targeted specifically for a wild-horse immunocontraception project. In September 1992 the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM, The HSUS, the research team, and the University of Nevada at Reno marked the formal beginning of the project.

The Nevada BLM organized and executed a large-scale wild-horse roundup, complete with a tent city, elaborate personnel, and a small army of personnel. As BLM and contract personnel sent horses through the maze of corrals, researchers Kirkpatrick, Turner, and Liu injected each adult mare with either the vaccine. Preliminary evidence from the mares held for the second shot of the two-shot protocol suggests that they were responding well to the vaccine.

Wild horses, who are strangers to confinement and alarmed by the close presence of humans, are severely stressed by roundups. We hope that the fertility-control technology being tested in this project will reduce the need for such roundups in the future. We also hope that the prudent application of fertility control will reduce the number of wild horses entering the adoption program. Scaling down the adoption program should allow more careful screening of adoption applicants and improve the quality of the horses’ adoptive homes.

We hope that the cooperative spirit shown in the design and execution of the immunocontraception study will increase BLM sensitivity to other HSUS concerns about wild-horse management. The HSUS will continue to press for public-land-management policies that are scientifically sound and even-handed and allow wild horses to thrive. --Irwin T. Barber, Ph.D., HSUS senior scientist, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

What’s Wrong with This Picture?
Government lab-animal poster concerns HSUS

When I first saw it, says first-grade teacher Sheila Schwartz, “I thought it was laughable. All those happy, smiling monkeys in cages. Then I said to myself, ‘This poster is printed with government money!’ That really bothered me because it’s completely biased and the subject is not age-appropriate at all.” Dr. Schwartz, who has taught grades one through five in her twenty-seven-year teaching career, was looking at a poster produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) entitled “Let’s Visit a Research Laboratory” (see accompanying illustrations).

The full-color, cartoon-style poster shows a building with thirteen different species of animals and people, animals, and equipment. The building purports to be a research laboratory, but certainly no invasive research is taking place there. The animals and people are all smiling. In Room 7, the testing lab, a happy monkey presses buttons on a computer panel. The lucky mice of Room 10, the rodent housing, are graced with names such as Jimmy, Freddie, and Lizzy, just like family pets. Room 13, the monkey housing, is not a collection of grim cages, but a delightful jungle-gym affair in which many children would no doubt enjoy playing.

The poster is accompanied by a presentation folder that includes suggested classroom activities. The stated target audience for both the poster and the activities is children in grades two through five. Also published by the HHS is a student brochure entitled “Animals and Science,” printed in large type (the kind generally reserved for young readers), and a teacher’s guide with the same title.

Patty Finch, executive director of The HSUS’s National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE) and a former classroom teacher, was deeply concerned when she saw the poster and accompanying materials. “Teachers often receive biased materials in the classroom,” she observes. “But we don’t expect our government to be the source of blatantly biased materials.”

The poster’s cartoon art is not in keeping with the seriousness of the controversial and emotionally charged issue of animal experimentation. It is, however, very much in keeping with the preferences of an audience of young children. Why might cartoon art have been selected? "Because a more realistic portrayal would frighten children and be unacceptable to teachers," says Ms. Finch. "When we cannot be truthful about an issue without scaring young children, then the issue itself is inappropriate for that age group who have not been trained as educators. You may think that you can teach any subject to young children so long as you simplify the language. In fact, learning the age at which children are cognitively ready to assimilate different kinds of information is a big part of teacher training.”

With assistance from HSUS Vice President, Laboratory Animals, Martin Stephens, Ph.D., NAHEE staff members began to evaluate the materials more fully and to develop an approach for alerting educators to the problems they found. A number of concerns emerged. Not only did the poster exploit children’s natural love of animals by persuading them that laboratories were fun places for animals to be, but the student guide also prioritized the issue by its choice of the word “extremists” for those who would limit the use of animals in research. The reality—that there exists a broad spectrum of beliefs regarding this highly controversial topic—was not addressed. This approach is highly questionable from the educator’s standpoint. Both the student and teacher guides dismissed the concept of “alternatives” to animal experimentation.

Dr. Stephens observes, “It’s ironic that the federal government professes to support the development of alternatives to the use of animals in research and promotes the development of alternatives to the use of animals in research, and yet claims to accept children’s graphic art is not in keeping with the seriousness of the controversial and emotionally charged issue of animal experimentation. It is, however, very much in keeping with the preferences of an audience of young children. Why might cartoon art have been selected? “Because a more realistic portrayal would frighten children and be unacceptable to teachers,” says Ms. Finch. “When we cannot be truthful about an issue without scaring young children, then the issue itself is inappropriate for that age group who have not been trained as educators. You may think that you can teach any subject to young children so long as you simplify the language. In fact, learning the age at which children are cognitively ready to assimilate different kinds of information is a big part of teacher training.”

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HSUS Position Statement on Elementary Education Materials Distributed by the Department of Health and Human Services

The elementary education materials titled "Let's Visit a Research Laboratory" (poster and lesson plans), "Animals and Science" (student brochure), and "Animals and Science" (teacher's guide) were produced by the Department of Health and Human Services under the auspices of the former Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. They are currently being distributed by the Department of Health and Human Services' National Institute of Mental Health. These materials primarily target young children who do not possess the cognitive ability to make meaningful decisions regarding the highly controversial and complex issue of the use of animals in biomedical research. By targeting a vulnerable audience, these materials fail to meet even the most basic criteria for objectivity. This discredits the use of the materials as objective educational tools. Moreover, the contents of the materials are highly selective and at times misleading, revealing a biased and prejudiced point of view, not a balanced treatment of the subject. The materials fail to provide an accurate representation of animal experimentation and its limits. They dismiss the mainstream concept of "alternatives" to animal experimentation in favor of the belittling and misleading term "adjectives." These and other shortcomings of the materials are totally inconsistent with the level of integrity and fairness that should be observed in government-sponsored educational materials. We find these materials to be both biased and pejorative in as much as they:
1. Fail to address the inherently controversial nature of the subject.
2. Exploit children's natural love of animals and attempt to persuade children that laboratories are places in which researchers engage in playful and enjoyable activities;
3. Fail to provide a balanced discussion of the ethical considerations relating to the potential suffering of animals used in research;
4. Attempt to polarize the issue of the use of animals in research by characterizing people concerned about animal suffering as "extremists;"
5. Seek to relegate sentient creatures to the same level of importance as the inanimate objects used by scientists in their research;
6. Reject the mainstream concept of "alternatives" to the use of animals in research and education;
7. Fail to mention animal-welfare and animal-protection groups in listings of possible resource agencies and materials;
8. Inadequately advise teachers regarding the care and maintenance of animals used in classrooms.

Because the subject of the use of animals in biomedical research is highly controversial and complex and therefore inappropriate for young children, and because of the blatant bias and propagandistic nature of the materials, we strongly oppose the use of public funds for the future production, distribution, and promotion of these materials by the United States government and its agencies.

LABORATORY ANIMALS

Wanted: Better USDA Reporting

HSUS seeks more information on lab-animal use

People who ensure that animals are treated properly in biomedical research are concerned that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is misusing its authority to report forcibly on the care and use of laboratory animals. USDA's Animal Welfare Act, the USDA's Animal Welfare Enforcement reports are the only annual profiles of animal use available in this country. Unfortunately, they pale in comparison to the comprehensive profiles of laboratory-animal use issued by many other countries.

The USDA reports don't provide the total number of animals used in research because the agency keeps no figures on the species that make up the vast majority of the animals used. Therefore, they quote the numbers as "rats, mice, and birds." They contain no information about controversial procedures such as the Draize Eye-Irritation Test, in which chemicals are tested in the eyes of rabbits, and the Lethal Dose 50 Percent (LD50) Test, in which animals are poisoned to death.

The data on primate is grossly inadequate. There is no information about how these animals are used or from what sources they are obtained. For example, the reports contain no information about chimpanzee use. Instead, data on chimpanzees are lumped together with information about all other nonhuman primates.

In the fall of 1992, The HSUS filed an administrative petition that calls upon the USDA to overhaul its reporting system. The petition recommends that the USDA...