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ALLISON BURGESS

MATCH MEATS FOUNDER
AND HSUS SUPPORTER
// BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

ALLISON BURGESS LOVES her Missouri farm. But she's troubled that her home state ranks in the country's bottom 10 for animal protection laws.

Missouri has been dubbed the puppy mill capital of the nation. A horse slaughter plant was poised to open there in 2013, if not for an HSUS-backed measure in Congress to block horse slaughter inspections. And just recently, Missouri's attorney general filed suit alongside five other states seeking to overturn California's ban on the sale of eggs from battery cage hens.

But while such challenges might discourage others, Burgess has been stirred to action. She's always cared deeply for animals, starting with the stray dogs her family adopted and the barn cats she befriended as a young girl. "When I look at an animal I see someone, not something. ... They are emotional [and] sensitive and just want to live their lives in some comfort, just like us."

FROM RETIREE TO ACTIVIST: When the successful St. Louis businesswoman sold her video production company to retire at 48, she looked forward to relaxing and doing some community work. But a *Washington Post* article about factory farming changed everything. "I couldn't sleep for days. I knew I had to do something."

That drive led to the creation of Match Meats—a unique blend of soy and wheat proteins and natural flavorings that can replace meat in virtually any recipe. One Detroit restaurant uses Match "beef" to offer vegetarian alternatives for its entire burger menu. The company regularly receives kudos from grateful customers, like one woman who re-created a favorite recipe from her grandmother that she'd been unable to enjoy as a vegetarian.

For Burgess, it's all a labor of love. She invested her retirement money in the company, and while Match Meats is now profitable, she's never taken a salary.

ACTION EQUALS CHANGE: Burgess now serves on The HSUS's Missouri state council, farm animal protection council and equine leadership council. She visits legislators, mingles at campaign dinners, forwards petitions to friends and writes letters to the editor. She recently attended The HSUS's Humane Lobby Day to talk to Missouri legislators about three concerning bills.

She's adopted horses through Saddlebred Rescue, a nonprofit that buys horses being sold for slaughter. And she also gives substantially to The HSUS. "You do what you can. Every day is a decision about how you spend your money and time."

Her dream is to one day get a studio apartment in D.C. and lobby for animals two or three days a week. "That's how I want to spend my retirement." In the meantime, she'll continue to fight for better animal protection laws in her state. "It's dark for animals here in Missouri. ... We have to get active."



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