The HSUS in Action: Field Services, Investigations, Regional Work, Disaster Relief, and International Assistance

The HSUS's original strategy for lifting the sights and the prospects of the animal protection movement's myriad local organizations rested upon the production and distribution of better educational materials, efforts to reach beyond the shelter doors to educate the broader public about humane concerns and conduct, and a determined focus on national solutions to national cruelties. But it also included a strong action-oriented program agenda, based on field work, investigations, relief services, and the projection of the organization's influence to a nationwide audience through the development of branches and affiliates. The HSUS's contemporary sections devoted to regional services, investigations, and disaster relief are the developed manifestations of Fred Myers's plan for an organization to help the humane movement meet its needs for technical and practical information and expertise, provide direct relief services in emergency situations, and confront cruelty by bringing out the facts about it to buttress reform efforts at the local, state, and federal levels.

In 1971, under John Hoyt, The HSUS established a stable system of regional offices to serve as the eyes and ears of the organization, informing the central office of trends and opportunities, representing its interests in regional affairs, and extending The HSUS’s knowledge, experience, and organizational expertise to a broad range of constituencies. In addition to supporting ongoing work in The HSUS’s traditional areas of concern—companion animals, laboratory animals, wildlife, and animals in agriculture, regional staff members handled cases, problems, events, contests, and miscellaneous issues that fell outside delineated programs.

Field services and investigations steadily expanded in the Hoyt era, each gaining separate section status. The HSUS’s Field Services section (ceding its original duties to program staff members involved with animal sheltering, research and data services, and other areas) became responsible for a growing network of regional offices. For its part, the Investigations section pursued in-depth investigations with the goal of providing evidence to support reform initiatives. The two sections frequently combined their personnel and resources in campaigns designed to advance The HSUS’s work.

During the 1970s and 1980s, disaster relief, which The HSUS pursued on an ad hoc basis, beginning in the mid-1960s, became the subject of a formal program to enhance the organization’s capacity to serve. In the 1990s disaster relief assistance became a signature element in The HSUS’s national and international identity. The organization that had begun modestly, pursuing relief work opportunistically and as feasible, had become a major partner in disaster relief services for animals.

The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of a robust international arm of The HSUS, Humane Society International, which was charged with extending humane work into areas of...
the world where needs were great and available assistance limited. HSI was an important ele-
ment in The HSUS’s determination to support humane work on a global basis.

As The HSUS marked its fiftieth anniversary, there was no humane organization in the
world that could match its regional programs, investigating capacities, disaster relief work,
and international assistance efforts. These action-oriented components of The HSUS’s work
made it a powerful force for animals’ good.

Field Services and Investigations in the 1950s and 1960s

As might be expected in the case of a start-up organization, lack of funds limited the number
of staff and programs to which The HSUS could make a commitment in the 1950s. Field serv-
dices and investigative staff were among the first hires Myers made for The HSUS. Field service
was an important early priority, and Larry Andrews, who had coordinated such activities at
AHA, undertook similar work for The HSUS as director of field services. For several years, An-
drews and his wife lived on the road, helping The HSUS to establish good relations with hu-
mane organizations and individuals across the country.

For the first decade of The HSUS’s existence, field service operations included support
and assistance to local societies and animal control agencies, the promotion of national is-
sues, legislation at both the state and local levels, and the investigation of cruelty. Field work-
ers covered a lot of territory and had many responsibilities. During the first three months of
1962, for example, HSUS staff traveled more than thirty-four thousand miles, visited forty-six
local societies from Oregon to Puerto Rico, and handled inquiries from an additional thirty-
seven animal care and control operations.1

In an era when many local societies lacked the resources to hire their own investigators
or to develop strong collaboration with law enforcement authorities, HSUS field representa-
tives provided much-needed energy and expertise in the identification, investigation, and
prosecution of cruelty.2

As Field Services began to expand its staff in the early 1960s, it conducted The HSUS’s
early education and training initiatives, organized seminars for animal control officers,
helped to inspect and correct conditions at local pounds, consulted
with humane societies on building renovation, and assisted police
with raids on animal suppliers.3

Field Services comprised an essential part of The HSUS’s pro-
gram for improving the general field of humane work by promoting
greater movement unity. In 1959 and 1960, John Miles Zucker suc-
cessfully mobilized discordant factions within Puerto Rico’s animal-
protection community for a campaign to strengthen local animal
cruelty laws. In 1960 Belton Mouras did something similar in Utah,
bringing together three separate local organizations to form the Utah
state branch of The HSUS. The following year Mouras repeated his
success in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, uniting local leaders around a
proposed animal shelter that opened later that year.4

Field service in the early years was closely associated with in-
vestigative work. The founding board and staff members of The
HSUS not only considered investigations to be essential to the expo-
sure of the era’s “national cruelties,” they also saw it as a defining element in the organiza-
tion’s identity. Myers, Andrews, Helen Jones, and Marcia Glaser all went into the field to gath-
er evidence of cruelty. By 1956 The HSUS had hired its first investigators, and since then it has
never been without such personnel.

The first investigators The HSUS recruited went to work in laboratories to observe and
record conditions that might provide evidence of the need for national legislation to regulate
animal use. One investigator worked in Tulane University laboratories. In 1958 his work there

Fred Myers and Robert Chenoweth
check blueprints at the Utah branch
construction site.
produced evidence that animals were kept for years in inadequate
caging, were subjected to unsupervised and frivolous operations
and procedures by undergraduate students, and were denied post-
operative care.5

The same year, investigator Thomas O. Hammond, an experi-
enced animal caretaker and laboratory assistant, went to work as a
laboratory technician at a medical institution in California. Ham-
mond’s revelations sparked litigation and provided early momen-
tum to The HSUS’s campaigns for laws that encompassed laborato-
ry use of animals, including Representative Morgan Moulder’s H.R.
3556, one of the first bills on the subject in the post-World War II era
(see chapter 3).

Fred Myers personally participated in field work and investiga-
tions, visiting horse shows, public pounds, rodeos, slaughterhouses,
and other sites of possible cruelty. His active efforts against cock-
fighting made him a much-vilified figure in underground publica-
tions like Grit and Steel.6

In 1962 in civil rights-era Mississippi, Myers and Director of Affiliates Philip T. Colwell, a
former policeman, infiltrated a gang of dogfight enthusiasts. Colwell helped to organize a po-
lice raid on an all-day dogfighting extravaganza near Meridian. Myers followed up by push-
ing the FBI and the IRS to investigate whether the promoter-bookie behind the fights had
been reporting his net income properly.7

The HSUS’s determination to pursue investigative work was perpetuated under the pres-
idency of Oliver Evans. “The outstanding quality of our Society is aggressiveness,” he wrote
to one potential donor. “We ask people to join and support the Society only so we can fight
cruelty.”8 By the times Evans made this appeal in 1967, Frank McMahon, with six years of in-
vestigations for The HSUS under his belt, was a legendary figure within humane work.
(McMahon, a Massachusetts native, had begun working with local humane groups while still
in his teens. He served in the U.S. Navy between 1945 and 1949 and then came to Washing-
ton. He worked in real estate before joining The HSUS.)

During his thirteen-year career, McMahon scrutinized dozens of animal dealers; inspect-
ed hundreds of pounds and shelters; monitored zoos, circuses, and other captive wildlife en-
terprises; and attended more than three hundred rodeo events. His work turned up evidence
that made possible the passage and subsequent revisions of the Laboratory Animal Welfare
Act as well as local, state, and federal legislation concerning pound seizure, rodeos, wild
horse roundups, and the soring of horses. McMahon even extended the reach of the Investi-
gations department into the arena of marine mammal issues when he launched The HSUS’s
investigation of the Pribilof Islands seal harvest in the late 1960s.9

The basic guidelines for running an investigation were set during McMahon’s tenure. Be-
fore 1970, in particular, the scope and intensity of investigations were limited by organiza-
tional finances. Budget constraints made it hard to undertake all of the work staff members con-
sidered to be important. At times, too, as in the case of animal theft and the supply of animals
to laboratories (see chapter 4), issues of emerging importance and urgency claimed time and
resources that might otherwise have been available for other investigations.10

In those years McMahon typically proposed the investigations he wanted to undertake,
sometimes after reported incidents of cruelty from local societies or individuals, and discuss-
ion with administrators and fellow staff members ensued. He was sensitive to the desire of
local organizations and HSUS branches to be involved in work that took place in their vicinity and, where appropriate, took steps to include them. While McMahon focused on how to plan and execute the investigation, develop information, secure photographic evidence, generate publicity, and pursue remedial action like the filing of charges, administrators concentrated on meeting the expenses involved, striking a balance between the needs of the investigation and those of other HSUS programs, and anticipating and addressing its possible legal ramifications.\(^{11}\)

**Investigations and Field Services in the 1970s**

In 1974 Frank McMahon died at age forty-eight, after a series of strokes. He was buried, as Fred Myers had been, at The HSUS’s Waterford, Virginia, property, home of the National Humane Education Center. McMahon’s passing marked the end of an era, but it did not end The HSUS’s commitment to investigative work. Soon after the regional office structure emerged in the early 1970s, these offices began to employ their own investigators and to conduct their own investigations, many of which required steady collaboration between field representatives and Washington headquarters staff. By the mid-1970s, The HSUS had assembled an outstanding cohort of competent and experienced investigators. Frantz Dantzler, Ann Gonnerman, Marc Paulhus, Sue Pressman, Eric Sakach, Margaret Scott, Philip Steward, Bernie Weller, and Phyllis Wright were all capable of excellent investigative work, and The HSUS relied on their efforts to obtain documentation and evidence concerning dogfighting, cockfighting, greyhound racing, puppy mills, zoos, rodeos, the treatment of animals in entertainment, soring of Tennessee Walking Horses, and other issues.\(^{12}\)

Celebrations of the 1976 Bicentennial Year produced a number of situations requiring the attention and energy of HSUS investigators. John Dommers of the New England Regional Office campaigned against the organizers of a greased pig contest at Old Saybrook, Connecticut, citing a law that forbade the harassment of animals for mere amusement. Investigators confiscated a number of unhealthy horses from wagons heading across the country to Valley Forge as part of the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania. The HSUS harshly criticized organizers of the Wagon Train when they sold animals to slaughtering interests at the end of their long ride, and the society helped to purchase, and pension out, some of the animals so badly served by the escapade.\(^{13}\)

The most conspicuous spectacle of animal misery to emerge during the Bicentennial was The Great American Horse Race, and here, too, HSUS investigators played a crucial role. The HSUS had sought to put an end to the race as soon as it was announced, but it was not possible to make a legal case. Owners of 150 horses, vying for a $25,000 prize, traveled from New York to California on modern-day blacktop roads. The HSUS asked local animal welfare organizations to monitor the race at all junctures, and Phil Steward attended the race’s Memorial Day launch in Frankfort, New York. Even as the enterprise’s organizers went bankrupt, and riders, veterinarians, and other personnel abandoned the race, The HSUS did its best to provide relief and assistance to the animals en route.\(^{14}\)

Investigative, regional, and program staff members collaborated in many initiatives during the decade. In 1977 Dantzler and Jamie Cohen of ISAP teamed up with Union Pacific Railroad to develop an on-board system of transport that allowed hogs to receive “proper food, water, space, and opportunity to rest,” making it possible to avoid the burdens and pitfalls of unloading trains en route to slaughtering facilities. The HSUS’s harsh evaluation of earlier systems of transportation led to innovations in the design of Union Pacific’s hog cars.\(^{15}\)

The same year, Phil Steward and Southwest Regional Investigator Bernie Weller respond-
ed to a student’s complaints about neglect and mistreatment of animals at North Texas State University. For almost two years, Steward and Weller kept the case moving, corresponding with university officials, USDA, the complainant, and local authorities. Finally The HSUS’s photographic evidence of substandard conditions in the university laboratories put an end to complacency on the part of administrators, USDA inspectors, and the Denton County district attorney and resulted in positive changes within the facility.16

As their predecessors in the 1960s had done, 1970s-era field staff provided practical assistance and expertise to help local shelters improve their operations, negotiate with government, and troubleshoot their programs. Some investigations led to the closing of substandard kennels, or the renovation of inadequate pound facilities. The HSUS’s work in this area sometimes hit the front pages of major newspapers. Weller got a pound manager fired in Pensacola, Florida, in 1975. In a case involving the Baltimore pound in 1976, The HSUS found Baltimore mayor William Donald Schaeffer receptive to its offers of assistance and counsel. Schaeffer placed a trusted aide on the case and ultimately assigned the city’s public health veterinarian to full-time responsibilities at the pound.17

Regional staff members took on some investigations of prominent impact, too. In 1978 Sandy Rowland of the Great Lakes office signed a complaint against an Ohio man whose businesses included a pet shop, a grooming salon, a boarding kennel, and a pet cemetery. The shop was a substandard operation, and further investigation revealed that the man killed puppies he judged would not sell, hitting them on the heads with a hammer or wrench.18

The HSUS continued to investigate the animal trade in the 1970s, providing damaging evidence of overcrowded conditions; inadequate food, water, and shelter; and other improprieties at animal auctions and trade day sales in one Mississippi community. On one occasion Frantz Dantzler found twenty dogs crammed into a makeshift cage fitted onto a pickup truck. His colleague Marc Paulhus found fighting cocks for sale, even though cockfighting was illegal in the state. In January 1977 The HSUS threatened to sue the city of Ripley, Mississippi, in an effort to halt its monthly animal sale, an especially egregious occasion for neglect and mistreatment of animals. Some years later The HSUS used its knowledge of the Ripley flea market to force the University of Mississippi Medical School, then the subject of The HSUS’s administrative complaint for violations of the AWA, to abandon its practice of purchasing at Ripley trade days.19

Budgetary constraints played a role in determining investigations strategy and forced investigations staff to develop criteria for the selection of cases to pursue. Investigators took into consideration the national or regional import of an investigation, the number of animals involved, and the prospects for local cooperation. But no single criterion was determinative, and The HSUS tried to stay true to its founding vision of providing principled and competent assistance to those seeking to help animals in need, whatever their circumstances and wherever they might be.20

The selection and development of investigative personnel has been one of The HSUS’s most challenging burdens. Some have proved to be fearless in their dealings with animal abusers but lacked the finesse needed to interact with law enforcement officials and animal control agencies. Provoked by official indifference or outright neglect in the face of terrible cruelty, investigators sometimes found it difficult to contain their outrage. In the interests of achieving immediate relief or humane improvements, however, investigators moderated their tone and approach where necessary, negotiating with responsible officials, advancing logical arguments and proposals, offering practical or technical assistance, and pursuing extended dialogue. In other cases, investigators chose to remind author-
ities in diplomatic tenor of the negative press coverage that would ensue in the event that corrective measures were not taken. On the rare occasion, too, The HSUS weighed in more fully with a threat of legal action. Handling these options in a range of situations where animals' lives were literally at stake demanded tact, discretion, sensitivity, and determination, and The HSUS employed many individuals so endowed throughout its history.21

HSUS investigators came from a variety of professional backgrounds. Bob Baker (with The HSUS from 1980 to 1993) was a stockbroker. Gail Eisnitz was a photographer. Lisa Landres was an elephant trainer. Eric Sakach was an illustrator. Frantz Dantzler began his working life as an aerospace electronics technician.

Former law enforcement personnel also served The HSUS very well. Phil Colwell, Bernie Weller, and Bob Reder were all ex-policemen who performed effectively as investigators. Although there were and always would be important exceptions, it frequently proved easier to socialize law enforcement professionals with the values and approaches of the humane movement than to provide knowledgeable humane advocates with the skills, background, and insights that could only be gained through direct experience with law enforcement. In this way The HSUS brought experienced, seasoned investigators into its ranks. Such precedents set the stage for the hiring of Rick Swain, a former Montgomery County, Maryland, police captain (who as a detective sergeant had been assigned to the Silver Spring monkeys case in 1981) as head of investigations for The HSUS in 1996.22

In some instances investigators brought with them a serious interest in a particular issue, which then made its way onto the investigations agenda of The HSUS. In 1980, for example, Bob Baker, a former horse owner who had authored a book on the misuse of drugs in racing, drew The HSUS into investigations of the drugging of racehorses to numb or mask the pain of their injuries. Investigators interviewed jockeys, racetrack veterinarians, horse owners, track operators, trainers, and others. Staff members testified before state racing commissions in six states, and their work resulted in a restriction of drug use in most of these instances. The HSUS also worked with the American Horse Protection Association (AHPA) for legislation in Congress to prohibit the use of drugs in horseracing and helped to draft model legislation to curb abuses. While no bills were passed, Senate hearings were held, and furor over the issue produced a number of reforms within the industry.23

As The HSUS developed and enhanced its program staff, its investigators were increasingly able to take advantage of the skills and knowledge within the organization. Frequently, however, investigators developed their expertise on a particular topic through their work and later were able to provide expert support not only for future investigations but for program work as well. Marc Paulhus, who made himself an expert on equine issues, eventually moved from investigations and regional office management to vice president of The HSUS’s Companion Animals section. Paulhus and Eric Sakach of the West Coast Regional Office exemplified the successful path of service that led from an investigator’s position to the position of regional director.24
A number of significant national campaigns waged by The HSUS first arose from the work of regional investigators. The puppy mills campaign that took off as a national effort in the early 1990s came out of investigations carried out in the Midwest. For years the New Jersey regional office waged a struggle against a deer hunt held in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. This effort presaged The HSUS’s broad commitment to reform in the nation’s wildlife refuge management policies.25

At least one campaign that emerged from regional work reached the U.S. Supreme Court, after Southeast Regional Director Paulhus began to investigate Santeria animal sacrifice in the Miami vicinity. Paulhus’s work led to the enactment of a legislative ban on animal sacrifice in the community of Hialeah, Florida, in June 1987. When the constitutionality of the law was challenged, both Paulhus and Michael Fox appeared as expert witnesses, Paulhus on the species and methods used and Fox on animals’ pain. After the law was upheld in this trial and affirmed by the appellate court in Atlanta, it went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which reversed the decision—ruling that the law was too specifically directed toward a single religious organization—and declared the ban unconstitutional.26

Dispelling fears that this decision might encourage the proliferation of animal sacrifice as a protected religious practice, the Supreme Court held that governments could enforce more broadly based regulation or prohibition of animal sacrifice, including an extant anti-cruelty statute. HSUS Southeast Regional staff member Ken Johnson was paying attention. In June 1993, after the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Rigoberto Zamora, a Miami Santeria practitioner, publicly performed a Santeria ritual in which he killed three goats and one sheep by slitting their throats. Johnson videotaped the incident, in which one goat continued to bleat after being cut.27

In July 1995 Zamora was charged with four counts of animal cruelty (for the manner in which the animals were handled) under Florida’s anticruelty statute, and his motion to have them dismissed on the grounds of religious freedom was rejected. The HSUS’s Michael Fox and Melanie Adcock, both veterinarians, assisted the prosecution. The next year Zamora pled no contest: he received two years’ probation and four hundred hours of community service. This conviction was upheld in 1997.28

HSUS investigations could become very elaborate, involving regional staff and national investigators in a collaborative effort to procure the evidence needed to attack cruelties on a national level. In the 1980s Bob Baker, Frantz Dantzler, Paul Miller, and Sandy Rowland participated in a complex operation that targeted a notorious high-volume animal dealer known to carry dogs across state lines without the required vaccination certificates on his way to deliver animals to major laboratories in his home state. The plan was to follow his tractor trailer (a triple-decker hog transport) from a dog auction in Routledge, Missouri, one of his many stops, all the way to Pennsylvania, where humane investigators in that state would use a prearranged warrant to stop the truck. Unfortunately, someone in the law enforcement chain tipped off the regional USDA representative on what was afoot, and the dealer paid a veterinarian to issue false certificates for the three hundred animals he was carrying.29

Despite this disappointment, Baker and Dantzler procured some excellent footage of sick and crowded animals in the dealer’s transport vehicle. Later, their video and photographic evidence were crucial to the designation of dog theft as a felony in Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.30

While investigating an animal-hoarding case in 1962, HSUS Director of Affiliates Philip T. Colwell found a puppy, only a few days old, in a cardboard box in a New Jersey dump. With the help of local humane agents, Colwell caught and removed almost fifty additional dogs and cats from the vicinity.
Because so many practices in which animals were used and harmed continued to flourish despite the best efforts of the nation’s humane community, the investigations staff frequently found it necessary to revisit areas in which The HSUS had already invested substantial effort. In the late 1990s the Investigations section conducted investigations of puppy mills, rodeo practices, and the Tennessee Walking Horse industry, all longstanding concerns that several generations of HSUS investigators had targeted in their work. However, the section also incorporated investigations focused on emerging concerns, like the slaughter of Canada geese by municipal authorities, the launching of an intensive egg-production facility by a shady entrepreneur, and the evolving trade in frogs for dissection.

Throughout its history the section perpetuated The HSUS’s long commitment to positive collaboration with prosecutors and other law enforcement personnel in relevant cases. The HSUS provided investigative support and evidence, clarified the meaning and implications of anticruelty statutes, helped to identify targets for scrutiny, and sent its investigators out into the field with representatives of local societies and law enforcement agencies.

In the years following Rick Swain’s appointment, The HSUS centralized its investigative functions, provided the section with its own budget, and gave it autonomy to strike a balance among its own priorities, the opportunities for new areas of investigation that randomly arose, and the expressed needs of program staff for reliable information and evidence about ongoing or emerging forms of cruelty. In this way the investigative capabilities of The HSUS were integrated as components of a larger strategy.

At the same time, The HSUS took all reasonable steps to enhance its investigations team, adding skilled staff members with appropriate backgrounds in law enforcement, fraud investigation, and journalism, among other fields. In a world where laboratory animal suppliers, circus moguls, furriers, and agricultural interests spent a fortune on research, investigation, and other measures designed to discredit animal advocates, The HSUS responded by developing an Investigations section whose sophistication and professionalism had few equals in the nonprofit sector.

For fifty years, from its early efforts to publicize the highly visible cruelties of rodeos and soring, to its international investigations of the fur trade’s darkest secrets, there was almost no arena of The HSUS’s work that investigators did not influence through their activities. Their crucial contributions provided the facts and evidence needed to support the organization’s program work, legislative agenda, and ongoing efforts to reach the public with the facts about cruelty to animals.

The Classic Investigations and Campaigns

Rodeo

With the exception of The HSUS’s outstanding investigations of animal dealers, leading up to passage of the AWA (see chapter 3), few of its investigative activities before 1975 garnered more publicity than its persistent campaigning against rodeos and “bloodless bullfights.” In these efforts The HSUS demonstrated that it would go anywhere to challenge the cruelties of these events and use legal methods to suppress them.

Its efforts against rodeos dated back to the organization’s earliest years. The HSUS helped to organize the Wyoming Humane Society in 1958 and supported that organization’s efforts to compel reforms in rodeos held in the state. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Myers, Helen Jones, and other HSUS staff members regularly protested rodeos scheduled in Washington, D.C., and other communities.

In 1961 The HSUS petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to deny licenses to any stations that offer cruelty as entertainment, advancing the legal theory that this violated the requirement that such stations be operated “in the public interest.” Later The HSUS filed suit in federal court in Washington, D.C., to block NBC-TV from televising rodeos...
in any state where its practices may violate the anticruelty statutes. “The essence of our request for an injunction,” said Fred Myers, “is that the NBC method of telecasting rodeo cruelties is inimical to the public interest and is therefore a violation of the conditions under which television stations are granted licenses to use the publicly-owned radio frequencies.” In the end, both the FCC and the court declined to act upon The HSUS’s entreaties.

Several years later, after NBC broadcast a ninety-minute show on Spanish bullfights, complete with an announcer who repeatedly called the events “beautiful” and praised the human participants for their courage, The HSUS continued to protest to the FCC. “The nation’s most eminent and authoritative psychologists and psychiatrists are virtually unanimous in the opinion that such programs are adverse to the public interest—that they are psychologically harmful to children as well as adults,” The HSUS’s letter of protest read.

In 1965 HSUS investigators made a strong push to expose rodeo’s cruelties. Field representative Dale Hylton joined local societies in Nevada to protest the staging of bloodless bullfights in Las Vegas. Hylton publicized the events and their violation of Nevada’s anticruelty laws. Frank McMahon testified on behalf of a bill to prohibit rodeos in Ohio. Traveling to West Virginia, both men denounced a rodeo event in White Sulphur Springs and signed a complaint charging one contestant with cruelty after a calf’s leg was broken in a roping contest. “Cowboys seem to be very brave when it comes to jerking an animal around on the end of a rope, but not when it comes to facing a magistrate,” Hylton observed.

The HSUS appealed to the nation’s most prominent Texan, President Lyndon Johnson, and to state and local officials to intervene when a series of “bloodless” bullfights was scheduled at the Houston Astrodome in February 1966. At “bloodless” bullfights, bulls were tormented, precisely as in the more commonly known form of these spectacles, by horsemen and matadors in capes. Many animals were injured during these events, even though the bull was not actually killed. In his letter The HSUS’s Oliver Evans suggested that the events undercut the president’s anticrime initiative, not only through their sheer violence and degradation but also through their flouting of extant anticruelty laws in the state of Texas. The president declined to intervene, but the Texas state’s attorney filed an unsuccessful petition to stop the fights.

The HSUS targeted the Houston event because its sponsor was planning events of the same kind at arenas around the country. As part of The HSUS’s exploration of legal and other channels for the suppression of such events, Frank McMahon went to Houston with the aim of filing charges if any instances of demonstrable cruelty occurred. His presence was also part of The HSUS’s attempt to develop evidence that the bullfights did result in animals’ injury and the flow of blood. After witnessing banderillas pierce the Styrofoam protection guards covering the bulls’ shoulders and penetrate their flesh, McMahon went looking for a local judge to issue a warrant charging participants in the contest with cruelty, but he could find none.

In April 1966 McMahon’s efforts to thwart the staging of another bullfight, this one in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, touched off a major confrontation. McMahon and Kay Clausing of Camden’s Animal Welfare Association, an HSUS affiliate, generated sufficient publicity to drive the promoters across the river to Philadelphia. In a chaotic series of decisions, the promoters were first denied and then granted a permit from municipal authorities. The Pennsylvania SPCA and the Women’s SPCA sought to stop the exhibitions through a restraining order. The judge first denied this request but retained jurisdiction over the case. After attending the first night’s event to see for himself, he issued a next-day injunction barring “bloodless” bullfights as a “violation of law and a common public nuisance.”
Some time later staff members Patrick Parkes and Dale Hylton thwarted the effort to bring the bullfights to Washington, D.C., by meeting with the District of Columbia corporation counsel. After they showed him the film taken at the February event in Houston, the corporation counsel agreed that laws would be broken if the spectacles were staged in the nation’s capital.39

A similar battle by members of the Animal Protective League resulted in a favorable ruling in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. However, promoters of the “bloodless” bullfight then attempted to switch the event to Waukesha County, thirty miles from the city. They also sued Wisconsin officials and the Animal Protective League of Milwaukee to prevent them from seeking an injunction against the rescheduled fights. The HSUS sent Frank McMahon, who testified in the circuit court and stipulated that The HSUS would become a named party in the suit.40

Unfortunately, the judge ruled in favor of the bullfight promoters in the Wisconsin case and denied rights of inspection to The HSUS and the Animal Protective League. As McMahon entered the arena, the announcer denounced The HSUS and its efforts to stop the event. McMahon was assigned a police escort and was followed everywhere he went.41

The poorly attended event was another setback for promoters, but the fight was not over. “Unquestionably,” McMahon observed, “we are going to have to face many more attempts to schedule these spectacles…. We can guarantee these promoters that there will be a ‘fight to the death.’ It will be a fight by The HSUS and its friends to eliminate all forms of bullfighting from our country.”42

The HSUS had greater success in its efforts to ensure that bullfights would not be broadcast on television. In late 1966 the National Association of Broadcasters announced that arena bullfight events violated the Television Code to which approximately 65 percent of stations adhered.43

At the same time, half a dozen state legislatures were considering bills to prohibit the use of bucking straps, electric prods, and pain-producing devices in rodeos. In December 1966 Virginia campaigner Pearl Twyne described some of rodeo’s most blatant cruelties on the CBS-TV’s Evening News with Walter Cronkite.44

In 1967 the battle against both rodeos and “bloodless” bullfights heated up in half a dozen states. Humane advocates defeated rodeo and bullfight promoters in hearing rooms, legislative halls, and in the court of public opinion, registering decisive victories. Ohio’s legislature was a crucial battleground, and HSUS staff members provided powerful testimony to refute the claims of veterinarians appearing on behalf of the Rodeo Cowboys Association and other interests. Humane advocates succeeded in defeating the rodeo interests’ attempt to amend the Ohio law outlawing bucking straps and other pain-producing devices.45

Another round of the “bloodless” bullfight battle took place in Seattle, Washington, where a temporary restraining order put the fate of one such exhibition on hold until tried in a court of law. The HSUS’s Texas film footage strongly influenced the judge in the case. This time, promoters of the fight responded by suing advocates Gertrude Peck and former HSUS director Arthur Redman for $200,000 in damages.46

One of the most serious obstacles to success emerged when rodeo promoters began to cite the support their events received from AHA. Branding The HSUS as the most radical antirodeo group in the country, a representative of the Rodeo Cowboys Association stated that AHA “works with us in the spirit of full cooperation” and that if all organizations were like AHA, “we’d have no problems.” HSUS President Oliver Evans responded by condemning AHA’s Ohio humane activists and The HSUS’s Frank McMahon (right) demonstrated placement of a bucking strap to state Senator Charles Carney, member of the Ohio Senate’s Agriculture and State Agency Committee in 1967.
practice of “playing footsie” with rodeo interests, and Frank McMahon, commenting on an incident in Baltimore, observed, “strangely, our men seem to be able to see things that escape AHA agents, and the rodeo promoters seem scared that we see too much.”

In 1969 and 1970, The HSUS continued to push for legislation in several state legislatures. Working with the affiliated Youngstown, Ohio, Animal Charity League, The HSUS brought a successful court action against rodeo promoters who permitted illegal use of the bucking strap in their events.

The HSUS struck a great blow against rodeos with its formal petition to the FCC to prohibit the televised broadcast of rodeo on the grounds that the animals appear to be wild only as a result of an arsenal of devices used to inflict pain upon them. The contest, portrayed to the viewer as one between a lone and skillful cowboy and a wild and dangerous animal, “is a mere sham,” The HSUS’s petition stated.

Because weak anticruelty laws made it difficult to mount challenges to the events in some states, McMahon and others ultimately concluded that a federal prohibition of “bloodless” bullfights was the right solution. In 1971 Representative William F. Ryan (D-NY) introduced a bill to prohibit interstate shipment of any animal for use in steer busting, calf roping, or steer wrestling at public events. The bill also proposed a ban on the buying, selling, and shipment of bucking straps, electric prods, steer bells, and other devices designed to make animals appear wild.

By this time investigator Bernie Weller and field representative Guy Hodge were also monitoring the rodeo circuit. Hodge was surprised to discover that announcers at one Virginia rodeo told the audience that the horses used in bucking events were not wild. Weller (a onetime rodeo cowboy and livestock handler) attended the Klamath Falls, Oregon, rodeo, ill-famed in humane circles because sponsors rounded up wild horses by airplane for the rodeo and then sold them at auction afterward. Weller’s partner in the investigation was Elizabeth Sakach of the Animal Welfare League of Reno, Nevada, whose son, Eric, would forge a long career as an investigator and regional director for The HSUS.

In 1976, some five years after The HSUS’s 1971 petition was filed, the FCC denied it on the grounds of violation of the First Amendment and doubts about whether rodeos were cruel. At the same time, The HSUS continued to challenge both rodeos and bloodless bullfights in intermittent skirmishes, usually through its field offices. In 1985 the organization fought rodeo promoters in courtrooms and the Ohio legislature in a failing effort to defend the statute prohibiting rodeo cruelties, two decades after helping to secure its passage. The following year the Gulf States Regional Office assisted Texas officials trying to put a stop to the Huntsville prison rodeo.

In the mid-1980s, HSUS investigators also went to the Omak Stampede Rodeo in Washington State, whose signature event, the Suicide Race, featured twenty horses and their riders rushing down a steep incline at a heart-stopping pace. Investigators Kurt Lapham and Eric Sakach believed their presence as observers made a difference, and negative publicity about the continuing deaths of equine participants resulted in a wholesale flight from sponsorship by major corporations once tied to the stampede.

By the 1990s The HSUS was less active on the rodeo and bullfighting fronts. This was, in large measure, a result of the organization’s program and policy review work, which assigned a lower priority to these issues than to other program areas. However, regional offices continued to work on the issue. Staff members observed many problems at Cheyenne, Wyoming’s Frontier Days Rodeo, the so-called Daddy of ’em all.
Soring

The “soring” of horses provides another classic example of The HSUS’s early efforts to combine investigative work with hard-hitting public awareness campaigns and legislative redress. The focus of its efforts was the Tennessee Walking Horse, a breed descended from the southern plantation horse. A hidden cruelty lay behind the spectacle of the walking horse performing in a ring, with forelegs thrown high. Many owners and trainers produced the walker’s award-winning gait not through training but by blistering the horse’s legs, fetlocks, or feet through the use of chains, oil of mustard, oxide of mercury, nails, and other methods. Soring had proven to be impossible to stem through local or state anticruelty statutes.

The HSUS first began to report on its attempts to address horse show cruelties in 1960, policing events in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, usually in cooperation with Pearl Twyne of the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies. In Virginia, where the anticruelty statute prohibited animals from being “over-ridden and ill-treated,” The HSUS was able to file charges of cruelty against a nationally recognized horse trainer and one socially prominent exhibitor. The conviction of a Lynchburg horseman for exhibiting a horse with sored feet gained nationwide publicity.58

In late 1960 the Nashville Humane Association filed a complaint against three horse trainers for mistreating animals in their care. Believing that the case had national importance, The HSUS launched the first serious national campaign against cruelty to horses in show rings. From that time on, The HSUS was a leader in the effort to investigate and expose the cruel methods involved in the showing and/or sale of horses whose gait was altered through painful procedures.59

After the Nashville case, Fred Myers, Patrick Parkes, and John Miles Zucker spent many weekends in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia monitoring the shows for cruelty. HSUS staff members corresponded and met with various horse show officials and were able to discourage some of the worst soring methods, like barbed wire in the feet. However, lack of funds and recognition that the number of animals involved was small in comparison to other cruelties limited The HSUS’s pursuit of the campaign after 1964.60

By this time, however, Pearl Twyne and Joan Blue (d. 1986) of the AHPA were also very active on the issue, and The HSUS worked closely with them. In 1966 a bill to prohibit cruelty to Tennessee Walking Horses surfaced in the U.S. Congress.61 In 1968 the Virginia legislature banned the infliction of pain or injury to the front hooves or legs of horses for the purpose of competition.62 Twyne joined Blue in the effort to ensure successful enactment of Public Law 91-540 in 1970, treating the movement of “sored” horses as a matter of interstate commerce, to ban the use of blistering agents, burns, cuts, lacerations, or other cruel or inhumane methods or devices for modifying a horse’s gait through pain.63

The Horse Protection Act of 1970 prohibited interstate shipment of sored horses, and it included a prohibition on the use of blistering agents, tacks, chains, and other instruments as well as a provision to make owners, trainers, and horse show promoters liable for any sored horses under their responsibility. The new regulations created considerable tumult and controversy at horse shows, as The HSUS cooperated with government officials, local organizations, and other national societies in an effort to see the law strictly enforced. Enforcement fell to USDA, in part because the passage of the Horse Protection Act happened to coincide with the approval of amendments to the AWA that same year.64

In the years that followed, Frank McMahon teamed up with Joan Blue to observe walking horse contests, and they continued to uncover evidence of animals with raw and oozing sores in the shows. They found USDA’s enforcement efforts wholly inadequate. Of one show, McMahon reported, “The USDA has the right to pull pads and shoes from the horses, but this...
was not done, even in cases where horses were so sored that they limped or fell out of the show arena.”

At an oversight hearing in May 1973, McMahon told members of the Environment Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee that The HSUS was receiving regular complaints about flagrant soring of Tennessee Walking Horses, despite regulations that had been in effect for over a year. McMahon, who harshly criticized USDA inspection procedures in his testimony, was pleased to note that enforcement actions under the Horse Protection Act of 1970 rose after his appearance before the committee.

Unfortunately, this diligence in enforcement practices did not last long, and the situation got worse in one respect. “Back in the ’sixties, it wasn’t uncommon to see horses that were bleeding profusely right in the show ring,” Patrick Parkes, HSUS vice president for field services, recalled in 1988. “The abuses were much more apparent than they are today. You couldn’t attend a show without seeing scarred legs and bloody, open wounds.” By the time Parkes made this observation, the industry had introduced a greater sophistication, making use of corrosive chemicals like diesel fuel and mustard oil, shoeing the animals tightly, trimming hooves down to their sensitive tissue, and concealing sharp objects like glass and nails between a horse’s hoof and padded shoe.

In 1984 AHPA filed suit against USDA, charging apathetic enforcement of the law first passed in 1970 and then strengthened in 1976. Four years later a federal court ruled in AHPA’s favor, and USDA issued emergency regulations banning some of the objectionable practices. The Walking Horse industry—a $150 million concern that accounted for 4,500 jobs in Tennessee—quickly mobilized to fight.

In 2000 The HSUS was still fighting the cruelty of soring, as Tennessee Walking Horse enthusiasts made use of more subtle chemicals and anesthetics to mask the impact of their misconduct. Political lobbying—to render USDA oversight ineffectual—and deceptive tactics within and outside of the show ring were the industry’s stock in trade.

Wild Horses
The HSUS’s involvement with wild horse concerns dates back to the late 1950s, when it first placed its support behind Velma “Wild Horse Annie” Johnston’s crusade to save the wild horses and burros of the West from mustangers, who brutally captured them to sell to pet food manufacturers and rendering plants and ranchers who sought to crowd the animals off land they preferred to use for cattle grazing. Before Johnston began her crusade, the number of wild horses and burros fell from an estimated two million at the turn of the century to just tens of thousands. The HSUS supported Johnston’s 1959 campaign for a law to prohibit planes and trucks from rounding up wild equines.

In 1968 The HSUS filed suit against the Department of the Interior to stop the pending Bureau of Land Management (BLM) roundup and slaughter for dog food of a mustang herd in the Pryor Mountain region of Montana and Wyoming. Ultimately, Secretary of the Interior Morris Udall designated the Pryor Mountain area as a wild horse refuge, added acreage, and established a BLM committee (with Velma Johnston and Pearl Twyne as members) to determine the number of animals that the area could realistically support.

In 1969 The HSUS again came to the rescue of wild horse populations when heavy snows trapped three hundred mustangs in central and northern Nevada. Nel-
lis Air Force Base officials donated a C-54 aircraft and volunteers to load and fly a planeload of hay to the starving animals. The HSUS’s Frank McMahon was on the scene, using a “spotter” plane to locate the trapped herds.73

With the passage of the Wild, Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, the terms of battle for wild horse protection changed dramatically. Now, the nation’s wild horses were to be “managed and protected” by the federal government. If thinning out herds was necessary, it was to be done with care, and a program was to be set up to provide suitable homes for them.74

In 1972 The HSUS honored Johnston with its highest honor, the Joseph Wood Krutch Medal. However, as all parties knew, the passage of the 1971 Act did not ensure the horses’ protection from the assaults of ranching interests. Threats to the wild horse population continued to surface, as ranchers exploited every opportunity to reduce the horse population.75

In 1973 regional staff member Frantz Dantzler and wildlife representative Hal Perry saved twenty-nine horses from slaughter at a dog food cannery after investigating an incident in which seven wild horses had been driven off a cliff in Idaho. Johnston drew them into the case after getting a tip from an informant who had participated in an illegal roundup and slaughter of horses with a helicopter. Another twenty-five horses had died as a consequence of shock and injury en route to a canning company in Nebraska, to which HSUS investigators traced their shipment. In Washington, D.C., Frank McMahon pressed this issue with officials of the BLM, as The HSUS tried to penetrate the lies that enveloped the story of how the horses had died. HSUS investigators provided shocking evidence of cruelty, lack of compliance with federal regulations, and illegal conduct in the episode, whose specific details were far more grisly than they felt comfortable reporting on for HSUS News. Fifteen months after the incident, the federal government had taken no action, and The HSUS and AHPA brought suit against USDA and the Department of the Interior to gain access to their documented investigations of the BLM’s failure to enforce the Wild, Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act. John Hoyt publicly criticized the government’s inaction in a statement before the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, stating that its lack of initiative in the matter “has resulted in a cruel hoax being perpetrated on the public by leading them to believe the law is now being effectively enforced.”76

Dantzler condemned the peculiar brand of “Idaho justice” that led the state’s brand inspector to declare that the surviving horses were owned by the very ranchers responsible for the grisly roundup. The horses bore no brand marks, and the ranchers had failed to observe procedures required by the Wild, Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act. In a public reaction to the ruling, Dantzler reviewed the details of the roundup, declaring The HSUS’s dismay “that the horses may be returned to the same people who clamped hog rings in their noses, slit the throats and cut off the legs of horses whose hooves got caught among rocks, and drove uncooperative horses off a cliff.”77

In late 1974 a federal judge ruled for the government in the suit filed by The HSUS and AHPA, even as western ranchers sought to have the Act declared unconstitutional. Dantzler’s increasing knowledge of the roundup program, and his experience with government officials’ obfuscation, led him to charge that the BLM was “a slave to cattle raisers’ vested interests.”78 In 1976 The HSUS and AHPA teamed up to secure a permanent injunction to stop the BLM-authorized roundup in Challis, Idaho.79

In 1977, Dantzler, then HSUS director of field services, testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Resources in efforts to protect the gains embodied in the Act. The
following year, Dantzler and Marc Paulhus testified before a similar House committee to fight
off attempts to weaken humane safeguards previously incorporated into the BLM’s Adopt-a-
Horse Program. The HSUS investigators presented graphic evidence of the horrors and the
practical deficiencies of the BLM program, especially the wholesale adoption of horses by indi-
cividuals who later sold them to slaughterhouses, rendering plants, and rodeos for profit.80

Dantzler showed the House committee evidence of serious deficiencies in the BLM’s
own Palomino Valley Holding Area near Reno, Nevada. In one year the BLM had buried
three hundred of two thousand horses near the site, and it was not hard to discover why. It
was no place to keep horses. The corrals were packed with mud, and the animals had no pro-
tection from the cold and rain. The pens lacked drainage, and the lower sections were flood-
ed. The animals had to eat their hay off of the muddy ground. Many horses showed signs of
disease, but there was no veterinary treatment provided and no effort made to separate the
healthy from the sick animals.81

Eventually, The HSUS joined with AHPA in a lawsuit against the Department of the Inter-
ior, charging that the BLM had mismanaged its wild horse program with terrible conse-
quences for the animals it rounded up. The suit asked that the BLM be forced to conduct
an environmental impact study before every roundup and that it be enjoined from con-
ducting any further roundups until its own holding area was managed humanely, in ac-
cordance with the law. The suit also sought to halt the abuse of wild horses under the
adoption program.82

In January 1979 Dantzler provided infor-
mation to ABC-TV’s 20/20 for a feature seg-
ment on the BLM’s mismanagement of the
Adopt-a-Horse Program. Collaboration with
AHPA remained very strong. In 1980 The
HSUS and AHPA filed suit to stop eradica-
tion of the burros in the Grand Canyon.83

By the mid-1980s, the wild horse issue
had become a program concern of The
HSUS’s Wildlife section and was also the subject of legislative initiatives at the federal level.
In August 1984 the campaign for wild horses hit rock bottom, as the Ninety-eighth Congress
tacked on nearly $17 million to a Department of the Interior appropriations bill for the pur-
pose of rounding up more than seventeen thousand horses and burros—more than 35 per-
cent of the estimated number on the nation’s public lands. Western senators, led by Senator
James McClure (R-ID), advanced dubious claims about the impact of wild horses and burros
on the public lands in support of a new strategy that made use of the appropriations process
rather than seek expanded authority for the BLM to sell the horses it did round up.84

After the BLM went through the $16.7 million windfall that resulted from McClure’s gam-
bit, a terrible glut of unadopted animals ensued. The capacity of adoption programs to deal
with this population was limited, and the excess numbers set the stage for additional legisla-
tion granting the BLM the authority to sell the horses to anyone it chose—including rodeo
and slaughterhouse interests.85 Representative Bill Green (D-NY) had introduced provisions
in the House appropriations bill to delete support for roundup and sale authority, but his
move was blocked on procedural grounds.86

In 1990, almost two decades after the passage of legislation designed to halt American
ranchers’ war against wild horses, it was still going on, under the hapless auspices of the BLM.
The HSUS continued to highlight the injustice of the agency’s decimation of a population of
just tens of thousands of horses while some 4.5 million domestic livestock roamed the lands. Against this onslaught The HSUS advocated a balanced approach that included recognition of the place of wild horses and burros on public lands.87

**Chincoteague**

As the history of its rodeo investigations suggested, The HSUS never let the argument of tradition prevent it from taking action against cruelty. But this commitment was also put to the test in other instances, like that of the Chincoteague, Virginia, horses, purportedly descended from those who survived the shipwreck of a Spanish galleon carrying wild mustangs to the New World in the sixteenth century, but more likely the descendants of animals turned loose by early settlers. Pony penning had its origins in livestock owners’ need to claim, brand, break, and harness animals. By the early eighteenth century, penning had become an annual ritual event, festive and time honored.

The swim across the Assateague Channel (which separates the thirty-seven-mile-long sandbar off the Maryland-Virginia coast from the community of Chincoteague on the Delmarva Peninsula) dates from 1925. It developed from the decision to stage a fund-raising carnival for the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company in conjunction with the pony penning event. Attending crowds swelled by the late 1930s, and in 1947 the fire company began to add animals to the herd through purchases. The horses were permitted to graze on the recently established Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Marguerite Henry’s children’s classic *Misty of Chincoteague* (1947) brought international attention to the pony penning event.

By the late 1960s, the auction sponsored by the fire department was the occasion of many disturbing practices. It was particularly brutal in 1971, the year Frank McMahon, Phyllis Wright, and Donna Truslow saw fights break out among stallions defending their bands, day-old foals separated from their mothers and sold, horses denied proper food and water, successful bidders carrying away their ponies without supervision, and not a single veterinarian on hand. Buyers jammed foals into trunks and backseats of cars, attendants beat animals with bullwhips and wooden boards, and firemen subjected the horses to harsh branding. The crowd gained further entertainment from the staging of “wild pony rides.”

In the early 1970s, The HSUS received permission from the Department of the Interior to supervise the roundup on Assateague. Subsequent negotiations led to other modifications, including the prohibition of sales of foals without teeth, the end of hot branding of adult horses, the segregation of stallions on Assateague Island, and the requirement that buyers provide adequate means of transporting their new horses from the site. Phil Steward continued to monitor the event during the mid-1970s and judged that organizers were doing a better job of complying with humane standards.89

When HSUS investigator Mark Paulhus went to Chincoteague in 1981, however, he discovered many of the agreed upon rules being flouted by the firemen. Foals as young as two or three weeks old were being auctioned off, and they were still being carted off in vans, box trucks, and other ill-equipped vehicles. Mares were forced into rodeo-type chutes, where those who wanted to test their “riding skills” mounted them as they were let into the corral.”

In the late 1980s, HSUS investigator Gail Eisnitz monitored the pony penning at Chincoteague. By then, The HSUS had added the charge that the fire company failed to provide the ponies with appropriate year-round care to its bill of indictments. The fire com-
pany had also failed to ensure the presence of a veterinarian for a few years running, and several mares collapsed and died during the pony penning without receiving any veterinary care.91

Sadly, the problems at Chincoteague still existed in the early twenty-first century, as the event’s boosters annually demonstrated their inability to supervise it. Volunteer firemen resorted to harsh and stressful handling practices, and impulse buyers continued to carry animals away in their vehicles under terms that HSUS attorneys believed were in violation of Virginia law. Field Service and Video department personnel videotaped the recurrent problems and sent the tapes to the U.S. Fish and Wild Service (FWS) in an effort to have the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company’s permit rescinded for grazing ponies on the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge during the year. The HSUS’s vigilance at the Chincoteague event had itself become a tradition.92

Dog Racing

In 1954 the principal companion animal issues addressed by The HSUS were the need for spay-neuter in keeping the companion animal population in check, the campaign to end the handing over of pound and shelter animals to medical and scientific institutions, and the establishment of the animal shelter in the United States as a professional, well-managed enterprise. By the late 1960s, the organization was becoming involved with burgeoning threats to animals—like animal fighting and dog racing—exploitive and harmful practices and industries that not only harmed companion animals but exacerbated the problem of animal overpopulation.

Greyhound racing found its way onto The HSUS’s agenda in the early 1970s. While racing was legal in only nine states, promoters were planning an aggressive program to see it legalized in eleven others. For many years the training methods used included the chasing and tearing apart of live rabbits as lures. After five or six “coursings” in which the dogs were allowed to chase and kill a live rabbit in an enclosed field, they advanced to the track, where a live rabbit was hung by the back legs to a mechanical lure.93

In 1975 investigator Bernie Weller gave HSUS News readers a “behind-the-scenes” look at the training of racing greyhounds, describing his undercover experience at a Texas track where dogs trained for racing in other states. It was a grim account of terrible animal suffering. In 1977 other HSUS investigators went into the field to gather definitive evidence of the use of live rabbits for “coursing” greyhounds. Coursing had its own fan base, as spectators watched and wagered while dogs chased down jackrabbits and killed them, and these so-called training events also provided a convenient venue for selling, trading, and leasing racing dogs.94

The deaths of dogs who consistently fell behind the pack was another intolerable consequence of greyhound racing. Observers estimated that some 50 percent of the dogs bred for racing died before they reached the track because they failed to demonstrate the characteristics necessary for success. Their lack of socialization sometimes made them unsuitable for adoption, and humane officials suspected that dog breeders and trainers killed the animals they no longer valued to avoid the veterinary fees for euthanasia.95

Focusing on the National Greyhound Association meet in Abilene, Kansas, The HSUS asked the state’s attorney general to halt the dog versus rabbit events by invoking Kansas’s anticruelty statute. When he refused HSUS investigators asked USDA to declare coursing an “animal fighting venture,” specifically prohibited by the AWA. USDA turned the matter over to the Department of Justice, and another year went by.96

Compelling photographic evidence of cruelty, such as this photo of greyhounds pursuing a live domestic rabbit being used as a lure at a training track in Florida, was a major contribution by HSUS investigators, including Gail Eisnitz.
In 1978 investigator Frantz Dantzler went back to Kansas with an ABC camera crew and reporter Geraldo Rivera in tow. After 20/20 showed footage of the event, the National Greyhound Association (NGA) outlawed the use of live rabbits in its coursing events. Although it did not pass, proposed federal legislation generated contemporaneous pressure that drove the NGA’s decision, even as The HSUS remained critical of proposals that did not prohibit “coursing” in private. Throughout the decade The HSUS led the fight to stop the introduction of greyhound racing or its augmentation through wagering in California and several other states where it was under consideration.

For a short while, dog racing even threatened to enter the District of Columbia as part of a gambling initiative proposed in 1979. The HSUS fought this proposal, just as it had opposed a 1973 campaign to bring the activity to Robert F. Kennedy Stadium as a means of reducing the stadium’s construction debt.

The HSUS continued its efforts to push reforms in the world of greyhound racing in the 1980s. In 1982 and 1983, John Hoyt and other staff members met with industry representatives to press for the adoption of artificial lures instead of live rabbits and other animals in training. In those years, too, the mass breeding and ultimate destruction of greyhounds moved to the forefront of humane concerns. Breeding exacerbated the general problem of animal overpopulation in the country, and industry operators relied on a supply of bullets to eliminate unwanted animals from their inventory.

Throughout the 1980s HSUS staff members worked to thwart the goals of the industry. One of the emerging threats The HSUS sought to fend off was the legalization of dog racing on Native American reservations and trust lands. Regional investigators continued to monitor greyhound racing, cooperating with FWS agents to suppress the sale and interstate transportation of jackrabbits for “coursing,” following up on complaints about greyhound breeders and kennels, and providing evidence that illegal training of greyhounds with live rabbits as lures was common at training tracks.

By 1996 there were some signals that the racing industry had lost the popularity that had fueled its growth. The industry’s own statistics indicated that attendance had declined and state gambling revenues tied to the racetrack had decreased by 25 percent and that it was losing its overall share of the American gambling market. Even so, the industry continued its efforts to extend operations, expand betting opportunities, and cash in on the use and suffering of animals.

Doggfighting
There has never been a time when humane advocates did not treat the spectacle of animals fighting each other for humans’ entertainment as a serious concern. In spite of the fact that dogfighting was usually considered to be illegal under state anticruelty statutes and was explicitly prohibited as a felony in a handful of states, it thrived in many locales. In fact, it was an extensive interstate activity in which dogs, spectators, equipment, and promotional literature crossed state lines with complete impunity. Animal fighting magazines and publications boldly made use of U.S. Postal Service second-class mailing privileges without repercussions. Indeed, The HSUS once presented congressional representatives with evidence that the most popular of dogfighting magazines, Pit Dogs, was being produced on a Department of Defense lithographic press, with paper taken from government supplies.

In the mid-1970s The HSUS’s Frank McMahon likened dogfighting to an organized crime
operation, one that required concerted cooperation on the part of law enforcement officials at all levels. State-by-state enforcement varied according to the disposition of police and judicial officials, and The HSUS uncovered some shocking examples of law enforcement agents shielding animal fighters from scrutiny and prosecution. In 1974 The HSUS concluded that a federal ban on dogfighting was the best way to proceed, and it found willing sponsors in Representative Thomas Foley (D-WA) and Senator Harrison Williams (D-NJ). Williams’s bill, introduced in September, made dogfighting a federal offense by prohibiting the use of interstate commerce for transporting dogs trained or intended to be used to fight other dogs. Under the influence of The HSUS, Williams included provisions to prohibit activities preparatory to a fight (such as breeding, training, and sale of dogs for fighting), the manufacture and sale of training paraphernalia, the contribution of a site, and the use of the mails for promotional purposes.

While Williams’s bill and related measures went nowhere, advocates also considered the option of extending the authority of the AWA to cover dogfighting. This occurred in 1976, as the AWA was amended to incorporate a ban on animal fighting ventures. However, for years no funds were budgeted for enforcement.

In the meantime, however, HSUS investigators continued to assist law enforcement officials with the infiltration, raiding, exposure, and prosecution of dogfighters. In late 1979 Marc Paulhus and Eric Sakach infiltrated an Arkansas convention where state and federal law enforcement agencies subsequently arrested 250 animal fighting enthusiasts and seized an arsenal of weapons, a large cache of illicit drugs, and over half a million dollars in bets.

The following year The HSUS brought suit against USDA and the Department of Justice for absolute failure to enforce AWA provisions designed to prohibit animal fighting. As part of its response to the government’s motion for dismissal on the ground that The HSUS lacked standing to sue, The HSUS argued that it was a legally proper suit because “the Animal Welfare Act creates... legal rights for animals, i.e., the right not to be cruelly treated in fighting ventures, [however] the animals themselves have no ‘forum’ in which to assert the rights to protection and freedom from abuse that the Act was intended to afford.” Unfortunately, in January 1981 a U.S. District Court judge dismissed the action, holding that the Court did not have the basic power “to oversee or second guess the allocation of prosecutorial resources.”

In the early 1980s, The HSUS focused its efforts on Ohio, which had passed an effective law making it a felony not only to promote or participate in dogfights but also to be a spectator at one, to own or train a fighting dog, or to accept money for admission to a dogfight. HSUS investigators worked hard in support of the bill, Great Lakes Regional Director Sandy Rowland testified on its behalf, and The HSUS cooperated with the Columbus Police Department’s Organized Crime Unit to penetrate the state’s dogfighting fraternity.

Throughout the 1980s representatives of The HSUS joined law enforcement in many communities on raids and investigations. In 1981 Bob Baker, Rowland, and regional investigator Tim Greyhavens played principal roles in a major dogfighting bust in southern Illinois, one that involved the largest contingent of Illinois state troopers since the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. In 1983 Baker and investigator Paul Miller helped to bust Jack Kelly, editor of the dogfighting magazine Sporting Dog Journal. In 1988 Sakach helped Colorado authorities to bring to justice the self-described “Bad Bob,” curtailing his career as an animal fighting entrepreneur. The same year Rowland and other HSUS personnel helped to bring the curtain down on a national underground fighting ring in southwestern Ohio. It was a significant raid in which the FBI played a large role, and law enforcement authorities seriously explored—for the first and only time—a prosecution of dogfighting under the AWA.
During the 1990s HSUS field personnel continued to assist law enforcement authorities with major raids on dogfights. Police and prosecutors, it appeared, were becoming more cognizant that the people who committed violent crimes against animals were frequently involved in violent activities directed at other human beings. Moreover, as Sakach suggested in 1993, "The police are learning that your local dogfight or cockfight is a likely place to meet up with lots of people with warrants outstanding for their arrest, as well as a likely site for drug dealing, gambling, illegal weapons, and other crimes."109

After a quarter-century of frustration at USDA’s failure to focus on animal fighting cases (since 1976, the federal government had pursued just three dogfighting cases and no cockfighting cases at all), The HSUS launched a new legislative initiative against animal fighting. In May 2002, under the leadership of Senior Vice President for Communications and Government Affairs Wayne Pacelle, The HSUS secured legislation closing the loopholes on cockfighting and dogfighting in the AWA. In the new century, the battle shifted toward funding for AWA enforcement efforts.110

Cockfighting
HSUS investigators and lobbyists played an important role in the passage of 1976 legislation that barred interstate shipment of animals and birds for fighting and forbade use of the U.S. mail for promoting illegal animal competitions. The legislation secured fell short of the desired prohibition of cockfighting under the AWA. The law as passed contained a loophole on cockfighting, permitting the shipment of fighting cocks to Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, where such events remained legal, as well as to U.S. territories and protectorates like Guam and Puerto Rico and to foreign countries, including Mexico and the Philippines.111

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, with cockfighting on the rise, both national and regional investigators participated in law enforcement raids. In 1987 HSUS staff members observed that cockfighting was illegal in forty-five states and a felony in fourteen of them, while thirty-two states made it unlawful to attend a cockfight. Even so, investigators noted, in Arizona, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, cockfighting was not only practiced openly but was also a legal form of entertainment. The following year The HSUS launched an anticockfighting campaign to seek its prohibition in those states and to strengthen legislation in states like Kansas, Missouri, and Virginia, where extant statutes were ineffectual. A 1989 raid in Oregon, stemming from an informant’s tip that The HSUS provided to law enforcement authorities, resulted in the arrests of more than three hundred people and a racketeering charge against one cockfighting derby impresario. A 1991 southeastern Ohio raid netted the membership list for the United Gamefowl Breeders Association.112

In the late 1990s, The HSUS launched a new round of efforts to suppress cockfighting, working on two 1998 state-level cockfighting initiatives that successfully outlawed the pursuit in Missouri and Arizona. At the federal level, The HSUS sought to close the loophole that enriched those who bred birds in states where the activity was prohibited and shipped them to states where animal fighting remained legal. In 1999 the Government Affairs department persuaded Wayne Allard (D-CO), the Senate’s only veterinarian, to sponsor a bill to prohibit interstate ship-
ments. The HSUS also secured the agreement of Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN), a frequent adversary in other arenas, to sponsor a companion bill. In a complex legislative battle, The HSUS and its congressional allies spared the anticockfighting provision from the fate of other animal-protection measures that opponents successfully "skinned" from the 2001 farm bill. HSUS investigators provided additional momentum for the cause by assisting law enforcement officials in a string of raids on larger cockfighting operations around the country.113

In 2002 The HSUS gained the support of Governor Frank Keating and wrestler Bill Goldberg, an Oklahoma native, for an initiative to outlaw cockfighting in the state. The two also helped The HSUS to defeat a countermeasure that proposed to double the number of voter signatures needed to place any animal-protection initiatives before the citizenry. "This measure creates two classes of citizenship in the initiative petition process," Keating declared. "It is unfair and undemocratic." The HSUS's initiative also survived a court challenge by the cockfighting lobby.114 The HSUS waged the fight against cockfighting on another front, too, asking USDA to recognize and address the fact that cockfighting magazines like The Gamecock, Grit and Steel, and The Feathered Warrior were using the U.S. mail to promote cockfights, in violation of federal law. 115

**Dog and Cat Fur**

In the late 1990s, the HSUS Investigations section successfully identified the widespread use of dog and cat fur in global garment, accessory, and trinket production and provided the American public with disturbing evidence of the callous practices that characterized the industry. In source countries such as China, the Philippines, and Thailand, HSUS investigators saw dogs and cats held in barren, unsanitary compounds and killed by horrific methods and followed the trail of blood, death, and fur to retail establishments in half a dozen countries—including the United States. Cagey fur industry marketers designated the products with misleading labels to obscure their origins.116

In December 1998, through coverage in the *Washington Post* and on the television news-magazine *Dateline NBC*, the shocking details of the eighteen-month investigation caused an uproar that pushed at least one major retail outlet to immediate action. When Burlington Coat Factory learned that it was selling coats trimmed with dog fur, the company promptly responded by removing the offensive items from its racks.117

Working with Government Affairs and Companion Animals, HSUS investigators helped to publicize the terrible details of the industry, pressuring the government to require labels that clearly identify products made from dog and cat fur. The HSUS also enlisted the support of television host Montel Williams and other celebrities in bringing the subject to national attention. In 2000 the U.S. Congress passed the Dog and Cat Protection Act, banning the sale of such products, as a direct result of The HSUS's campaign. Later, the effort to ban such products moved to Europe through the efforts of HSI.

**Karakul**

In December 2000 *Dateline NBC* made its viewers aware of The HSUS's year-long investigation of a fur industry secret—the slaughter of some four to five million newborn and unborn lambs for expensive garments made from their fur. With two animals, a mother and her baby, forced to die for each pelt, karakul (the common commercial designation of the lamb pelts) offered a disturbing twist on the question sometimes posed to those who wear fur: "How many animals had to die for that coat?" HSUS investigators traveled to the central Asian nation of Uzbekistan to demonstrate the falseness of industry claims about the production of...
karakul and to document the ruthlessness of its production in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Namibia, and South Africa, among other countries. The investigation yielded compelling videotape evidence of the grisly dimensions of the karakul trade, giving animal protectionists worldwide an opportunity to challenge designers, retailers, and the buying public with the evidence of what one HSUS investigator called “an obscenely frivolous waste of life.”

The Regional Office System

In the early years of The HSUS, Field Services encompassed virtually all of the organization’s investigative functions, disaster relief activities, and direct assistance to local humane societies. After 1971, when The HSUS transformed its branch system into a network of regional offices, the Department of Field Services became responsible for their oversight, which included helping to implement The HSUS’s national programs, responding to the needs of its constituents and partners around the country, and keeping the central office apprised of pertinent developments in the field. Over the years, the regional offices served, as Vice President for Field Services Melissa Seide Rubin put it in 2003, as “the eyes, ears, and voice of The HSUS.”

The HSUS regional office system grew out of a state branch network that Fred Myers championed in the late 1950s. Through the branches, Myers hoped to find, enroll, and mobilize those who supported The HSUS’s goals, wherever and however they were situated. Together, they would make The HSUS a dynamic vehicle for the abolition of animal suffering through the eradication of cruelty’s causes. They would be particularly useful for advancing the work in communities where economic, geographic, or other reasons made the organization of a traditional humane society difficult. The result, Myers hoped, would be a greater unity of effort and a stronger humane movement.

At the same time, in an era when The HSUS’s total staff never numbered more than several dozen people, branch employees deepened the organization’s capacities, frequently assisting their colleagues in other parts of the country. In 1965 New Jersey HSUS staff member Don Maxfield testified in support of successful humane slaughter legislation in Ohio and Indiana. Belton Mouras, whether working in Denver, Salt Lake City, or California, also traveled the country to testify for humane slaughter and other initiatives.

The program suffered in part from the limited funds available to The HSUS in the 1960s. Even so, all of the branches had achieved a few victories for animals, and in some cases they had done much more. The New Jersey branch (1958), for example, with its energetic president, Jacques Sichel, did fulfill Fred Myers’s vision of a branch that recruited members and conducted program work. Sichel and his wife, Miriam, began in 1958 with a shoebox and 250 file cards as a membership base. Seven years later the New Jersey branch had almost five thousand members and a paid staff, the result of extraordinary personal involvement by Sichel and other branch directors.

The branch waged a strong but unsuccessful decade-long struggle for the passage of humane slaughter legislation in the state and sued to stop the annual deer hunt at the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The branch worked hard in support of a state bill to prohibit the steel-jawed leghold trap, too, and filed a lawsuit challenging the makeup of the New Jersey State Fish and Game Council, arguing that the selection of members should not have been delegated to special interest groups with an interest in promoting hunting and fishing.

The New Jersey branch also provided essential support for The HSUS’s New York office, which operated intermittently between the 1950s and 1970s under the guidance of Helen Jones, Cleveland Amory, Charles Herrick, and others. One of the New York office’s highest-profile actions was its display at the 1964 World’s Fair. It was there that Nina Austenberg, who went on to many years of service in The HSUS’s Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, first came
into contact with the organization.123

While it was not recruiting many members into the national HSUS, the Utah branch (1960), under the leadership of Harold Gardiner, was operating an exemplary animal shelter facility in Salt Lake City, handling tens of thousands of animals every year, conducting investigations that resulted in cruelty charges and convictions, and undertaking some other humane work as well. In 1963 branch members defied a pound seizure law they deemed to be unconstitutional. After joining the HSUS board of directors in the 1970s, Gardiner served for over a quarter of a century. In addition, one longtime HSUS employee "went to school" at the Utah branch. Frantz Dantzler was its shelter manager from 1964 to 1972, gaining valuable experience that he would bring to the national headquarters and to field work a few years later.124

The Connecticut branch (1957), for its part, had waged a long struggle for humane slaughter legislation during the early 1960s. Later, branch members carried out extensive investigations of the abuse of live animals at science fairs and in the classroom. The branch also devoted its efforts toward the acquisition of a property for conducting educational work, an initiative that had extremely positive consequences for The HSUS in later years. James C. Shaw (d. 1988) and his wife, Bettsy, helped to lay the groundwork for the acquisition and development of property owned by their friend, Norma Terris. Ultimately, this property became the headquarters for both the New England Regional Office and NAAHE (see chapter 6). In addition to the Shaws and Terris, the Connecticut branch produced K. William Wiseman, who would go on to become chairman of the HSUS board in the 1990s; national HSUS board members Charlotte Griswold and Everett Smith; and Richard K. Morris of Trinity University, an early advisor on humane education and classroom use of animals who also helped to organize the 1976 benchmark conference, "On the Fifth Day."125

The California branch (1958) had also worked hard on humane slaughter legislation that passed in 1959. In the late 1960s, the branch protested the threatened burning of dogs as a protest against the Vietnam War and fought off a proposal to introduce dog racing to the state. Longtime HSUS investigator Bernie Weller and regional office director Charlene Drennon got their start as employees of the branch.126

Like the other state chapters, the Minnesota branch (1959) campaigned for a state humane slaughter law, securing the nation's second such statute in 1959. It was also responsible for an important revision of the Minnesota anticulteuly statute that incorporated a requirement that humane shelter be provided for domestic animals in both winter and summer. The law relieved judges, prosecutors, and humane officers of the burden of having to determine just how much heat or cold an animal could tolerate, and the branch actively sought to see it enforced. However, by 1970 the branch was barely functional, with few members, virtually no assets, and little program activity, when Hoyt conducted an assessment study after taking office.127

Ultimately The HSUS's experience with building and sustaining branches was a mixed legacy. Hoyt quickly moved to end the branch system in favor of a regional office arrangement and set The HSUS on a course of identifying the best locations to situate them. In July 1971 The HSUS established a Great Lakes Regional Office in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and appointed John H. Inman to direct it. In July 1972 the Rocky Mountain Regional Office opened in Salt Lake City, serving Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Idaho. The Gulf States Regional Office in Corpus Christi came into existence in 1972 through the generosity of the Earl C. Sams Foundation, where trustees Gladys Sams Porter and Dodie Hawn committed to support a re-
Regional office for its first three years. In 1973 The HSUS opened a West Coast Regional Office in Sacramento, California, to serve California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. The HSUS also operated a New York City information office intermittently during the 1960s and early 1970s.128

Several other regional offices grew out of the discarded branch structure. The Connecticut branch became the New England Regional Office, the Utah branch was ultimately incorporated into the framework of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office (and later the North Central Regional Office), and the New Jersey branch ultimately became the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. In many cases, branch staff members continued their work as members of the regional office system.

The new arrangement brought impressive early results. In 1973 regional staff members visited more than three hundred public pounds and humane society shelters, conducted nearly two hundred investigations, reached over 20 million people through publicity efforts, handled approximately eleven thousand letter and telephone inquiries, and spoke before 250 audiences.130

One important difference between the branch and regional office systems was that staffing decisions would now be made in Washington by executive staff, instead of by regional boards of directors, as under the old arrangements. Over the years, this gave John Hoyt, Patrick Parkes, Patricia Forkan, and other officials who did the hiring a chance to set general standards for the positions of regional director, regional investigator, and program coordinator, the most common openings available in the regions.

A few regional office staff members, like Nina Austenberg, Frantz Dantzler, Charlene Drennon, John Dommers, and Bernard Weller, came from the old HSUS branches. During the 1970s Hoyt, a minister himself, hired former clergymen, including Donald Cashen, Donald Coburn, John H. Inman, and Douglas Scott, who, he judged, brought a good combination of skills in administration, interpersonal relations, and communication to the regional office system.130

In time The HSUS would also recruit staff members for its regional offices, as it sometimes did for positions at its Washington headquarters, from the ranks of humane society personnel around the country. Dorothy Weller, for example, came to The HSUS from the Orlando Humane Society, where she had been executive director. She served in the regional offices in Corpus Christi, Texas, and the Great Lakes region before assuming a position at NAHEE, The HSUS’s youth education division, in 1994. Ann Gonnerman, Wendell Maddox, and Phil Steward all came from local organizations where they had developed good reputations, as did Phil Snyder and Bill Meade, who had managed well-run humane society shelter operations in South Bend, Indiana, and Arlington, Virginia, respectively.131

Other national organizations provided a source of regional office staff members, too. Sandy Rowland worked as a field representative for The Fund for Animals, and Dennis White (1946–2001) was the longtime director of AHA’s Animal Protection Division before becoming director of The HSUS’s Southwest Regional Office.

In hiring regional directors, Patrick Parkes recalled, The HSUS looked for individuals who were “humane-minded, in tune with animal welfare concerns” but who would be equipped...
to handle cruelty situations rationally and professionally. Good communications skills were also deemed to be essential. Experience with humane society and shelter operations, as well as some administrative experience, became increasingly important after 1980. Where possible, The HSUS also looked to its regional representatives for "double duty," encouraging them to lend their expertise to HSUS initiatives beyond the realm of their geographic responsibilities.

Regional personnel frequently served in a number of capacities and locations. Burton Parks, who once served in the Washington, D.C., headquarters as director of fund-raising, worked as The HSUS’s southern area representative. Based in Pinehurst, North Carolina, Parks assisted local shelters and animal control programs with the expansion of their fund-raising and community outreach efforts and tried to acquaint them with the technical assistance that The HSUS could provide. Bernard Weller (1932–1988) started at the HSUS California branch in 1968. As the organization expanded field operations in the 1970s, Weller helped to establish regional offices in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Corpus Christi, Texas, and Orlando, Florida. Frantz Dantzler came up through the ranks, first working at the Boulder, Colorado, affiliate in 1962. After serving as shelter manager there, he became director of the Utah state branch. Eventually he served in the West Coast Regional Office as its director. In 1975 he came to Washington to help with the expansion of HSUS regional programs, investigations, and services.

Periodic reassessments of the geographic coverage and impact of the regional offices resulted in changes over the years. A new regional office opened in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1983 to monitor activities in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Led by Marc Paulhus, an investigator since 1977, the new office brought the total number of HSUS regional offices to seven. In 1984 Frantz Dantzler gave up his position as director of investigations to open The HSUS’s new North Central Office in the Chicago area. The HSUS’s eighth regional office served Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri. In 1987 the Midwest Regional Office opened in Kansas City, Missouri, to serve Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa. In 1990 the South Central Regional Office opened in Knoxville, Tennessee. The HSUS added a Southwest Regional Office in 1995 and a Pacific Northwest Regional Office in 2001.

Regional diversity has shaped the evolution of the offices, as directors focused their work in ways responsive to the communities and states in which they had to operate. Working in an area in which wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and relocation are in high demand, for example, Northern Rockies Regional Director Dave Pauli earned respect through his promotion of humane trapping techniques. With animal control officers for only three of fifty-four counties in Montana, the Northern Rockies Regional Office also provided critical assistance to sheriff’s departments, municipal officials, and—where they existed—the region’s animal shelters. “In a region where rodeo and hunting are primary lifestyles,” Pauli told a reporter in 1996, “we take great pride in our having built a credible animal protection resource that is respected and used by most of our state government and law enforcement agencies.”

On several occasions, Field Services personnel confronted the challenges associated with working on tribal reservations, where state anticruelty laws do not apply and animal issues must be addressed through reservation-specific ordinances—if they are addressed at all. In such instances, The HSUS worked to ensure good diplomatic relations with the reservations, which are sovereign nations, recruited specialists to cover anticipated needs on-site, and con...
ducted preliminary assessments of law enforcement, community outreach, and social services bearing on the targeted concerns.136

The first recorded Native American project in which The HSUS participated was in its Navajo Nation initiative in 1991. Tribal leaders contacted The HSUS in late 1991, asking for help with an admitted proliferation of at-large strays. On just one day in July, animal control officers on the reservation—which covers sections of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah approximately the size of West Virginia—captured more than 350 dogs. The HSUS sought to identify and strengthen local forces working to address animal care and control problems, initiate humane education programs within the Navajo Nation, and bolster tribal animal control services.137

Some years later HSUS animal care professionals traveled to the Fort Peck Indian reservation in Montana to conduct a brief but intensive assistance and education campaign. An inordinately high ratio of dog bites in an area plagued by rabies meant that human victims were forced to undergo expensive postbite treatment. In 1994 tribal officials at Fort Peck, a forty- by eighty-mile expanse home to more than ten thousand Sioux and Assiniboine, contacted The HSUS for assistance. The assistance team transformed the powwow grounds building into a temporary animal shelter, from which it launched aggressive attempts to capture loose-roaming dogs for treatment, identification, and rescue: more than five hundred dogs came through the shelter during The HSUS’s time there. The HSUS also distributed leashes, collars, and literature to residents, issued spay-neuter certificates redeemable in Montana, and identified residents who had clearly contributed to the reservation’s animal control problem for special visits and follow-up.138

In the late 1990s, the Native Nations spay-neuter and pet wellness programs were expanded under the auspices of the Remote Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) program, The HSUS’s direct veterinary services arm, which began to provide spay-neuter and vaccination services for companion animals in poor, rural communities and on reservations. The RAVS team, frequently accompanied by regional office and HSI staff, also led veterinary assistance teams into some of the western hemisphere’s neediest areas, including locations in Mexico, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Bolivia.

In 2001 the Southwest Regional Office opened a spay-neuter clinic and animal wellness center in Dallas, Texas, to provide lower-cost services for thousands of dogs and cats. It provided one more example of the degree to which The HSUS’s regional offices were establishing their own identities and specialized programs.

As The HSUS’s fiftieth anniversary approached, staff members at its regional offices anchored the organization’s work in an ever-expanding range of ways. They sponsored a variety of training workshops. They provided advice to wildlife agencies and the general public as part of The HSUS’s Living with Wildlife programs. They participated in numerous direct relief activities, promoting alternatives to goose roundups, preventing turtle and other wetland wildlife from finding their way onto busy highways, and helping to rescue and relocate...
stranded and endangered animals. They helped to coordinate response to high-profile cruelty cases, offering rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators. They testified at and monitored trial proceedings. They were in the front lines of fights against greyhound racing, animal fighting, and other enthusiasms that harmed and killed animals.

The field offices also had important responsibilities for monitoring and advancing the status of state-level legislation. Such legislation covered a range of issues, but some common concerns in recent years have included the legal authority of shelters to directly acquire sodium pentobarbital for use in euthanasia; the promotion of lower-cost spay-neuter through license plate and other subsidy programs; higher standards of training for animal cruelty enforcement personnel; the safeguarding of caregivers’ rights in senior citizen housing and other contexts; legislation to restrict the ownership of exotic animals; and the upgrading of dog-fighting, cockfighting, and cruelty to animals from misdemeanor to felony status. The regional offices also played a role in the statewide ballot and referendum initiatives launched by The HSUS’s Government Affairs department in the 1990s.\(^\text{139}\)

**Disaster Relief**

In its first fifteen years, The HSUS did very little disaster relief work. It was simply not possible to divert funds toward such activity. In 1969, however, staff members began to involve themselves in substantial rescue and relief work. Early in the year, Frank McMahon supervised an emergency feeding operation to save a herd of wild horses in Nevada. In the spring Mel Morse went to the site of the Santa Barbara, California, oil spill as part of a team to assess the harm done to sea lions, seals, and other animals. In the fall McMahon traveled to disaster areas in Mississippi and Louisiana after Hurricane Camille destroyed fifty-one miles of homes and businesses along the Gulf Coast. McMahon assisted local societies with their response to the plight of the hurricane’s animal victims, addressing the urgent need for food and supplies, and helping the region’s animal shelters to maintain twenty-four-hour schedules during the height of the crisis.\(^\text{140}\)

In 1973, with demand for such services rising, Morse began to develop plans for a disaster relief program. Its goals included the establishment of an internal operation that would always be ready and able to respond to disaster situations, the initiation of overtures to coordinate relief services with the American Red Cross and other disaster preparedness agencies, and the organization of substantial efforts to influence decisions about how to care for animals in the case of disaster.

By 1976 Guy Hodge, then director of research and data services, had stepped in to coordinate The HSUS’s newly created disaster relief program. In its first year, the program responded to more than a dozen disasters. Hodge’s hobby of ornithology made him an ideal choice for leading bird rescue operations after oil spills, like those following the Chesapeake Bay spill of February 1976. Under his leadership The HSUS worked closely with officials of the U.S. Coast Guard, FWS, and EPA to coordinate relief efforts.\(^\text{141}\)

When the Teton Dam in southeastern Idaho collapsed in 1976, Frantz Dantzler went to the Snake River Valley to support regional agencies in their efforts to safeguard animals.
Dantzler’s experience underscored the value of such relief work in building goodwill with local communities. “The longer we stayed there, the more cooperation we experienced,” he reported. “Once the citizens and authorities discovered we were serious people with a real role in the disaster, they began to work hand in hand with us.”

Hodge, Phil Steward, and others also went into action in December 1976 after an oil tanker leaked 133,000 gallons of oil into the waters near Wilmington, Delaware, affecting the shorelines of three states. The HSUS team treated almost three hundred birds, including ruddy ducks, Canada geese, whistling swans, herring gulls, mallards, and black ducks.

Just one year after its creation, the disaster relief program received a special recognition award from the state of New Jersey for its crucial intervention in feeding waterfowl confronted with a serious food shortage due to extremely cold temperatures along coastal marshes. Thousands of wintering waterfowl in this critical area survived because of The HSUS’s contribution.

In 1977 Phil Steward and Marc Paulhus brought emergency supplies, animal food, and first aid equipment to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in the midst of the serious flood that jeopardized both human and animal lives. Steward and Paulhus joined the beleaguered staff of the six-month-old Humane Society of Cambria County, which had no power or running water. Individuals accepted at area relief centers found they were unable to keep their companion animals with them, and HSUS staffers began regular daily pickups with the promise that every animal would be returned once displaced citizens had reestablished their homes. While Steward and Paulhus were quick to credit the extraordinary dedication of shelter staff and local volunteers, who worked sixteen-hour days during the crisis, it was clear that The HSUS’s development of a response mechanism had made a difference. “We were able to perform a real service in Johnstown, because of [The] HSUS’s previous experiences with such catastrophes, and our knowledge of what must be done to help the animals in this unusual situation.”

During the 1980s, disaster response received less emphasis as The HSUS focused its attention on expanding other programs. Even so, regional and other staff members continued to respond to emergencies and to provide assistance when appropriate. Disaster relief services were channeled through The HSUS’s regional offices, which coordinated the provision of equipment with local authorities. The HSUS was providing local societies, civil defense agencies, and other organizations with support and advice necessary for community response. In 1980 Frantz Dantzler and Eric Sakach went to Washington State after the eruption at Mount St. Helens occurred, wiping out all life within a twelve-mile blast area. The two worked with humane society personnel to rescue and shelter shocked and injured animals found at the limits of the devastated zone.

In the 1990s Mel Morse’s hope for a program that could act upon the goal of placing animals within the scope of every emergency operations plan again be-
came a priority. The disaster preparedness plan of the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of The HSUS, in place since 1992, proved to be fortuitous in August 1993 after Hurricane Andrew devastated a portion of South Florida. SERO Director Laura Bevan lived in the area for a month, coordinating the development of a temporary animal shelter and emergency veterinary services. HSUS staffers worked with local officials, the U.S. Army’s 478th Civil Affairs Battalion, and others to distribute animal food, supplies, and water and to provide direct care and assistance. HSUS staff veterinarian Steve Kritsick, D.V.M., (1951–1994) and reservist Thelton McCorkle, D.V.M., toiled away in The HSUS’s makeshift compound, administering care to a long line of animal patients rushed to the facility with injuries suffered during the chaos that followed the disaster.147

The capacities of the SERO would be tested again in 1998, when severe drought led to wildfires that threatened both human and animal populations. By that time, the SERO had developed Disaster Animal Response Teams in Florida, ready to assist in evacuating animals and setting up temporary animal shelters.148

The HSUS’s disaster relief task force, comprised of staff members from a number of regional offices and The HSUS’s Washington, D.C., headquarters, also went into action when the Mississippi River overflowed its banks during the Great Flood of 1993. Water spilled over from teeming rivers and spread over land encompassing four states. A similar team effort ensued in the wake of severe flooding in western states caused by a tropical storm system in 1997 and again in 1999 when Hurricane Floyd hit North Carolina. HSUS staff members also assisted local authorities in the crises that attended the Malibu fires and California floods of the late 1990s.149

By 1995 The HSUS’s relationship with the American Red Cross had coalesced, and the Red Cross sent out copies of the HSUS-produced disaster response video, *The Forgotten Victims*, to three hundred of its chapters. The following year the two organizations co-produced a brochure on how those with companion animals could prepare for disaster.150

In 1997 The HSUS enhanced its formal collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), helping the agency to develop its study course on animals in disaster and exchanging website links. When The HSUS went into disaster areas to assist, as it did in tornado-devastated Oklahoma under Southwest Regional Director Dennis White in 1999, it often found communities relying on disaster management plans that did not include animals. The HSUS worked with local societies and volunteers to develop a system for recording information about missing and recovered animals. Such outstanding service culminated in a partnership agreement in 2000 between The HSUS and FEMA to promote and implement disaster plans encompassing the needs of animals and their caregivers. Under the name Project Impact, the program was a high-water mark in The HSUS’s long history of disaster relief work.151

In 2003 Melissa Rubin and Anne Culver, HSUS director of disaster services, negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with USDA’s APHIS to coordinate disaster preparedness and response efforts for animals. The partnership posited exchange of information between The HSUS and USDA offices, jointly sponsored conferences, training exercises, and other collaborative efforts. The HSUS also agreed to provide technical advice and service in disaster situations. For its part, USDA agreed to ensure strong local and regional cooperation as well as assistance to HSUS teams seeking access to afflicted areas.152

By 2004 the Disaster Services department had developed unparalleled expertise and re-
sources to respond to the needs of those who provide emergency relief and care to animals in the wake of disaster. The HSUS was involved in regular dialogue with federal, state, and local government agencies to ensure the inclusion of animals in disaster plans and continued to cultivate normal relations with veterinary associations and private relief groups. The HSUS hosted two national conferences on disaster planning and response for animals, drawing emergency managers and other employees of state and local government as well as members of the animal care and control communities. At the same time, the organization attempted to equip its regional offices with appropriate disaster equipment and planning capabilities for disaster response.

**Humane Society International**

The formation of an active international division in the early 1990s was a natural outgrowth of the expanding vision and capacities of The HSUS. The program coalesced under the leadership of longtime HSUS staffer Janet Frake and Neil Trent, an animal welfare professional with three decades of experience at the RSPCA and WSPA. By 1998, with Frake and Trent in place as administrative director and executive director, respectively, HSI was ready to make a proper reckoning of what it wanted to accomplish and where it wanted to project its influence.

HSI board and staff members began by identifying priority goals: (1) enhancing the international animal protection movement's capacity for action, (2) promoting the worldwide adoption of humane slaughtering practices, (3) addressing the surplus companion animal problem that affected virtually every nation in the world, and (4) developing a strong prowildlife program. In 1998, with Frake and Trent in place as administrative director and executive director, respectively, HSI was ready to make a proper reckoning of what it wanted to accomplish and where it wanted to project its influence.

The prospects for capacity building in the Internet era were considerable, as HSI staff members discovered when they launched hsi-animalia@lists.hsus.org, an open forum electronic list that encouraged the exchange of information concerning common challenges and practices. The value of the list quickly became evident as participants from a broad range of nations helped one another to address and resolve problems about which they might never have communicated otherwise. HSI moved quickly to augment this feature with a web-based library of pertinent literature and technical advice.

Humane Society International Australia, a semiautonomous HSI affiliate, proved to embody the success of the goal of capacity building. Established with an eye to creating a strong local financial base for HSI’s international programs, it became the most successful HSI affiliate. Under the direction of Michael Kennedy and Verna Simpson, Humane Society International Australia also developed a good working rapport with government officials, particularly in the wildlife protection arena, became an important part of HSUS/HSI international treaty initiatives, and by 2003 began to fund HSI programs in Asia and Africa.

HSI also moved to forge the kinds of links between The HSUS’s domestic resources and the needs of international campaigners that Paul Irwin had intended to be a distinguishing element in HSI’s work. Collaboration with the Companion Animals section resulted in a program that brought selected workers from animal care and control agencies from around the world to participate in training sessions at The HSUS’s annual Animal Care Expo. At the same time, HSI staff arranged for international participants to spend a few days at North American shelters in advance of the conference to provide further exposure to the high stan-
dards of policy and practice that HSI hoped to encourage. The program quickly exceeded expectations, and by 2004 the HSI component at Animal Care Expo took up a full day of sessions.155

To meet its second priority, HSI built a partnership with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to promote both the techniques and the proper equipment for humane handling, transport, and slaughter of animals destined for the food supply. HSI produced a video (filmed in a South African facility representative of the conditions that might be typical elsewhere in the world) and developed a poster and training guide for global distribution. Like The HSUS’s campaign for the Humane Slaughter Act in the United States more than four decades earlier, the initiative stressed the economic advantages of humane techniques. Together with the FAO, HSI conducted training sessions and workshops in Africa, Asia, and Central America.156

HSI sought to forge similar relationships with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and other agencies with an interest in promulgating better standards in animal care and control. By 2000 HSI was coordinating advanced training for WHO veterinarians in technical skills at a facility in Italy, providing travel and expense stipends for those who committed to stage training sessions once they returned to their own duty assignments.157

In tackling the worldwide crisis of dog and cat overpopulation, HSI tried to extend the “L.E.S.” approach—legislation, education, and sterilization—that Phyllis Wright had made the centerpiece of The HSUS’s 1970s-era offensive to curb the problem of surplus animals in the United States. At the insistence of HSUS Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Andrew Rowan, however, HSI added a new component to such programs—the extensive study, documentation, and measurement of outcomes. HSI put its energies into pilot programs in the Bahamas (funded in part by the Pegasus Foundation) and Taiwan—where it helped to secure that nation’s first animal-protection law in 1998.158

The wildlife component of HSI’s work proved to be more difficult to sustain, as managers found it hard to secure proper funding. Still, there were notable successes. In 1994 HSI sent Guy Hodge to South Africa to support an oiled-bird rescue operation after a devastating oil spill caused by the sinking of the ore carrier, Apollo Sea. The next year, HSI sponsored an investigation of the bear parts trade in China. HSI also sustained an environmental education center in Costa Rica and launched a campaign to change attitudes about keeping wild animals as household pets. In 2000 HSI published the Spanish-language proceedings of the second HSI-sponsored Neotropical Conference on Wildlife Rescue held in San José, Costa Rica. Humane Society Australia also registered many successes in the wildlife protection arena, under the direction of Kennedy and Simpson.159

Without abandoning its readiness to support international wildlife protection work when the opportunity surfaced, HSI nevertheless adopted a fourth priority initiative aimed at improving the lot of the world’s estimated 300 million working equines. This program sent staff members and consultants associated with The HSUS’s RAVS to other nations, to provide basic instruction in domestic animal care to veterinary professionals and the lay public. Such initiatives helped animals and the people who relied upon them by encouraging better basic care, discouraging reliance on crude and harmful veterinary treatment, and, as Michael Fox had observed, by serving “to promote and strengthen compassionate attitudes by showing that something can be done.”160
Conclusion

In an organization blessed with excellent program staff and known for the quality of its publications and technical expertise on hundreds of animal cruelty issues, it was sometimes easy to overlook the action-oriented components of The HSUS. Nevertheless, the determination to undertake prompt, principled, and effective action to identify and expose cruelty and suffering, wherever it occurred, was a fundamental premise of The HSUS’s founding cohort and one upon which successive generations of staff members in field service, investigations, disaster relief, and international outreach continued to base their efforts.

In the current era, many organizations carry out investigations of cruelty. However, until the maturation of The HSUS’s investigations strategy under Frank McMahon and his successors, the humane movement in the United States had accomplished very little on that front. Today many organizations have field offices and representatives. But during its first fifty years of existence, The HSUS’s efforts to build and sustain such a network, first through its branch and affiliate structure and then through its regional office system, were unequaled by any animal-protection organization. While not necessarily the pioneering force in disaster relief or international work by humane campaigners, The HSUS began to make substantial commitments to these activities in the 1970s, and they became ever more important in its attempt to extend protection and relief to animals both nationally and, in the last decade of the twentieth century, internationally. These accomplishments comprised a legacy of action not to be overshadowed by The HSUS’s program area work.