USDA GOES REGIONAL

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has realigned its Veterinary Services field structure into 19 area offices covering the entire country. These offices will replace the current 47 field offices through which USDA administers its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The purpose is to make APHIS animal health programs more responsible to the needs of the livestock industry and the public through more effective use of manpower. Included is the realignment of veterinary biological field activities as an integrated part of animal health activities.

The restructuring seems to be a healthy move and it affects HSUS activities insofar as they relate to laws or regulations administered by USDA. We recommend therefore that you get in touch with the local USDA office and find out the exact location of the new area office which covers your regional territory. It is not too early to make them aware of your presence and your work in the field of animal welfare.

CHANGE IN THE Pribilof Islands Seal Hunt

The International North Pacific Fur Seal Commission has announced an international ban on the commercial taking of seals from St. George's Island in the Pribilofs. The ban, which could last as long as 15 years, is purportedly to enable the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to make a study into the seals' real diet makeup and show if, indeed, they are as much of a threat to commercial fishing as is so often argued by the fishing industry and, especially, Japan.

We are happy about any reduction in the numbers of seals taken annually in the Pribilof Islands hunt. It must be noted, however, that the ban affects only St. George's Island. St. George accounts for only about 15% of all the seals taken in this so-called annual harvest. The major harvest area is on St. Paul's Island where the remaining 85% of seals are taken. We feel strongly, therefore, that we must continue to protest the hunt and the clubbing and other violent methods sometimes used in taking the animals.

LEAD SHOT PETITION LODGED WITH INTERIOR

The HSUS and the National Parks and Conservation Association have filed a petition with the U.S. Department of the Interior that would require the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife to outlaw use of lead shot in migratory bird hunting by June 15, 1974. (Lead shot kills an estimated 4% of North American migratory waterfowl populations through poisoning after shot is eaten as supposed food.)