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Summer 1981

# GSRO Summer 1981

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## Recommended Citation

"GSRO Summer 1981" (1981). *Gulf States Regional Office*. 16.  
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# REPORT

Summer 1981

## Many Horses Face Mistreatment

The proud and majestic horse, who for centuries has served mankind's needs, is often subjected to flagrant neglect and abuse. Throughout the Gulf States Region and the entire country, an increasing number of horse cruelty cases are being received by humane societies. At the same time, increasing numbers of horses are ending up in slaughterhouses. The slaughter of horsemeat for human consumption has exploded from 49,000 horses in 1970 to over 330,000 horses this past year.

The Humane Society of the United States' Gulf States Office is actively trying to solve horse cruelty problems. We are also encouraging state legislation to protect horses destined for slaughterhouses.

ize that horses need regular veterinary and farrier care to worm the horse and shoe it properly. The sizable feed and water needs of the animal are the most frequent area of neglect. It is clear that horses should not be purchased until the owner has learned fully about good horse care and responsible ownership.

### Rancher's Attitude

A major stumbling block to improving horse care is a prevailing attitude of many ranchers and some enforcement officials. They feel, since animals are personal property, the owner may do what he or she pleases, including deprivation. A number of cruelty cases have also been



Three cases of horse starvation investigated by The HSUS Gulf States Office.

Regional Director Bill Meade said, "One of the saddest things we see are pathetic horses that have been starved almost to death by owners who are uncaring or ignorant of the animals' needs."

### Backyard Horses

Many families today are acquiring a riding horse for their family's pleasure. Often, however, they have not informed themselves about the special needs of the horse before bringing it home. The first problem is where to keep the horse. Some horses end up confined to small residential lots which do not allow for proper exercise. If the horse is kept at a commercial stable, the owner must be sure the stable is properly operated. Too many owners do not real-

dismissed because courts have been reluctant to strongly prosecute under anti-cruelty laws. The public must demand of officials that violators be dealt with according to our laws.

### Rustling & Slaughter

As an offshoot problem to the growing number of horses being sold for slaughter, there has been an increase in rustling. A stolen horse can be quickly converted by the thief into \$400 or \$500 by selling it for slaughter. A recommended precaution against having a horse stolen is to have it marked with some sort of identification. As with most other problems of animal suffering, the answers lie in responsible animal ownership.

## Oklahoma Proposes Humane Euthanasia

For the second year, Oklahoma humanitarians and The HSUS are trying to outlaw the cruel killing of surplus shelter animals. In many cases dogs and cats have been shot, clubbed, poisoned, and decompressed because no state law required humane methods of death.

Last year HSUS Regional Director Bill Meade testified before the Oklahoma Legislature to urge passage of a humane euthanasia bill. It was defeated during the first year.

The bill has now been reintroduced as H.B. 1277 by Representative Jim Williamson and Senator Ed Moore. It allows for euthanasia by injection of sodium pentobarbital or use of cooled or pure bottled carbon monoxide gas.

Oklahoma humanitarians should write their representatives immediately in support of this legislation.

## How to Improve Texas Shelters

Concerned Texans have a new opportunity to improve their local city or county operated animal shelters. Under the new 1980 Texas rabies law, shelters used for quarantine must meet minimum state standards. These standards require the shelter to provide proper protection from the weather and to have heating and ventilation inside the shelter. Also called for is proper sanitation and drainage and separation between animals. The shelter staff must feed and water the animals every day and use only humane methods of euthanasia.

As with many other laws that establish standards, they are only enforced when local citizens bring them to the attention of their officials and convince them of the need for compliance.

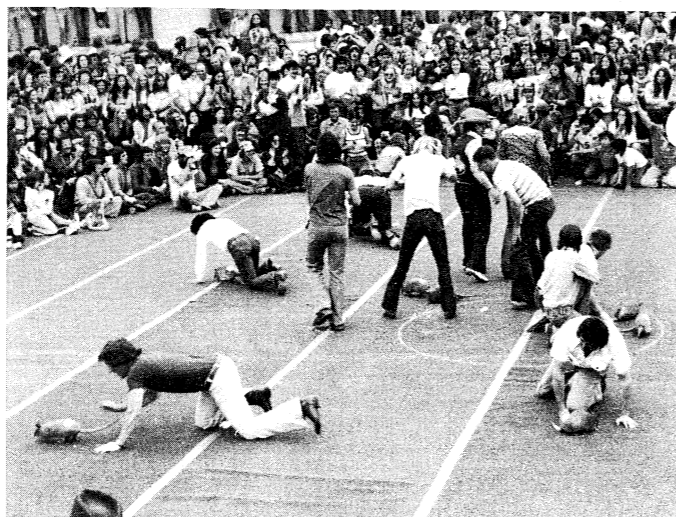
The Texas Department of Health has the responsibility of inspecting shelters to enforce compliance. To have your shelter inspected, contact the Gulf States HSUS Office and

we will send you the address of your regional veterinarian. Also, we will send you a booklet giving step-by-step instructions on how to organize and effective citizens' pressure group to work with your local officials toward enforcement of the law.

After your shelter is inspected, the law allows up to one year to make the needed corrections. If these are not done by the local government, the law requires the shelter to cease operation until acceptable standards have been established.



Animals in quarantine must be safely and humanely confined according to Texas state law.



## HSUS Condemns Armadillo Races

It seems that in the wild, wild West people constantly invent new forms of "entertainment" that involve senseless harassment of animals.

As if the rodeo, rattlesnake round-ups, dropping turkeys from planes, greased pig contests, and various coon games were not enough, armadillo races add to the list in their ever-growing popularity.

The activity involves capturing and removing armadillos from the wild. This in itself is a traumatic occurrence for any wild animal. In addition, they are often not properly fed. During the race the armadillo is exposed to the screaming and stomping of its handler in an effort to make the armadillo "race." The entire production is totally without merit and proves only that the participants do not understand the ethic of respect and compassion for our wildlife.

The HSUS Gulf States Office continually speaks out against these animal abuses and urges local societies to take a stand against them.

## Arkansas Exotic Owner Found Guilty

In Conway and Faulkner County, Arkansas, a major case of animal starvation and improper care has resulted in two guilty verdicts.

Our last Regional Report told of the full-grown polar bear confined in a small, filthy cage. Also, there were about 150 other exotic animals and horses involved. The elderly owner apparently did not have the resources to care for the animals properly.

The Gulf States Office of The HSUS consulted at length with the Faulkner County Humane Society to find ways to end the suffering of these animals. Because the animals were in two separate counties, two court cases had to be brought against the owner.

The court's decision requires that the operation and its animals have regular inspections by a veterinarian and the humane society. Their findings will be reported to the judge.

## Six New Animal Bills for Texas

In an ambitious effort to move the state of Texas forward in its protection for animals, six bills are being readied for introduction in the state legislature. A major force behind these bills is the Texas Humane Information Network. Under the enthusiastic leadership of its president, Martha Cox, the network has thousands of humanitarians across the state prepared to support proposed legislation. The HSUS helped draft the bills and fully endorses them.

The first four bills will allow the Texas Department of Health to set minimum standards for animal shelters, pet shops, kennels and boarding stables, and carnivals and roadside zoos.

The fifth bill will allow animal shelters to use sodium pentobarbital for animal euthanasia. This important change will help bring an end to the use of shooting, hot gas chambers, and outdated decompression machines.

The sixth bill will bring strong sanctions against anyone participating in dogfight activity; even spectators may be found guilty of a misdemeanor. This legislation should go far toward abolishing vicious organized dogfighting in Texas.

If you would like to help T.H.I.N. in its campaign for the animals, write us and we will refer you to the regional key person for your area.

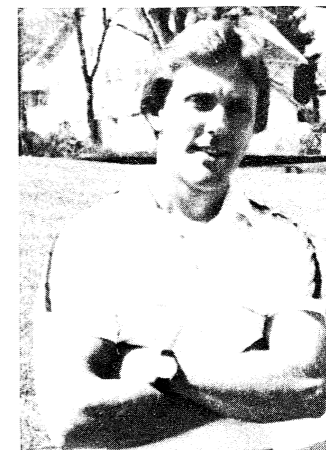


## Around The Region

- Tarrant County, Texas—Three starved horses were confiscated by the Tarrant County Humane Society. They were rehabilitated with extra feedings and vet care. After the court case the horses were placed with new owners.
- Conroe, Texas—The Montgomery County Humane Society has announced the success of their building fund program. Construction on the new shelter should begin during 1981.
- Tioga, Louisiana—A spay/neuter program has been started by the new Cenla Humane Society. People who adopt shelter animals may receive a rebate toward the operation.
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma—Because of ongoing inspections by Volunteers for Animal Welfare, Inc. the city's animal shelter is being urged to correct difficulties and furnish only first-rate animal care.
- Shreveport, Louisiana—Animal Welfare, Inc. has started a spay/neuter subsidy program for low income individuals. Shelterless societies can make a difference with this type of significant program.

## Director's Comment

By Bill Meade



The annual slaughter of seals seems to be a remote issue for us located in the southwestern part of our country. We have horses, cattle, coyotes, and jackrabbits to worry about. How can we possibly worry about seals in the Pribilof Islands and Canada?

It is just this attitude that has helped allow the continuation of about 200,000 seals being slaughtered yearly. Governments of the world

do not look on wildlife as belonging to all citizens, but only to a few special interest groups.

The involved governments are claiming the seal hunts are justified because of the jobs created for natives and to control overpopulation of seals. Both arguments are little more than fronts for the furriers who reap profits in the millions of dollars.

As citizens of the world, we must let our objections be heard loud and clear in forum and in letters of protest.

## ANIMAL NEEDS: National and Regional

The Gulf States Regional Office of The Humane Society of the United States coordinates national programs with direct attention to this region. You are aware that our major concern is the prevention of cruelty and suffering to animals.

Among our several programs which address the needs of animals is one which provides for your financial needs and at the same time creates a future gift for animal welfare.

If you would like to know more about the dual benefits of our Life Income Program, please send for the society's brochure entitled "Planning for the Future."

Mail to: Paul G. Irwin,  
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# Louisiana Carriage Horses Die in Heat

On a sweltering Louisiana afternoon a valiant black mare carriage horse collapsed on the pavement. After two hours of agony and struggle, she died of heat exhaustion. Nine days before, another carriage horse had dropped in its tracks and died on the 120 degree pavement. About sixty days later a third carriage horse was struck by a bus on the congested French Quarter streets and died of its injuries.

When the first horse died the field investigator for The HSUS Gulf States Office traveled to New Orleans to appraise the possibility of a ban on the carriage horses. Feelings were running strong and most people felt a total ban was the only way to prevent future deaths.



Times Picayune

The black mare lay on her side, hooves spasmodically striking air and concrete, as officials tried to hold her steady as she died.

John Hoyt, President of HSUS, contacted each city councilman and urged them to vote in favor of the ban. Hoyt reasoned, "Given the high temperature and humidity in the city of New Orleans, we feel it is not possible to run a humane carriage horse operation. Times have obviously changed. No longer is there a watering trough at every corner. The necessity for the horses to wear diaper bags is simply one example of how ludicrous it is to try to maintain a nineteenth century custom in a twentieth century society."

Despite these protests and vigorous objections of many citizens and other animal welfare groups, the proposed ban on carriage horses was defeated by a 4 to 3 vote. It is sad to anticipate that other horses will probably have to die in the extreme heat before the councilmen reverse their faulty decision.

For the present, HSUS Regional Director Bill Meade urges visitors and citizens of New Orleans to boycott the carriage horse tours.

The Gulf States Regional Report is a publication of:

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The Gulf States Regional Office serves the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. The office operates Monday through Friday and is closed on federal holidays.

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