Recognizing that legislation, regulations, and litigation are among the most effective tools for confronting cruelty, we work to broaden and strengthen animal protection policies while ensuring that they are enforced.

The Great Ape Escape

The chimpanzees greeted the newcomers in the sanctuary’s play yard with boisterous vocalizations and hair standing on end. Chimps faced off, charged, chased, fled. But eventually, every one calmed down and shared chimpanzee-style greetings: touching, smelling, and sizing each other up. One pair sat nose to nose, grooming. “It’s great to watch them express behaviors that are normal for chimpanzees,” says Kathleen Conlee, HSUS vice president of animal research issues.

It was the first day outside at Chimp Haven for 4 of the 111 federally owned chimps declared permanently ineligible for research in 2012. Under an agreement The HSUS and Chimp Haven helped bring about in December, the National Institutes of Health is moving the animals one small group at a time from Louisiana’s New Iberia Research Center to the national sanctuary. The HSUS, which provided $500,000 to help expand Chimp Haven for the new arrivals (thanks to one of our most generous supporters), has for years pushed the NIH to retire federally owned chimps. In 2009, an HSUS undercover investigation at New Iberia revealed chimpanzees kept in bare cages, some in isolation for months, and screaming in fear as they were forcibly sedated for experiments. Then in 2011, The HSUS successfully petitioned the federal government to stop illegal breeding of chimps at New Iberia.

Sored No More

Startling images shot during an undercover HSUS investigation helped spark a critically important year in the battle against soring. Under this cruel and illegal practice, trainers deliberately inflict pain to a Tennessee walking horse’s legs or hooves in an effort to exaggerate his high-stepping gait, all for the sake of winning prizes. In the HSUS video, horses were shocked with cattle prods and irritating chemicals were applied to their lower legs. One horse was smashed in the face with a wooden pole, while another, too injured to stand, was whipped in his stall.

The 49-day investigation dispelled the Tennessee walking horse industry’s contention that soring is a thing of the past, and the fallout came fast and furious. State and federal charges were filed against noted trainer Jackie McConnell and three of his associates, with McConnell pleading guilty to a felony. After ABC’s Nightline aired the footage, Pepsi and Ford withdrew their sponsorship of the annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. In an interview with The HSUS, former trainer Barney Davis shed more light on the scope of the problem: “You’re not going to win if you don’t sore.” And the U.S. Equestrian Federation—the nation’s largest horse show sanctioning body—banned the use of devices typically associated with soring.

Federal policymakers took action as well. Three biomedical research facilities recently ended their use of chimps, and several pharmaceutical companies have agreed to no longer use them.

The recent retirements may be just the beginning. In January 2013, an NIH committee recommended the government retire all but 50 of the remaining 350 federally owned chimps, including many who were caught in the wild and have spent half a century in labs.

“We’re There: Attacking Root Causes”
Jerry Brown signed S.B. 1221 into law. Responding to the news, Sinclair emailed: “After a few whoops, I broke down and just started crying. … I am so, so happy right now.”

Legislate and Collaborate

In a basement corner where plywood boards helped cordon off a dogfighting pit, luminous blue spray revealed splatters of blood everywhere, from a rolled-up carpet to the deep red walls.

It was one of two suspected Michigan dogfighting operations where The HSUS’s mobile crime lab helped gather evidence last August. Kalamazoo County Animal Services and Enforcement officials had begun cracking down on dogfighting earlier in the year after attending a Humane Society University training. To set in motion the August raids, HSUS staff provided access to a database of suspected dogfighters; they later helped obtain search warrants and ran the temporary shelter for the 46 dogs rescued. “Probably, if we didn’t have [The HSUS’s] assistance, we would put down all of the dogs,” Kalamazoo animal services director Steven Lawrence told a local TV crew. “They know what they’re doing. They made this so much easier.”

The cases caught the attention of state lawmakers, who in the ensuing months passed a package of HSUS-backed bills to create more avenues for prosecuting and penalizing animal fighters. It was one of multiple victories against dogfighting as much as the animals. “I am so, so happy right now. … whoops, I broke down and just started crying. … I am so, so happy right now.”

NOMINEE: Paige Rense Noland

NAME: Paige Rense Noland

WHY SHE’S AN HSUS SUPERSTAR:
Helps stop puppy mills

For nearly 40 years, Paige Rense Noland commanded the helm of Animal Rights Digest as editor-in-chief. Her love for animals was apparent even then, in her refusal to publish photos of interiors decorated with animal trophies and fur rugs. After discovering the horrors of puppy mills—her own dog, Lucy, spent nearly a decade in one—she donated $105,000 to establish The HSUS’s Puppy Mill Reward Fund, then made additional gifts to further support the fight against puppy mills, including the campaign to pass tougher laws in multiple states. “It does so much for me to support the fight against puppy mills, particularly the campaign to pass tougher laws in multiple states. “It does so much for me to know I am helping,” she says. “I am benefiting as much as the animals.”

In Ohio, 1,000+ high-volume dog breeders exempt from federal licensing are now subject to state licensing and inspection thanks to a new law, one of eight HSUS-backed state puppy mill bills passed in 2012. In all, 12 states now have some sort of puppy mill law on the books. We also released a proposal to extend USDA oversight to online puppy sellers.