

2009

[SNAPSHOTS]

Aggressive. Savvy. Dangerous. An incredible force for change. The most feared animal protection organization. ■ The HSUS has been called it all, but we don't mind: Even the barbs from our opponents are telling reminders of how far we've come. ■ From our investigation of chimpanzee abuse in labs to our lawsuits against sport hunts of endangered wolves, we continued to take on business-as-usual in 2009. We helped launch a nationwide pet adoption campaign and grew our list of fur-free designers, retailers, and brands to nearly 300. We exposed appalling abuse of infant calves and gained corporate commitments to phase in eggs from cage-free facilities. We rescued and cared for tens of thousands of animals and passed 121 state laws to improve the lives of millions more. ■ But behind these numbers we also saw individual seals, cats, horses, and other animals like those on the following pages, waiting for help. So when an agribusiness executive who's comfortable with extreme confinement of living creatures dubs The HSUS the "enemy," we take it in stride—and so do the 11 million constituents who've joined our fight against the real adversary: animal cruelty in all its forms.

▶ WATCH A VIDEO about our 2009 victories at humanesociety.org/magazine.



“This little guy was on his own and waiting for his mom to return,” says Mark Glover, who lay flat on the ice in Canada’s Gulf of St. Lawrence last March to photograph baby harp seals and their mothers. The director of Humane Society International’s U.K. division was there for the fifth year in a row, as part of a campaign to end the brutal annual seal slaughter. Though magical, the experience is heartbreaking, says Glover: “You’re there seeing these beautiful creatures but knowing something they don’t know: that in three weeks, the next people they see are likely to bludgeon them to death.” ■ But this time was different: In 2009, footage from The HSUS and HSI was key to persuading the EU to ban trade in seal products—shutting down a major market for the Canadian sealing industry. The HSUS is also pressuring sealers where it hurts the most: their wallets. More than 5,500 establishments and 650,000 people are boycotting Canadian seafood, jeopardizing sealers’ main source of income. ■ And as the push for a ban gathered momentum in Europe last spring, prices for pelts plummeted, sparing a quarter of a million seals, says Glover. “So perhaps this seal was saved,” he says, “as a direct result of our presence and our showing the world exactly what’s going on.”

Nestled in their owner's arms, these cats patiently awaited check-in at a free sterilization clinic in Lima, Peru, last June. Sponsored by Humane Society International and local organization Grupo Caridad, the clinics are stemming the tide of homeless pets in San Juan de Lurigancho, the city's most populated district and one of the poorest. ■ Though the conditions are makeshift—the services are offered in private homes, where kitchen and dining room tables stand in for surgery and prep sites—the residents of this impoverished area are grateful for the chance to improve the health of their pets and end the breeding. Working at these clinics is “a constant reminder that even people without means love their animals,” says HSI program manager Jessica Higgins. ■ Lima is one of dozens of cities in the developing world where HSI works to stop pet overpopulation and improve vet care. In 2009, the organization launched a landmark project in Bhutan, the first-ever countrywide spay/neuter initiative. Closer to home, the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association brought free spay/neuter and vet care to about 7,600 animals in the poorest regions of the U.S. and Central America.





Found wallowing in muck-filled pens, this puppy and 108 other border collies were rescued from a rural Tennessee property in September. Terrified of people, the dogs required expert handling and placement, says HSUS Tennessee state director Leighann McCollum, who worked with colleagues to help a local sheriff's office transport the animals to rescue organizations. ■ In 2009, The HSUS strengthened its capacity to assist communities that might otherwise be overwhelmed by puppy mill cases, launching a national tip line and a task force. As a result, teams saved more than 3,000 animals from 16 mills. And HSUS staff made sure legislators saw the evidence of large-scale cruelty in their states: By year's end, 10 states had passed laws targeting puppy mill abuses, and The HSUS had begun work on a 2010 ballot initiative to turn up the heat on Missouri's large-scale commercial breeders. ■ Taking on the retail side of the industry, The HSUS also exposed national chain Petland's practice of selling puppies from mills, shut down a major Internet and retail puppy mill dog seller, and spurred a changing ethic by enlisting more than 400 stores to proudly display placards saying, "We love puppies; that's why we don't sell them."

THIS PAGE: PAUL TURNER/THE HSUS. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: CHAD SISNEROS/THE HSUS, KATHY MILAN/THE HSUS



Performance jitters weren't rattling Thistle the day he debuted before an admiring audience of horse lovers in Fort Worth, Texas (below). Rescued from a Nebraska property by HSUS Emergency Services teams last April, the once-emaciated mustang (above) was ready for his close-up at a September event featuring the humane training methods of horseman Pat Parelli. ■ "He made that face, and then I was teasing him and made it back," says Rachel Shannon, a trainer from the Grace Foundation who worked with The HSUS to rehabilitate Thistle and 83 other starving mustangs who'd been transported to the Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Murchison, Texas. "He was standing in the hallway and he was just so relaxed. He was yawning." ■ One of seven homeless horses highlighted at events organized by The HSUS, Parelli, and local horse rescues last year, Thistle now shares his "laughs" with his new family, two veterinarians in Stillwater, Okla.





A stint with The HSUS's Pit Bull Training Team transforms dogs like Rocky from aggressive "liabilities on leashes" to model pets, says lead trainer Jeff Jenkins (right). "At one point I couldn't even make him sit," says owner Raymond Greenleaf (left) of Chicago. Now "he's obeying all of the commands I'm giving him. He's doing great." ■ The 2½-year-old pit bull is part of an initiative intended to showcase the possibilities of what a dog can be, says Jenkins. Since 2006, The HSUS's End Dogfighting program has partnered with community leaders, educators, and former dogfighters to promote alternatives to animal fighting in Chicago; in 2008, a similar initiative launched in Atlanta. Last year, at-risk youth in cities around the nation met with convicted dogfighter and Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Michael Vick, joined by HSUS president and CEO Wayne Pacelle, to hear why animal abuse is a dead-end path. ■ Continuing its investigations and law enforcement training efforts in 2009, The HSUS also participated in a historic eight-state dogfighting raid and paid out its 50th reward for tips leading to arrests in animal fighting cases.

It was an investigation that brought to light the suffering of the dairy industry's byproducts: male calves torn from their mothers shortly after birth to be slaughtered for veal products. In October, The HSUS released an undercover video showing employees at a Vermont plant kicking, slapping, and shocking the animals and improperly stunning them before slaughter, while a federal inspector looked the other way. One calf who appeared to be conscious was partially decapitated; another was skinned alive. ■ Following a swift condemnation from the USDA, the plant remained closed more than a month later, yet another sign of progress in The HSUS's efforts to expose the shameful practices of industrialized animal agriculture. In 2009, The HSUS passed laws against inhumane caging systems in Maine and Michigan, while in California—where voters had approved a ballot initiative against extreme confinement of farm animals the previous year—legislators passed the first state law banning tail docking of dairy cows. ■ The successes built upon the overwhelming 2008 ballot victory, which created an “aura of invincibility” that has the industry scrambling to defend itself, says Paul Shapiro, senior director of The HSUS's Factory Farming Campaign. The HSUS is fueling the momentum into the new year, when signatures will be gathered to place the issue of cruel confinement on the Ohio ballot this fall.