Dear Members and Friends,

In reading this issue of The Humane Society News, you will recognize that there is a new look and several new features. We believe each of these will serve to make our communication with you more interesting and more informative.

You will also note that we have included with this issue an envelope in which we hope you will send to The HSUS a contribution to further our work and program in behalf of our animal friends.

This request for your continuing support replaces our usual "Special Report" appeal. Because of a change in our Publications Staff, it was not possible to produce such a report this past month. However, we are confident as you read of the numerous actions and activities we are currently taking to prevent cruelty and suffering you will want to support these efforts.

Sincerely,

John A. Hoyt

Beginning a New Era For Animals

Beginning a New Era for Animals is the theme we have chosen for the 1976 Annual Conference of The HSUS. It’s a theme based on our present philosophy and our future hope.

Over the centuries, man has variously regarded the nature of animals vis-à-vis himself. He has worshipped some and desecrated others. He has sometimes classified them as things and other times as brothers. He has constructively used them and arrogantly abused them. Yet at no time has man so universally respected animals that it could be said they were safe from cruelty and suffering at his hands. It is still so today.

I believe there is an essential quality of being as common to animals as to the man-animal. It is entirely possible the essence of animal being is just as important and sacred as man’s. Man, remember, has calculated and defined his own essence, and thus, his own value as a being among beings. That animals have not done likewise, we can only surmise. Or if they have, they haven’t discussed it with us. Consequently, it is left to us to define, at least for our understanding, what is the essence of animal being and what is their inherent value. Not value in the sense they are socially and economically valuable to us, but to themselves and life.

Obviously, we are a long way from giving serious consideration to that question in a community sense. Individually, yes, and in some esoteric groupings, perhaps. But as regards society in general, there is no consensus regarding the essential nature or quality of animal being. Nor is there any great sense of urgency that such consideration merits much attention. But it is happening here and there.

The HSUS recently adopted a statement of principles and beliefs which serves as the basis for our work and efforts. The preamble reads as follows: Every living thing has an intrinsic value that derives from creation. It exists by reason of a design and order not of man’s making. Yet man has all too often abused or destroyed other life capriciously and wantonly. The primary and motivating concern of The Humane Society of the United States is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures. We are mindful that man has been uniquely endowed with a sense of moral values. For this reason, we believe he is responsible for the welfare of those animals that he has domesticated and those upon whose natural environment he encroaches. This responsibility, we believe, must be shared by all people. It does not matter if they benefit from the use of such domestic animals or participate in the alteration of environments supporting the life of other creatures. As the dominant intelligent life form on earth, we are accountable as a species. Though we are not opposed to the legitimate and appropriate utilization of animals in the service of man, such utilization gives man neither the right nor the license to exploit or abuse any animal in the process.

Beginning a New Era for Animals is not simply the theme of our Annual Conference. It is a commitment that should involve all the people of this nation as we mark our 200th birthday. Toward that end, The HSUS seeks your personal commitment to this endeavor and urges you to join us in creating a society in which animals may live free from cruelty and abuse.