

The HSUS's Laura Bevan takes a puppy out for fresh air in tornado-stricken Tuscaloosa, Ala.; colleague Inga Gibson (below) feeds a kitten. "These people lost everything," says Bevan. "They're ready to start their lives anew, and we are helping with that."



TO THE RESCUE Out of Harm's Way

HSUS teams help save hundreds of lives

► **LOCATIONS:** Disaster zones in Missouri, Alabama, and Mississippi

► **ANIMALS SAVED:** Hundreds of pets left behind or displaced in floods and tornadoes

The woman came with a friend and photographs, trying to find her missing cats at a temporary shelter in tornado-ravaged Joplin, Mo.

Sára Varsa, director of operations for The HSUS's Animal Rescue Team, helped escort her around. As they were looking, the woman noted that she also had to find her dog. The chow mix had belonged to her husband, who had died in the storm.

"Essentially, these people were walking wounded," Varsa says, "and they were so shell-shocked, and this was all they had to hang on to. And finding their pets was one of the first steps in their healing. They just wanted that comfort back. They wanted to know where they were."

As flooding and tornadoes staggered

swaths of the United States over a particularly tragic spring, animal welfare groups—including The HSUS—joined together to protect, rescue, and return pets like that chow mix, who enjoyed a tearful reunion with the woman in Joplin.

HSUS responders were active across multiple disaster zones—from Tuscaloosa, Ala., where they helped trap pets running loose in the wake of a devastating tornado, to Tunica, Miss., where they used a boat to rescue stranded cats from rooftop-high floodwaters. In Adams County, Miss., The HSUS responded to a request from Sheriff Chuck Mayfield, who was looking to establish a temporary animal shelter for evacuees forced to leave their pets behind as the Mississippi River threatened to reach historic heights.

"I think just being around those people was the thing I enjoyed most," says Mayfield of the animal rescuers, who took in about 100 pets. "And the care level that they gave those pets, and the pet owners, it was just unsurpassed [by] anything I've ever seen. I'm just blown away by the whole affair."
— *Michael Sharp*



► LOCATION: Queen Anne's County, Maryland**► ANIMALS SAVED: 140 Polish Arabian horses**

Standing in a sparse pasture on a blue-sky-and-breezy April afternoon, Stacy Segal ran her hand gently along the side and back of a flea-bitten gray Polish Arabian horse.

She was one of 21 mares in the enclosure, where a tree had fallen through the fence and clumps of weeds and buttercups had grown in place of grass. "This one is a little deceiving because of her winter coat," said Segal, HSUS equine cruelty specialist. "But if you come over and start rubbing off the hair, you can really feel the ribs. I mean, I can feel every bone."

The horse will now see better days, after she and 139 others were removed from the Maryland property. The HSUS Animal Rescue Team and the ASPCA—along with Days End Farm Horse Rescue, Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue, and Summer Winds Stables—assisted Queen Anne's County Animal Control with the seizure.

The Polish Arabians, a rare breed known for their gentle nature, beauty, and stamina, were sent to horse rescue organizations and private facilities for individualized care as the legal process unfolds.

"We witnessed abuse in the form of neglect," says Days End assistant director Brooke Vrany, "and it was our primary goal to make sure they were safe and remove them to facilities that could provide good care for them."

Signs of that neglect included jutting ribs and hip bones, overgrown hooves, and parasites. There were holes in the walls of stalls and missing rails on fences. Seven horses had to be euthanized, including one whom HSUS and Days End officials found hidden under a tent—extremely emaciated—during a visit with animal control officers.

"This could be a viable farm," Segal said. "Unfortunately, this owner, she's here by herself. She has part-time help. She does not have the resources to care for this number of animals. And instead of recognizing that and modifying her plans, she continued to breed. And that's what led to what we're seeing here." — *Michael Sharp*

The HSUS's Sára Varsa calms one of 140 horses rescued from a Maryland property this spring. "The mare was a little nervous," says Varsa, "so I was rubbing her and whispering sweet nothings into her ear."





A Bird in the Hand

Rosie helps owner gain ballot supporters

Jill Johnson stands outside a grocery store, petition board in hand, greeting passersby with a special request.

“Would you be interested in signing ‘yes’ for humane farming in Washington State?” she asks in her British accent, seeking support to place a new initiative on the November ballot.

Similar scenes often play out across the country—different issues, in different states—but take a closer look at this one: On a small table, in a travel cage with straw, fresh water, and grain, stands an 8-month-old hen named Rosie. “People are naturally

drawn to her,” says Johnson. “It makes my job a lot easier.” With some help from her feathered ally, Johnson has collected thousands of signatures for Initiative 1130, which seeks to phase out the extreme confinement of laying hens in Washington, where about 6.5 million birds live in cages so small they can’t spread their wings. The measure would also make it illegal to sell eggs produced from hens living in such conditions.

Concerned about factory farms but knowing her family loves eggs, Johnson purchased Rosie and three other hens from an organic farmer. They were granted the run of everything but the flower beds in her backyard, and it didn’t take long for Rosie—“a real people-chicken”—to become part of the family. “She sees the

door crack open, and she’s in the house in a heartbeat,” Johnson says. “She loves to talk. She loves to come in and sit on our laps on the sofa and hang out.”

As she gathers signatures, Johnson occasionally brings out her pal for people to pet, asking them to imagine multiple Rosies stuffed into her travel cage.

“She brings the whole chicken issue to life,” Johnson says. “It’s no longer just a carton of eggs, or ... the meat wrapped up in cellophane.”

To get the measure on the ballot, supporters need to collect 240,000 valid signatures by early July. Just to be safe, they are aiming to gather 340,000. The same process is under way in Oregon, where language for a similar initiative—this one for the 2012 ballot—was filed in April.

If successful, the states will join California and Michigan in rejecting battery cages. “It sends a message to our state that animals raised for food deserve humane treatment,” says HSUS Washington state director Dan Paul. —*Michael Sharp*

The Truth Hurts | Factory farms try to outlaw undercover investigations

The undercover videos depict all-too-common cruelties: overcrowded chickens who can barely move in their cages at Iowa’s Rose Acre and Rembrandt egg farms; a hen trapped in wire mesh, eyes helplessly blinking as other birds trample her; the flattened, manure-covered corpse of a chicken peeled from a cage floor. At Minnesota’s Willmar hatchery, baby turkeys writhe in pain as parts of their beaks are lasered off; birds are plucked from blood-soaked conveyor belts to have their back toes amputated; injured animals are fed live into meat grinders.

In 2010, these images taken by HSUS investigators showed the public the reality of factory farms. But if it were up to some state legislators, treating animals in this manner would remain

legal while revealing the abuse would expose a person to a prison sentence—of up to five years in Iowa, up to a year in New York, a year or more in Minnesota, and up to 30 years in Florida.

In recent decades, a few states have pushed through laws that deter undercover investigations of agribusiness operations. This spring

brought the four most recent attempts to criminalize the taking of undercover videos and photographs on farms. The “ag gag” measures in Iowa and Minnesota would also criminalize possessing or distributing such videos and photographs, as well as gaining access to facilities by lying on employment applications, removing an essential tool for documenting inhumane treatment and violations of cruelty and food safety statutes. As



Paul Shapiro and CNN’s Jane Velez-Mitchell

Nine years after saving a foal from a near-deadly bout with bloodworms, Deborah Gilson says Lil' Girl comes running at the sound of her voice.

"First, she wants to know if there's an apple in my hand," says Gilson. Born to an adopted mustang, the dark bay with the long wavy mane likes to show off in front of strangers, bucking and kicking. But she still has a wild streak, constantly throwing her head back to ensure no one is approaching from behind.

"She has so much spirit in her," Gilson says. "I've never seen so much energy and enthusiasm."

Long considered to embody the essence of the American West, the country's 38,400 free-roaming mustangs and burros are at the center of a debate over how to manage foraging space shared with other wild grazing animals and livestock.

The HSUS continues to push for the temporary fertility control vaccine PZP to play a larger role, noting that proper use would allow the Bureau of Land Management to keep wild horse and burro numbers in balance with what the land can sustain, without having to remove the animals from the range.

The BLM's current approach includes



helicopter-driven roundups in extreme temperatures and costly long-term holding facilities. To protest these actions, the House voted in February to cut \$2 million from the agency's budget. Soon after, the BLM announced it was accelerating "fundamental reforms" for the next two years, such as increasing the number of mares treated with PZP

from 500 to 2,000 annually.

"We're praising the BLM for the efforts that they're making to change the status quo and to fix the broken program," says HSUS wildlife scientist Stephanie Boyles. On the other hand, she notes, it's troubling that the plans still call for removing 15,200 additional mustangs over the next two years. — *Michael Sharp*

introduced, the laws could affect not only undercover investigators but the organizations that employ them, media outlets that report on their work, and even factory farm employees-turned-whistleblowers.

The Florida bill died, but at press time, the Iowa and New York bills were still alive, while Minnesota's appeared dead for this year. Even if they're not approved, all four measures could be back on the table in 2012. Joining animal advocates in roundly criticizing the bills were newspaper editorial boards, the American Civil Liberties Union, law school professors, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, food safety advocates, religious leaders, and representatives of law enforcement and organized labor.

"It infringes on freedom of the press; it infringes on the Fourth Amendment against warrantless searches and seizures," says Iowa ACLU's Anna Dey of the bill in her state. "It enhances

penalties [to the point that they] are harder than what we've seen even for hate crimes."

The Florida bill was introduced at the request of an industrial egg farm owner. Iowa's came about with the encouragement of that state's Farm Bureau and Poultry Association, still smarting from the HSUS egg factory investigations. Fresh from the HSUS Willmar investigation, Minnesota legislators lifted Iowa's language to introduce their own bill, with the backing of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council.

For the time being, the bills have done the industry more harm than good, with news reports featuring the very videos they are attempting to suppress, says Paul Shapiro, HSUS senior director of farm animal protection. "More and more people are hearing about and seeing cruelty to farm animals than if they had not introduced the bills at all." — *Karen E. Lange*



A Twofold Service

Unable to afford vet care, the tall man stood in the church parking lot, his little gray-and-white tabby huddled inside his jacket. “You could tell that he really loved that cat,” says The HSUS’s Amanda Arrington. “That was his baby. . . . He got tears in his eyes when he found out what we were going to be able to do.”

More than 150 people came to the HSUS clinic in Maywood, Ill., for rabies vaccines and spay/neuter vouchers (above), while inside the Proviso Baptist Church, city officials and pastors attended animal welfare seminars. Local leaders had formed sponsoring group Ministers Against Animal Cruelty after an HSUS Faith Outreach summit last fall. “They are absolutely on fire for this issue,” says The HSUS’s Christine Gutleben. “They see the real connection between helping people and animals.”

— Ruthanne Johnson

The Jury Is In

Neighbors of the Olivera Egg Ranch in Lathrop, Calif., have endured noxious odors and fly swarms for more than 10 years. The factory farm dumps manure from more than 600,000 caged chickens into a 13-acre cesspool. “At certain times, you can’t sleep with your windows open. You can’t go outside. And you can’t have your friends over,” says Larry Yepez (below, third from left), profiled in a 2009 *All Animals* story.

This May, a federal jury ruled in favor of a lawsuit filed by neighbors and The HSUS’s Animal Protection Litigation team, awarding residents more than \$500,000 in damages. “These people have been allowed to do this for too long,” says Yepez. “I was so grateful for the representation and to have attorneys with integrity. Without that, we would have had nothing. It was just us.”

— Ruthanne Johnson

TOP: SALLY RYAN; BOTTOM: DAVID PAUL MORRIS





Crunchtime Allies | Indiana group steps up for puppy mill dogs

Two days before Thanksgiving in 2010, a plan was coming together: Within a week, the HSUS Animal Rescue Team and local authorities would swoop down on an Indiana puppy mill. Personnel from around the country were gathering, equipment was arriving, and final details were being nailed down. But a crucial piece of the effort was still missing—the team hadn't found a suitable place to set up a temporary shelter for the scores of dogs needing rescue.

In Bloomington, HSUS Indiana state director Anne Sterling drove past the big

garage doors of the Pets Alive Spay/Neuter Clinic and wondered what was behind them. She asked to meet with the clinic's then-director, James McNamara.

"After swearing me to about eight kinds of secrecy, she explained to me what was going on," says McNamara. "We went all over the building to see if it would meet their needs. It was far from ideal, but ... we were able to make it work." He also offered the clinic's vans and volunteered to shuttle the dogs from the breeding kennel to The HSUS's rescue rig, which couldn't negotiate the hilly terrain surrounding the mill.

Over the course of the rescue, 122 dogs flowed through the temporary shelter, receiving veterinary checkups and emergency care. HSUS staff then transported them to be adopted through agencies in its Emergency Services Placement Partners program. McNamara, impressed by the rescuers' organization and efficiency, describes it as "three days of ... animal welfare shock and awe ... a sight to behold."

While Pets Alive had never before participated in this type of rescue operation, large numbers were nothing new for a clinic that averages 200 to 250 surgeries a week. Serving 16 counties in south central Indiana, the non-profit facility has spayed and neutered more than 47,000 cats and dogs in six years of operation—with a small staff consisting of two full-time veterinarians, five veterinary technicians, two administrators, and one driver.

"They were very open and flexible, willing to roll with the punches, which is what you have to be willing to do if you agree to something like this," says Sterling.

Even while the drama of the rescue unfolded in their midst, dedicated clinic staff continued their normal business, sterilizing 183 pets and earning admiration from the HSUS team. When McNamara heaped praise on the rescuers, "we felt the same about them," says The HSUS's Michelle Cascio. "They're doing their own amazing work but then also going above and beyond and allowing us to set up our emergency shelter there." — *Arna Cohen*

HOMETOWN HERO: Pets Alive, Bloomington, Indiana

► **SERVING THE MASSES:** Pets Alive provides low-cost spaying and neutering for owned pets and 19 shelters and rescue groups in a 90-mile radius. With his rescued dog for company, transport driver Nathan Scholten hits the road every weekday morning, often before dawn, to pick up animals from partnering agencies; in the afternoon he repeats the trek, delivering pets who are ready for adoption.

► **MAGNIFICENT MILESTONE:** The clinic will reach the 50,000-spay/neuter mark this summer, including 8,492 cats and dogs sterilized in 2010, plus 971 in February of this year in obser-

vance of The HSUS's Spay Day campaign. "They're one of the strongest low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter clinics that we have in the state," says HSUS Indiana state director Anne Sterling. "We're very lucky to have them."

► **MISSION POSSIBLE:** Spay/neuter is key to reducing the number of animals entering shelters, says interim director Melissa Kusturin, who learned this lesson while working as a shelter director. "We cannot build our way out of it. ... You cannot euthanize your way out of it ... [or] adopt your way out of it."

TORMENTED BY *FIRE*



It's roughly 40 minutes of pure terror. A bull is led into a jeering crowd and secured to a post, then forced into submission by the pressing weight of a dozen or more men. Bound to his horns is a wooden frame with two protruding spikes, each topped with flammable material wrapped in cloth.

The men light the contraption, and the terrified animal begins running, kicking, and bucking. He jabs his burning weapons at the taunting crowd, bellowing as fiery liquid drips onto his skin with each whirl of his head. Finally, he calms as the flames begin to die. But the spectacle is not done. *Crack-boom-pop!* Fireworks ignite, the onlookers cheer, and the bull's dance of terror begins once again.

It's unknown just how many hundreds of animals are tormented at the fire bull fiestas held across Spain. Not everyone agrees with the spectacle. Humane Society International and Partido Animalista PACMA have sent the regional interior and justice ministry more than 38,000 signatures calling for an end to the torture, demonstrating this is not an insular issue, says HSI vice president Kitty Block. "People around the world care about this, and it affects Spain's image as a humane country."
 — Ruthanne Johnson

Due Justice

Mississippi Strengthens Cruelty Law

In March, a Mississippi man allegedly set fire to his family's home, leaving his wife's dog trapped in a kitchen pen to die.

In April, another Mississippi man stood accused of choking his mother and beating four puppies to death with a metal pipe. According to *The Natchez Democrat*, he corrected the judge who read the charges: "It was a hammer, not a pipe."

The brutal incidents reinforced the need for Mississippi's new felony cruelty law, with provisions including increased penalties, counseling requirements, restitution for shelters that take in abused animals, and a ban on keeping dogs outside without adequate shelter.

Mississippi is the 47th state to pass a felony cruelty measure. Given the well-documented link between animal abuse and human violence, "having that in our laws is a big step forward," says HSUS Mississippi state director Lydia Sattler.

— Michael Sharp

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From Puppy Mill to Capitol Hill

Congressman Michael Grimm admits there was a tinge of sadness to the moment, back in late March, when a tiny Yorkshire terrier was carried into his office.

Grimm, a Republican who represents New York's 13th district, had worked with The HSUS to adopt the 9-week-old dog, rescued from a Missouri puppy mill by Columbia Second Chance Animal Rescue. One of two puppies to survive from his litter, Sebastian had battled lice, malnourishment, and parasites before arriving on Capitol Hill.

"Sadly enough," Grimm says, "the first thing that went through my mind is, how can someone treat something like this so cruel?"

But what a life Sebastian leads now.

He bursts into the office every morning, making the rounds to greet each staffer. At times, he makes himself at home on top of a desk—or runs in furious circles. He plays tug-of-war and carries his toy fox around. Come afternoons, he stakes out a familiar patch of sunshine for a little siesta.

"His favorite thing to do is be a pampered little puppy," says executive assistant Blaire Bartlett, joking that Sebastian's feet "touch the ground maybe three times a day."

Grimm had asked for the runt of the litter to ensure "they all get a home." Now, he touts the many benefits of having a dog around, like enhancing office morale and calming debates.

"We get some people that are on a different side [of] a position than I am and are very vocal about it," Grimm says. "And we'll give them Sebastian to play with for a few minutes, and it calms them right down."

A former Marine, Grimm has introduced the Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act to create a pilot program in which veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders train service dogs for their disabled comrades. He's also a cosponsor of the Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act to combat puppy mill abuses.

As Grimm speaks from a couch in his office, Sebastian lies stretched out between the congressman's legs, sleeping on his back, his tiny paws extended skyward.

"He has a great life, let me tell you," Grimm says. "If I had it to do all over again, I'd come back as Sebastian. Because he's getting a lot of attention, and ... he's treated better than the congressman in this office, I'll tell you that much. He is certainly in charge." — *Michael Sharp*

The Battle in Missouri Continues

HSUS supporters will once again go door to door in Missouri—this time collecting signatures to better safeguard the will of the people from the whims of the state legislature.

The need for such protection was starkly evident in April, when the state's lawmakers overturned the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act (Proposition B), less than six months after voters approved the law setting commonsense care standards for commercial breeding facilities. The HSUS was poised to challenge lawmakers' decision through a referendum, but the legislature then passed a "compromise" law omitting key provisions, such as limiting facilities to 50 breeding dogs. Lawmakers rushed the watered-down law into effect, preventing The HSUS from resurrecting Prop B.

Now, says HSUS Missouri state director Barbara Schmitz, the most urgent need is to make sure that the rules implementing the weaker law give dogs as much protection as possible, that they are enforced, and that they go into effect in November, when Prop B would have.

At the same time, The HSUS and allies are working to put a constitutional amendment on the 2012 ballot that will make it harder for Missouri legislators to overturn future voter-approved initiatives. And an HSUS lawsuit challenges a new provision requiring shelters to help pay for enforcement of puppy mill regulations. "They're already cleaning up after a for-profit industry," Schmitz says. "They shouldn't be asked to pay for the privilege." — *Karen E. Lange*