



With so much talk about our swelling federal deficit, The HSUS presented Congress and the White House with a series of recommendations to simultaneously reduce spending and save the lives of millions of animals. We've known for a long time it's not just private industries that cause harm to animals; our own federal government is a culprit, fleecing American taxpayers in the process.

One such program—the USDA's so-called Wildlife Services agency—is in the spotlight in this issue of *All Animals*. The program has the worthy goal of resolving human-wildlife conflicts, but the means it chooses are crude and even ruthless. Federal agents amass a staggering body count of predators, birds, and other wild animals by poisoning, shooting, and trapping them—all of it a de facto subsidy to ranchers and other special interests. Such a life-denying program would be an outrage even if it had a deficit-neutral effect, but by also burning through so many taxpayer dollars, it is a disgrace.

Lawmakers in the House last year voted to continue the spending and killing spree, and leaders at the USDA have also failed to rein it in. The agency even rejected a modest HSUS request to discontinue the use of two highly toxic and indiscriminate poisons, Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide, for predator killing.

In order to stop these abuses, we've got to hold public officials accountable and to demand change. For 2011, we looked at the wide range of issues before the Obama administration and affixed a grade to their performance. It was a subpar C-, a downgrade from better scores of B in 2010 and B- in 2009.

The administration took valuable actions to ban the transport of horses on double-decker trucks, to advocate that Congress increase funding for enforcement of animal welfare laws, and to block the import of sport-hunted polar bear trophies.

But it also badly weakened a rule to restrict the trade in exotic constrictor snakes for the pet trade. The administration rounded up and removed more than 10,000 wild horses from our public lands, it doled out billions in subsidies to factory farms, and it funded invasive experiments on chimpanzees—although a scientific report released in December on the use of chimps in laboratories has altered the trajectory of that issue for the better (see p. 10). And the administration was at its worst when it removed wolves from the list of federally protected species, sidled up to the slaughterhouse industry in working to nullify state laws that protect livestock from abuses, and developed plans to allow the killing of sea lions in the Northwest (which The HSUS blocked in federal court).

We look at how the states perform on animal issues, too. In January, we released our Humane State Rankings, scoring the states on 66 animal welfare policies. California, we determined, has the strongest policies, while South Dakota has the weakest.

At The HSUS, we drive reform in so many areas, and we also take stock of where we are—so that we can chart a path forward. Policymakers, corporations, and other influential decision-makers must realize that animal protection not only is a moral imperative, but has an enormous following. At The HSUS, we are 11 million supporters strong, and it's time to flex our collective muscle to change the legal, cultural, and social framework for animals in our country.

That's why we need both financial support and active engagement—your citizen lobbying, your civic engagement, and your conscious decision-making in the marketplace. When we act in intentional ways—in all decision-making forums in society—we drive the change that animals so desperately need.



COMING SOON: Don't miss Wayne Pacelle's New York Times bestseller, *The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them*, out in paperback in early April from William Morrow.

▶ **FOR MORE ON THE OBAMA AND STATE RANKINGS—and Wayne's podcast with author and radio show host Tracie Hotchner—check out his blog at humane.society.org/wayne.**

OBAMA REPORT CARD: C-

- Animal Welfare Funding..... +
- Horse Transport..... +
- Chimpanzee Protection..... +/-
- Puppy Mills..... +/-
- Wild Horses..... -
- Wolves..... -
- Downed Farm Animals..... -
- Lethal Predator Control..... -
- Agribusiness Subsidies..... -
- Sea Lions..... -
- Snakes..... -

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