HSUS Urges Breeding Moratorium
Supply of dogs and cats far exceeds demand

To those of us whose vocation is animal protection and to others who care deeply about animals, pet overpopulation is not new. Since the 1960s the HSUS and many other groups have worked to expose the problems caused by too many pets and too few homes. We’ve encouraged sterilization, education, and legislation to protect animals and address pet overpopulation.

Clearly progress has been made. Fewer dogs now enter shelters, more pets are sterilized, and more pet owners are responsibly dealing with their pets. People are helping to reduce the numbers of surplus animals and have made a positive difference. But much remains to be done.

• In virtually every community in this country, more than half—often as many as 75 percent—of the animals entering shelters are euthanatized. Their numbers far outstrip the demand for them as pets, and, with animals continually flooding into shelters, euthanasia is the only choice.
• Approximately half of all animals euthanatized are less than one year old—puppies and kittens.
• In 1992 the American Kennel Club (AKC) registered a record 1.5 million new dogs. Assuming optimistically that all of those dogs found homes, 1.5 million other dogs, already homeless and in shelters, lost the opportunity to move into those same homes.
• As many as 25 percent of the dogs and cats entering shelters are purebred—clear evidence that the breeding of purebred animals substantially contributes to the pet-overpopulation problem. (Breeders often dispute this conclusion, however.)
• The growing popularity of cats poses increasing problems for communities. The number of cats in shelters has steadily increased in the last ten years, as has the number euthanatized.
• Outside the shelters, many more animals are homeless on our streets and in back alleys. They lack adequate food, shelter, and veterinary care; most lead short, miserable lives.

The HSUS, along with many others, finds these facts troubling and unacceptable. For all that we and others have done, millions of animals are euthanatized every year because the supply far exceeds the demand. Our answer? We’re calling for a one-year, voluntary moratorium on the breeding of cats and dogs to help stem the tide of unwanted animals who must be euthanatized simply because they are surplus.

We are not calling for, nor are we working toward, a permanent ban on breeding or an end to pet ownership. What we intend to do, however, is create and support efforts to reduce further the numbers of surplus animals.

On March 18, 1993, Paul G. Irwin, president of The HSUS, made an announcement at a press conference held in Orlando, Florida, at the 1993 Animal Care Expo:

Beginning today, The HSUS is calling for a temporary moratorium on the breeding of dogs and cats. This means everyone—pet owners, shelter workers, legislators, and even professional breeders—must stop allowing animals to breed until this crisis has passed. This may seem like an extreme step, but we are convinced that the only way to relieve the suffering of companion animals is to take extreme and immediate action.

The HSUS proposal for a breeding moratorium is two-tiered. First, we ask that pet owners and breeders stop allowing their dogs and cats to breed during the moratorium. If everyone participates in this voluntary moratorium for just one year, it will significantly reduce the number of surplus dogs and cats. While no new animals are born, millions of homeless animals will have a real chance to find permanent homes.

During the Animal Care Expo in Orlando in March, The HSUS's Kate Rindy explains our call for a one-year moratorium on the breeding of companion animals. Paul G. Irwin, who announced the moratorium at the press conference, listens attentively.
One of millions of unwanted animals taken to shelters each year, this dog will have to beat the odds to find a permanent home.

Second, we are asking local and state legislators to support legislative breeding moratoria, mandatory sterilization laws, differential licensing,* and other animal-control ordinances. The HSUS will support any legislative measure that will help end the suffering of dogs and cats.

The HSUS announcement received unprecedented coverage from both national and local media. Television, newspaper, magazine, and wire-service reporters covered the March 18 press conference, in which Mr. Irwin, HSUS Executive Vice President Patricia Forkan, HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals, Marc Paulhus, and HSUS Legislative Assistant Kate Rindy participated. Actress Loretta Swit lent her support through a videotaped message.

The moratorium received its first public support from USA Today, where it was featured on the front page. In an editorial, the national newspaper said, "Because education and neutering programs haven’t stemmed the tide, the moratorium deserves consideration." CNN, the Associated Press, National Public Radio, NBC’s

*Setting different licensing fees for intact and spayed/neutered animals.
As many as 25 percent of dogs and cats entering shelters are purebred; many of them were originally purchased on impulse, at high prices, from pet stores.

place the burden of responsibility for surplus animals in the hands of those who should bear it: owners of intact pets and people who breed their animals.

The AKC has voiced its opposition to the voluntary moratorium, stating that the “American public wants purebred dogs because they know when they acquire a specific breed, they are assured of the size, coat, and temperament qualities an adult member of the breed will possess.” In reality, purchasing a registered purebred guarantees no such thing. A recently passed California law, supported by the AKC, requires that breeders selling dogs with registration papers post a sign that reads: “Breed or pedigree registration does not assure a healthy dog, nor does it guarantee the quality of the breeding conditions or the quality of the dog.” Furthermore, a disclosure must be included with the sale of every purebred dog that includes this statement:

Registration means only that the [name of registry] maintains information regarding the parentage and identity of this dog, it does not guarantee the quality or health of this dog, and it does not guarantee quality lineage. Since dog-pedigree registries depend in large part on the honesty and accuracy of persons registering dogs, registration does not guarantee the accuracy of the lineage recorded nor that this dog is purebred.

Even if registration papers did guarantee certain characteristics of an animal, The HSUS and many others cannot defend the right to produce a specific breed over the right of an animal in a shelter, whether purebred or mixed breed, to live. In virtually every community, there are too many animals and not enough homes. We cannot condone breeding until we have more significantly reduced that surplus.

Many breeders have lent their support to moratoria efforts. In a recent AKC survey published in its January 1992 Gazette, 96 percent of the breeders surveyed...
thought that pet overpopulation is a problem, and 84 percent said that they were willing to limit their breeding. Sixty-four percent stated that they supported restrictive breeding measures. While this is not a statement endorsing a moratorium on breeding, it echoes the response we have received from many breeders who are willing to cut back on breeding to help curb the surplus. Although there may be many breeders who believe that they act responsibly, there are many more who breed their animals without careful planning. Breeder regulations such as the ones passed in Denver and already in place in Ft. Wayne and San Mateo will help discourage indiscriminate breeding.

Our goal, as always, is to encourage and promote the responsible ownership of pets. The pet-overpopulation problem is multi-faceted; so too is the solution. The HSUS supports any effective effort to reduce the pet surplus and ensure that every animal born finds a lifelong, responsible home. One simple truth remains, however: there are too many animals being born and not enough homes. We, and many others, seek to change that imbalance.

WILDLIFE

Halting Destruction of Predators

Suit stops eight districts’ ADC activities

On millions of acres of public lands managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the government’s killing of predators has stopped. Due to actions taken by The HSUS, for the first time in more than two decades, the federal Animal Damage Control (ADC) program, which has systematically killed hundreds of thousands of predators, is facing a major challenge to the secret slaughter it conducts on public lands.

According to federal law, the BLM must allow certain activities on its lands under the rubric of “multiple use.” One of these activities, livestock grazing, is controversial because BLM grazing permittees pay much less to use federal lands than they would pay for privately owned lands. The dispute over livestock grazing on BLM lands is not just over grazing fees, but also the killing of wildlife.

Each year tens of thousands of coyotes, black bears, bobcats, mountain lions, and other wildlife are killed on BLM lands to protect privately owned livestock, primarily sheep. Most of the destruction by far is aimed at coyotes, who are trapped, poisoned, chased by dogs, shot from the air, or killed as pups in their dens. The killing is conducted largely with tax dollars under the ADC program, run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

According to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and regulations established under it, each BLM district on which predator control may be conducted must first assess the potential environmental impact of proposed predator-control activities. The ADC program staff, which carries out the predator control for those using BLM lands, must file an annual plan proposing specific control activities. The BLM must assess the environmental impact of each annual plan. If no changes are planned to the previous
Agreeing with our concerns, BLM headquarters staff in Washington, D.C., contacted each of the BLM's state offices. In a brief letter, all districts without current environmental assessments and ADC plans were instructed to inform ADC personnel to stop predator-control activities immediately. Although our objections focused on the worst offenders, most BLM districts ordered ADC personnel off their lands until they produce updated and adequate environmental plans.

Predators can still be killed on BLM lands under special, so-called emergency exemptions. Unfortunately, the BLM's guidelines for emergency control are far too broad. In some cases emergency control has been conducted based on the killing by coyotes of just two sheep. The HSUS is working to limit predator killing, by the most humane methods possible, only to individual predators known to have caused substantial losses.

Last year The HSUS surveyed all BLM districts to determine whether those districts permitting predator control were complying with NEPA requirements. We found that many were not, yet year after year these districts were authorizing aggressive predator-control activities. Not only was the slaughter of wildlife being perpetuated, but the public was theoretically being denied an opportunity to comment on the BLM decisions on predator control.

With pro bono assistance from the prestigious Washington, D.C., law firm of Miller & Chevalier, Chartered, The HSUS filed with the DOI's Board of Land Appeals objections to the programs of eight BLM districts. We asserted that the documents on which the predator-control programs were being conducted were outdated and inadequate. In Wyoming, for example, the Casper and Rawlins districts had not conducted environmental assessments of predator-control activities since 1984 and 1985, respectively. Not only were the environmental assessments wholly inadequate, but administration of the ADC program had been transferred from the DOI to the USDA in the meantime, and restrictions on the use of poisons by the ADC program and requirements for protection of threatened and endangered species had changed. Since these districts had failed to update their environmental assessments, there was no way to be certain that district officials were aware of and operating under the new restrictions.

Now the public's view of ADC activities on BLM lands will be unobstructed, and destruction of wildlife on behalf of the livestock industry will, at long last, be given the critical scrutiny it warrants.

—Susan Hagood, HSUS wildlife-issues specialist.
COMPANION ANIMALS

Expo Takes the East by Storm
The HSUS's big show gets great reviews

Two years ago The HSUS created Animal Care Expo, a yearly event that combines a trade show with an extensive array of educational opportunities for participants.

"The animal-care community needed an event that focused on training and enablement, resources, and materials," said HSUS President Paul G. Irwin. "The HSUS has the wherewithal to bring all that together under one roof. The animal-care community has embraced the expo concept with great enthusiasm."

Animal Care Expo has attracted people from all animal-care professions. This year more than 1,000 participants converged on Orlando, Florida, from March 17 to 20, on the heels of the East Coast's "storm of the century." The event boasted more than 100 exhibitors, offered three day-long seminars, and featured twenty-four diverse workshops.

"Anything you wanted to know about helping animals you could find here," said Karel Bott, a volunteer for two humane organizations in New York. "I wish every-
one I know could have come here with me. It's been an amazing experience."

Animal Care Expo '93 opened with three eight-hour course offerings carrying continuing education credits. Attendees could choose a workshop on disaster preparedness for humane agencies, a seminar on coping with the stress of animal euthanasia, or an intensive course on animal cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid.

Nationally recognized experts conducted seminars on subjects such as feral cats, identifying animals using microchips, and publicizing 1993 as "The Year of the Cat.

Alpo Petfoods sponsored a "welcome" luncheon, at which keynote speaker Gus W. Thornton, D.V.M., president of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, urged those in the animal-protection movement to work together to help animals. "The greatest benefits for animals usually are obtained through effective communication and reasoned dialogue with each other, government, industry, academia, and the public," he said.

Working together, Dr. Thornton suggested, is also the prescription for the tragic problem of pet overpopulation. "It will require the combined efforts and commitment of research and practicing veterinarians, veterinary organizations, animal-protection organizations and their members, breeders and organizations of purebred-dog breeders, legislators, and licensing-and-control agencies," he said. "Each has something to bring to the solution; none can do it alone."

When the exhibit hall opened on the second day, the expo went into high gear. Attendees met with vendors of a wide...
It’s not too early to start planning to join us for Animal Care Expo ’94. The HSUS has scheduled the event for March 16–19, 1994, at the Town and Country Hotel in San Diego, California. Look for details in future HSUS publications.

Top: Expo coordinator John Dommers welcomes attendees in Orlando. Above: HSUS Executive Vice President Patricia Forkan, Dr. Thornton, Mr. Hoyt, and John Prange, D.V.M., of Alpo Petfoods, enjoy Wednesday’s luncheon.

range of products—everything from animal-rescue vans to direct-mail fundraising packages. Equipment suppliers demonstrated animal-handling equipment (using stuffed animals), animal-shelter technicians inspected new caging systems, and shelter directors sampled advanced computer-software programs.

“It’s the hands-on aspect of the expo that I really like,” said Nicky Ratliff, director of the Humane Society of Carroll County (Maryland), as she examined a pair of protective gauntlets. “You see things in catalogs and wonder what they feel like and how well they work. But you come here and you get to put your hands on things. Then you order the equipment that you really want as opposed to what you think you want.”

Exhibitors were equally enthusiastic. “We thought it was a really fantastic opportunity,” said Terry Cairns, general manager of Wildlife Pharmaceuticals, Inc., of Fort Collins, Colorado. “We learned about problems out in the field, and that will help us develop new drugs to meet the needs of the animals. It’s one of the best conferences that we attend—so many different people come here, from the veterinarian to the person in the trenches rescuing animals.”

“This was my first expo, and it was an outstanding experience,” said Linda Winterburn, president of Tabby Tags, a California-based company that makes identification tags for cats.

Thanks to generous corporate sponsorships, Animal Care Expo ’93 also provided participants with opportunities to meet at special social events and food breaks. In addition to Alpo Petfoods, sponsors included The Iams Company, Gaines/Cycle, Shor-Line/Schroer Manufacturing Company, and Animal Care Equipment & Services. Other sponsors were Nature’s Recipc Pet Foods, Grizzard Advertising, National Dog Registry, Vortech Pharmaceuticals, the Florida Animal Control Association, C. Specialties, PowerHouse Marketing, and the Mason Company.

The HSUS used the expo as an opportunity to hold a press conference that generated national publicity on an issue close to the hearts of hundreds of thousands of HSUS constituents: cat and dog overpopulation. The HSUS called for a one-year voluntary breeding moratorium to reduce the number of animals born who will never know the comforts of a loving home (see page 4).

For those who deal with the tragedy of pet overpopulation, the expo provided a needed break from their daily work. “I make the expo part of my vacation plans,” said Jessica Hamil, a sheltering professional from Las Vegas who also attended the first expo.

The HSUS thanks everyone who helped make this year’s event such a success.—Geoffrey L. Handy, editor; Shelter Sense.
INVESTIGATIONS

Zoo Accused of Elephant Abuse
Prosecutor rules evidence is insufficient

T

wo years ago the people of Milwau
tee erupted in outrage as Lota, an
elephant living at the Milwaukee
County Zoo, was, in the opinion of many,
brutally mistreated as she was being sent
from the zoo to a circus (see the Spring
1992 HSUS News). The HSUS, con-
cerned Milwaukee citizens, and some of
the zoo’s employees vowed to
monitor the treatment of ele-
phants more closely. To our shock
and dismay, a two-year investiga-
tion has revealed what we believe
to be some of the more abusive
elephant-handling practices we
have yet uncovered at any Ameri-
can zoo.

This is the story of “Moola,” a
former companion of Lota’s, who
could not have known, on that
dreadful day two years ago when
Lota was so thoroughly beaten,
that she would be the next to be
abused by zoo staff.

Lota had been the matriarch of
the Milwaukee herd, and Moola’s
difficulties began within weeks of
Lota’s removal. A feisty eleven-
year-old, Moola began ignoring
some of her keepers’ commands,
perhaps asserting her position in
the herd hierarchy after Lota’s re-
moval. Her actions weren’t dan-
gerous—we have been assured by
elephant keepers. In our opinion
The HSUS’s recommended
hands-off elephant-management
 guidelines* or a return of Lota to
the herd could have solved the
problem. Instead, expanding on
what we consider an archaic ele-
phant-management policy of
dominance, zoo management be-
gan a regimen of handling Moola
that one veteran Milwaukee ele-
phant keeper termed “sadistic” and two
others called “abusive.” Zoo staff, under
instructions from management, began to
chain and beat Moola regularly and even
tried using electrical prods. One witness,
a Milwaukee Zoological Society member
visiting the zoo during one of Moola’s
training sessions, reported that Moola
“appeared to be confused at the orders she
was given. ... We saw them [zoo employ-
ees] hit the elephant so hard that she bled.
Everyone gasped. I’ve never seen such a
thing done to an elephant.” Another wit-
tness to a separate incident stated:

When he [a handler] was hitting her in
the rear end, they had her shackled, lying
on her belly so that she couldn’t move. He
would hit her for a couple of minutes, then
pause, then hit her again. It was getting
harder and harder, and faster and faster,
and that is when [Moola] started to break
down. People were crying; two kids were
crying. . . .

Another witness to the same incident
said, “There were children crying and say-
ing, ‘Momma, why are they doing that?’”
She stated that the beating lasted
at least fifteen minutes.

Another incident occurred in
August, and another zoo visitor
complained to the zoo. She told
The HSUS, “What came next was
uncalled for. The trainer raised
his hook and struck the elephant
five times on the trunk. Five hard
blows. It just shocked me and my
family, as well as two other fami-
lies that were standing next to us.
We all just kind of looked at each
other in disbelief.” The trunk is an
extremely sensitive and vital part
of an elephant’s anatomy, and
damaging it can permanently de-
bilitate an elephant. A witness to
another incident said:

The elephant was cowering,
obviously terrified and trying to
escape each of the agonizing
blows but could not because her
legs were chained. . . . I noticed
all the terrified children observ-
ing this unbelievable scene and
recall several children crying out,
“Mommy, why are they hitting
that elephant?”

Another witness summed up:

According to witnesses, elephant handlers at the Milwaukee
County Zoo repeatedly beat Moola while she was chained.
"I have never seen an animal treated like that. . . . The Milwaukee zoo has really gone downhill." Many other witnesses related similar incidents; all accounts were consistent with each other and the statements of zoo employees.

Several conscientious elephant keepers who had participated in the sessions with Moola but could tolerate no more began to speak out. In her daily report to zoo management, Carol Franecki said that Moola "had had enough of what, in my opinion, constituted abuse." Ms. Franecki described numerous incidents in which she believed Moola was abused. After speaking with management, local media, and The HSUS, Ms. Franecki was promptly transferred out of the elephant program. She was told by zoo management that she was transferred for "not being a team player." Another Milwaukee County Zoo elephant keeper, Jim Rueda, told The HSUS, "I hate to see Moola being put through hell. What I've seen is abuse. We want to make people accountable for their actions." Mr. Rueda also has been transferred out of the elephant program. (The zoo's position is that neither of these transfers was related to the employees' speaking out about Moola.) A third keeper, Bob Czaplewski, said, "In my opinion, what they're doing to her is cruel." Mr. Czaplewski claims to have seen Moola beaten with a hose and an ankus (a metal hook used in elephant training) misused to punch holes in her skin.

None of the employees who spoke out did so to damage the reputation of the Milwaukee County Zoo. Ms. Franecki, who had been an elephant keeper at the zoo for four-and-a-half years, said, "I don't want to give our entire zoo a black eye, because we have got so many dedicated and caring people at that zoo, but what I have seen go on in the elephant house over the last six months is more than I can handle." Although Ms. Franecki was a reluctant participant in some of the allegedly abusive incidents involving Moola, she is coming forward solely out of concern for the health and safety of the elephants. She could not stand the thought, as the elephant manager allegedly told her, that, "if need be, this elephant will be on chains for the rest of her life."

The three zoo employees who spoke with The HSUS believe that the primary problem at the zoo is not with individually abusive keepers but with zoo management. Each employee attempted to solve the problems through internal channels before speaking with The HSUS. Ms. Franecki described one incident that helped her conclude that the problem would not be solved by management:

What I had to do with her [Moola] on the eleventh of January was abuse. . . . I put quite a few holes in her. . . . I said to [the elephant manager], "I'm not doing this anymore; I'm done. . . . What I just did to her constitutes, in my opinion, abuse; I will have no part of this, and I'm not going to ever do this again." And he said, "You can't say that to me." . . . There was blood on the floor; blood on her feet. . . . I opened her up and the wounds were bleeding. So he [the elephant manager] decided to medicate two of them, out of thirty. . . . I told [the elephant manager] and [the area supervisor] that I thought it was abuse. He [the elephant manager] said, "We're going to go back in and do it again, until we get the desired behavior from this elephant."

Mr. Rueda, an elephant keeper at the zoo from 1984 until July 1992, agreed that the problem is with management: "What I've seen is abuse. . . . Everything you see there is a big coverup. What I want is accountability for the management of those animals."

Milwaukee's premier television news investigative team, superstation WTTV's Victoria Ray and Duane Gay, knew something was amiss at the zoo. WTTV had won a major journalism award for its reporting of Lota's move. The station recently began airing the employees' complaints and the zoo's responses. The zoo then attacked WTTV. Zoo director Charles Wikenhauser, who has steadfastly defended the zoo's methods of handling elephants, filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, alleging bias on the part of Ms. Ray. As evidence of her alleged bias, Ms. Wikenhauser noted that, during Lota's beating, "bystanders witnessed [Ms. Ray] crying while covering the story. We felt then and still feel that she could not possibly cover a matter dealing with an elephant with an open mind." Lota's treatment was one of the most shocking examples of animal mishandling ever captured on videotape; thousands of people across the country must have cried as they viewed the tape. It could be argued that no feeling person could view that videotape without showing emotion. For Mr. Wikenhauser to state that Ms. Ray's off-air reaction indicates bias is ludicrous. We should be suspicious of those who view Lota's treatment as acceptable, standard elephant management—which brings us to the Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS) and the Milwaukee County district attorney's office.

The HSUS has no formal ties with local humane societies around the country. While we work closely and cooperatively...
with most local humane societies, they are entirely autonomous. That autonomy is a good thing, as responsibility for protecting animals within each state should fall to local humane societies and other local animal-protection groups. However, regrettably, sometimes disputes arise between groups. Such is the case in Milwaukee, where the Wisconsin Animal Protection Society, Students for Animal Rights, and HSUS members believe that mistreatment—grounded in an archaic and misguided policy of elephant management—exists in the zoo’s elephant program, and the WHS (which is located in the city) has repeatedly taken the position that no prosecutable offenses have been committed. The assistant district attorney assigned to the case, George Prietz III, is on the board of directors of the WHS. Mr. Prietz was the assistant district attorney assigned to the Lota case, and he joined the WHS board after he had accepted the recommendation of the WHS (against the recommendation of The HSUS) that Lota’s tormentors not be charged with cruelty. Mr. Prietz has indicated that he will base his decision whether to file cruelty charges over Moola’s treatment primarily on the WHS’s recommendation. When three different animal-protection groups are demanding cruelty charges and one is not, we believe the district attorney assigned to the case should have at least revealed that he was on the board of directors of the group opposing cruelty charges and considered removing himself from the case.

On May 12 Mr. Prietz ruled that no prosecutable misconduct had occurred at the zoo. He said that “the conduct, even if reprehensible, did not cause pain, or suffering or injury,” even though three zoo elephant keepers and many witnesses claimed to have observed the pain and suffering firsthand. Several nationally known elephant experts, prepared to testify on the elephants’ behalf, were never called. As in the Lota case, Mr. Prietz’s decision is final and unappealable. As of May 20, neither the district attorney’s office nor the WHS had released its investigative reports on the matter.—Michael Winikoff, HSUS legal investigator

Victory In Sight

On May 29 the Milwaukee zoo announced that it intends to abandon its Asian-elephant program and send its three Asian elephants to other facilities. The HSUS believes that it is the zoo’s—and Milwaukee County’s—responsibility to relocate the elephants to appropriate sanctuaries. If you agree with us, please write Charles Wikenhauser (Director, Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 West Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226) and County Executive Thomas Ament (901 N. 9th St., Room 306, Milwaukee, WI 53233). 

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