HSUS Continues to Fight Puppy-Mill Abuse

Over the past ten years, The HSUS has worked to improve conditions in commercial breeding establishments known as “puppy mills.” Our efforts accelerated when the Midwest and West Coast regional offices teamed up to investigate midwest puppy mills that have been exporting sick and diseased puppies to California. This investigation also would provide valuable information to help support legislation in California aimed at limiting the age of puppies shipped into the state.

Under current law, puppies can be taken from their mothers when they are between six and eight weeks old. Many animal protectionists, veterinarians, and even pet-shop owners agree that this is too early an age for them to be taken from their mothers.

As one pet-shop employee put it, “These puppies leave their mothers before they are socialized, and their lack of socialization creates abnormal personalities and behavior.”

Thus, A.B. 4500, introduced in the California legislature by Assemblyman Sam Farr, is right on target. Farr’s bill will stop the shipment of puppies under twelve weeks of age into and out of California.

Age is not the only factor that has so many buyers of pet animals upset. Because of crowded, filthy conditions and poor breeding practices, puppy mills are producing puppies with diseases and deformities. Most consumers are unaware that the irresistible “puppy in the window” they purchased is often diseased or deformed.

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Maddox Speaks in Four States

When humane societies in the Midwest need an expert in animal welfare to speak to their groups, they often turn to The HSUS’s Midwest Regional Office. Recently, groups in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska called on your regional director, Wendell Maddox, to conduct workshops or speak at their meetings.

These talks reached more than 250 professionals and volunteers dedicated to helping animals. What follows is an overview of each talk.

Springfield, Mo.—“The Role of Today’s Humane Society” was the topic when Maddox addressed the annual membership dinner of the Southwest Missouri Humane Society, held April 14 in Springfield.

Traditionally, humane groups concentrate their efforts on aiding stray dogs and cats, he noted. “But a humane society of today has to broaden its programs to fight many forms of animal exploitation: dog and horse racing, animal fighting, trapping, exotic-animal actions, and many more.”

In calling on the Southwest Missouri Humane Society members to meet this new challenge, Maddox used a popular quote continued on page 2

Filthy, unsanitary conditions characterize many puppy-mill operations. Cutting costs usually prevails over humane care and housing.
The Midwest Regional Office was called upon to investigate conditions at these facilities to find out why so many consumers who purchased sick and diseased pet puppies are being produced with puppies from pet stores in the Sacramento, Calif. area. The origin of these sick puppies was traced to midwestern puppy mills. The West Coast Regional Office has investigated a number of puppy mills we investigated have also put an end to the needless pain and suffering of animals in puppy mills. The HSUS will continue to work towards putting an end to the needless pain and suffering of animals in puppy mills.

Later in a four-part news story that has been shown in cities throughout the nation, Conditions at the facilities were deplorable. On days when the temperature exceeded 100 degrees, Maddox and the television crew observed dogs without shade from the hot sun and little or no water. Several dogs were obviously sick and diseased. None appeared to have ever been given a bath or groomed. Many had open, fly-infested skin sores. Since the airing of the news story of the investigation, one pet store in Sacramento has voluntarily gone out of business. We have also received reports that two Kansas puppy mills we investigated also voluntarily shut down.

The HSUS will continue to work towards putting an end to the needless pain and suffering of animals in puppy mills.

**LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**

- **NEBRASKA**—The Nebraska Coalition of Humane Societies has targeted laws to ban the use of steel-jaw traps. The coalition will also work toward passage of a law to license commercial breeding facilities.
- **MISSOURI**—Over the past three years The HSUS has conducted a vigorous campaign to defeat legislation to legalize dog racing in Missouri. We will be aggressively working with other groups during the coming legislative session to assure another defeat.

We also plan to enlist the support of humane groups to encourage enactment of a law to ban use of decomposition chambers for euthanizing animals.

During the legislative session, a bill to require state licensing and inspections of puppy mills and another bill to require felony convictions for those involved in cockfighting were held up in committee. We will work to have these bills moved out of committee and voted into law.

- **KANSAS**—Currently, under Kansas law, cockfighters can be charged for cruelty to animals as a misdemeanor. We will seek passage of a felony law, with much stiffer penalties, to stop this cruel activity.
- **IOWA**—The Iowa Federation of Humane Societies has tentatively set its legislative priorities for the coming session. The group will work in the state anti-cruelty laws, a law requiring rabies vaccinations for cats, and a ban on the use of the steel-jaw trap.

The City of Olathe owns the shelter and runs animal control. In early 1987, longtime HSUS member and Olathe resident Kathy McKee approached Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox for assistance after a change in city council members brought drastic changes in policies for building the shelter. McKee says, “The shelter, at 6200 square feet, was estimated to cost about a half-million dollars.

“The new council went into shock and started suggesting cuts, such as downsizing the shelter by 50 percent and eliminating air conditioning for the animals. Even though I didn’t know Wendell very well at the time, he picked up the phone while I was still in his office and made an appointment to visit then continued on page 4

**Maddox Speaks continued from page 1**

from Gandhi: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” He then urged the members to work towards building our own country’s greatness by alleviating the suffering of animals.

Fremont, Neb.—On June 2, Maddox visited Fremont to speak to a group that has formed the Dodge County Humane Society. He offered ideas on fund-raising, volunteer programs, staffing, and the role of the board of directors.

Parsons, Kans.—The board of directors of the Parsons Humane Society invited Maddox to tour the shelter and speak at its June 29 meeting. He addressed their problem of “burn-out” by offering fresh ideas on how to attract new volunteers, staff the shelter, and work with the city.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa.—At a three-day conference in April sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Humane Societies, Maddox was invited to conduct a workshop. His presentation on fund-raising highlighted such tried-and-true methods as selling stationery, holding garage sales, and organizing special events. In addition, he explained the role of the membership committee and techniques for researching grants to fund animal-welfare projects.

Humane groups in any part of the four-state area are always welcome to contact the Midwest Regional Office for assistance with community problems.

**Giving Shelter in Olathe—HSUS Lends a Helping Hand**

At long last, after three years of planning and many debates, the Olathe Animal Shelter was scheduled to open in August 1988.

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Olathe Shelter
continued from page 3

Assistant City Manager Bill Zeladsny the very next day."

Armed with HSUS drawings and model shelter operation documents, Maddox's work with city officials was a smashing success. While the city did indeed cut the shelter's size to about 4900 square feet, the cost was cut to approximately $315,000. This version was adequate for proponents and modest enough for opponents. Most importantly, the shelter was constructed to meet HSUS standards—including air conditioning throughout the building, separate puppy and kitten rooms, observation/isolation area, examination/euthanasia room, adaption room, reception area, thirty-six-run kennel area, kitchen, utility area, and separate animal-control office.

Two other bonuses came out of Maddox's involvement with McKee and the shelter issue—McKee's founding of the Humane Society of Olathe and the subsequent rewriting of the city's animal-control ordinance to meet HSUS guidelines. Concluded Maddox, "This much success for animals in a period of about fifteen months was very gratifying."