Bullfighting Surfaces in Texas

A renewed threat of animal abuse has emerged this past summer in the form of “bloodless bullfight.” We are urging HSUS members to be prepared to oppose and protest these events if they are scheduled in your area.

The traditional bullfight is one of the most vicious and grotesque forms of torture man has contrived. Before the actual fight—before the matador makes his entrance—the picadors on horseback repeatedly stab the bull in the neck and head area to weaken him. After completely exhausting the bull with cape maneuvers, the matador kills him with a sword thrust, to the wild cheering of the crowd.

In the bloodless version of the bullfight, the bull is not killed. However, it is tormented and harassed during the fight to the point of complete exhaustion and bewilderment. The bullfight is a tragic statement on man’s inability to feel compassion for other living creatures.

When we first learned of an upcoming bullfight in San Antonio, our field investigator, Bernie Weller, and Dr. Amy Freeman Lee, a leading humanitarian in San Antonio, met with the city attorney. An exhaustive effort was made to stop the fight through legal means. The city attorney, however, did not feel there was precedence to apply the state anti-cruelty code to “bloodless” bullfight exhibitions.

HSUS attorneys found there were several other states that consider the bullfight torture and therefore illegal. An attempt is now underway to obtain a ruling from the Attorney General of Texas to declare the bloodless bullfight a violation of Texas anti-cruelty law.

Important New Laws

The year 1981 has been a record-breaking year for new animal protection laws in the Gulf States Region. Active humane groups and individuals joined with The HSUS to support these meaningful animal welfare bills and make them a reality. Following is a report of the new legislation passed into law:

Arkansas
- *Dogfighting*—The present law was strengthened to make it illegal to promote, engage in, or be a spectator at a dogfight. It is also unlawful to train, sell, or possess a dog for fighting.
- *Spaying and Neutering*—Prohibits shelters supported by public funds from adopting out animals that will not be spayed or neutered.

Oklahoma
- *Humane Euthanasia*—Outlaws decompression, shooting, hot boxes, and other cruel methods. Allows for use of sodium pentobarbital and pure carbon monoxide.

Texas
- *Animal Shelters*—Sets minimum standards of housing and sanitation for larger shelters throughout Texas.
- *Humane Euthanasia*—Makes sodium pentobarbital available to shelters and outlaws some of the cruel methods of euthanizing animals.
- *Zoos and Circuses*—Sets up standards to promote humane conditions for animals in roadside zoos and animal displays.
Game Preserves: Pay-For-Slaughter

In the United States there are over 3000 facilities where the modern sportman may kill domestically-raised animals that are held confined for that purpose. Over 400 of these preserves have exotic big game species ready for slaughter by the weekend hunter. Unfortunately, our Gulf States Region has its share of these ‘game preserves.’

Preserve animals are accustomed to the presence of humans. In some instances they may unsuspectingly walk up to the hunters, expecting to be offered food. Instead, they are given the barrel end of the rifle. There are many grisly stories about hunters’ bungled attempts to slay these animals. Hunters are often escorted about preserves and kill their quarry without ever getting out of their vehicles.

The Humane Society of the United States is firmly opposed to the killing of any living creature just for trophy or for recreation—not solely for the animal’s sake, but also because of the negative effect of sport hunting on children who may learn irresponsible attitudes toward living creatures.

Preserve hunts of big game animals are defended on the premise that such activity reduces hunting pressure upon natural populations of these game species. This theory, however, is questionable. It is not simply that the lives of rare animals are being wasted on shooting preserves; the high fees charged by preserve operators for hunts of unusual animals promote the idea that the rarer the species the greater the hunter’s glory. This childish attitude will then encourage hunting in the wild of endangered species.

Hunters often defend their sport by claiming they help control overpopulation of wildlife. This argument obviously is not valid on a hunting preserve where animals are stocked according to the hunters’ needs. The hunting preserve reinforces the fact that these so-called sportmen hunt because they enjoy killing, not to control wildlife populations.

The HSUS Gulf States Office carried out an in-depth investigation of organized cockfighting in Louisiana during the past six months. Undercover HSUS investigators were used to infiltrate this illegal activity and actually attended several cockfights.

Cockfighting is one of the more widely practiced “blood sports” which include dogfighting and bullfighting among others. People involved in cockfighting often feel it is not a serious offense because the animals are “only chickens.”

HSUS Regional Director Bill Meade said that the Louisiana investigation confirmed there is illegal gambling, unlawful alcohol sales, and other drug and weapon offenses associated with cockfight crowds. Investigators also found that young people and children attend and participate in the activity. The two separate pits investigated were located in Vinton and West Lake, Louisiana. Our investigators found crowds that numbered in the hundreds. A carnival atmosphere prevailed with people laughing, drinking and betting on cockfights.

After the fights, which would last from just a few minutes up to twenty minutes, the injured and dying birds were dumped outside with no concern about ending their suffering.

Arkansas Puppy Mill Investigated

Many of the puppies you see in pet stores have been bred and raised in “puppy mills.” These pet breeding operations are generally found in rural midwestern areas. This pet breeding business came about, in part, because many small farmers could no longer compete with the industrialized giants in the poultry business. It was a simple matter for them to put puppies in the coops instead of chickens.

The HSUS said they did not have time to clean up because they had no control over the facility. Conditions were so unsanitary our investigators found it difficult to get inside the kennel. Conditions were so unsanitary our investigators found it difficult to get inside the kennel. Conditions were so unsanitary our investigators found it difficult to get inside the kennel.

An HSUS undercover investigator examines a dying bird following a cockfight. Birds are badly slashed by gaffs tied on each rooster's leg.

Norman, Oklahoma—The Citizens’ Humane Commission announced they are starting a financial assistance program to aid in spaying and neutering animals adopted from the Norman shelter. This is an excellent project for this new group.

Garland, Texas—Ground breaking for the Garland Humane Society’s new shelter is about to get under way. The new shelter is to have the unusual name of Animal Recovery Center (ARC).

Alexandria, Louisiana—A coalition of Louisiana Animal Activists (COLAA) was formed in May under the guidance of Holly Reynolds. This will be a federation of all interested humane groups in Louisiana.

Brownwood, Texas—Hume education projects were expanded by the Brown County Humane Society during Be Kind To Animals Week. Included were slide presentations for school groups and shelter tours.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please place The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office on your society’s mailing list. We would like to know your accomplishments for Around the Region.
The man living next door has a beautiful, large German Shepherd as friendly as she can be, but her owner beats her practically every day. You see this, day after day, but feel powerless to help. What can you do?

This cruelty, and other similar cases like starvation, abuse, or lack of shelter or veterinary care, can be halted if you are willing to act. Once you are, you need to know the laws and exactly what to do.

There are anti-cruelty laws in all states. These laws generally make it illegal to abuse, injure, torture, abandon, overwork, or cruelly kill an animal, or to fail to provide food, care, and shelter for the animal. The specific laws in the Gulf States Region are as follows:

ARKANSAS—Chapter 9, Section 41-2918 through 41-2962
OKLAHOMA—Section 1685 and 1681 through 1691.
LOUISIANA—Statute 14:102
TEXAS—Penal Code Section 42:11 and Civil Statutes Art. 182a

Each of the states also has laws that allow humane society agents or law enforcement officers to stop a cruelty or impound a mistreated animal. Any HSUS member needing a complimentary copy of the state anti-cruelty laws may write to The HSUS Gulf States Office.

To have these laws enforced you must find out who is the enforcement agency within your area. It will be either the local humane society or animal control officer. In areas where there is no animal agency, the responsibility rests with the sheriff or police department.

If your local humane society investigates cruelties but is failing to solve a problem, directly contact the organization’s president. If that fails, discuss the alleged cruelty with the police department or prosecuting attorney’s office.

Generally, when registering a cruelty complaint, you must sign a written statement of complaint and ask specifically for action to be taken. If this produces no result, you should move up the chain of command to the chief of police, city manager, or elected officials.

If you have followed these procedures and are still not getting assistance, contact The HSUS Gulf States Office and we will try to assist you with the problem.