Lab Animal Suffering Widespread in Region

We don’t generally think of laboratory animal problems as a part of the Great West. However, some of the most reprehensible animal experiments are being conducted daily in our Gulf States Region.

In San Antonio, Texas, at the Fort Sam Houston burn center, live pigs and rats have their skins purposely burned away with blow torches. They are then studied so that burn treatments can be developed. These horrendous experiments have been an ongoing activity, even though burn center officials claimed to have stopped them in 1981.

At the same time, Fort Sam Houston has also been conducting “wound ballistic research,” whereby live goats are shot in the legs with M-14 or M-16 rifles. These mutilated goats are then treated and observed while trauma takes place. Thirty goats are shot for each training course, resulting in 600 goats killed yearly.

Alternatives to the use of live animals in wound research are available and should be used. Many authorities, veteran surgeons with battlefield experience, strongly disagree with this type of research. A wound created by shooting dogs or goats cannot prepare a medical student as a battlefield surgeon. The body size and anatomy of any other species is markedly different from a human.

The HSUS has mounted a public pressure campaign to halt all shooting of animals for wound studies. To help stop these atrocities, write your representatives and the Secretary of Defense.

In a different type of animal experiment, The National Center for Toxicological Research in Jefferson, Arkansas, plans to use 150 rhesus monkeys. The monkeys will be strapped down and forced to smoke marijuana; some will be injected with its active ingredient while others will be killed so their brains can be studied.

A new animal research facility, costing taxpayers one million dollars, is being constructed to carry out this research. Additional animal experiments will probably be planned for the facility to justify its original cost.

The HSUS Gulf States Office has questioned officials about the need for the “marijuana” project and is attempting to halt its initiation. Citizens writing their representatives is the best way to protest this needless torture of primates.
Carriage Horse Problems in San Antonio, Texas

A number of accidents involving horse-drawn carriages forced the city council recently to examine carriage use in the city. Based on factors of stress and danger to the horses, The HSUS strongly opposed these operations. Also, when he visited San Antonio, Field Investigator Bernie Weller found sores on the animals, inexperienced drivers, and ill-fitting harness equipment being used. Texas humanitarians defeated a bill that would have legalized pari-mutuel horse racing in the state. Had it passed, a great increase in the abusive drugging of horses would have occurred.

OKLAHOMA — Representative Steve Sill’s bill to prohibit pound seizure (H.B. 1159) has passed the house committee and will be brought up for a full vote in January 1984. With a strong effort by Oklahoma humane societies, this bill has a good chance of passage.

LOUISIANA — The new 1982 anti-cruelty law (R.S. 14:102.1 through R.S. 14:102.5) was amended to include all domestic animals. A typographical error in the original bill had caused this oversight.

The new 1981 roadside zoo bill (Article 4447v) has passed the house committee and will be brought up for a full vote in January 1984. With a strong effort by Oklahoma humane societies, this bill has a good chance of passage.

TEXAS — A strong law (Penal Code Section 42.111) was passed making it a felony to sponsor, promote, or benefit from a dogfight. Eight participants and spectators can also be convicted of a misdemeanor. The law also provides for seizing the dogs, the vehicles used for transporting them, and any training equipment found.

The new 1981 roadside zoo bill (Article 4447v) was amended in an effort to cover zoos previously exempted because of licensing by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The HSUS Gulf States Office furnished guidance and information to council members on the need for this expanded spaying and neutering program. It has long been recognized that any shelter that adopts out unneutered animals only adds to the future animal overpopulation problem. Cities with mandatory spay/neuter requirements find they are actually saving money through reducing the number of animals handled.

The new Oklahoma City ordinance requires a $25 fee to cover the cost of surgically neutering a pet. An additional $20 fee covers the cost of rabies and other needed vaccinations.

The success of this program will depend on how well the shelter and city government follow through with enforcement for all adopted animals.

1984 SPRING WORKSHOP HEADED FOR LOUISIANA

HSUS members and friends in Louisiana and surrounding states will have an opportunity next year to increase their knowledge and effectiveness in working for animal protection. A workshop will be held in Baton Rouge during March 1984. Issues covered will include: spay/neuter programs, cruelty investigation, educational approaches, and many other current issues.

The exact dates and location will be announced soon, but plan now to be with us in March.

LEGISLATION

“Sody Pop” the Bear Gets New Quarters

One of the longest and most exasperating cases in the history of The HSUS Gulf States Office has been “Sody Pop,” the bear. Since 1973, The HSUS has attempted to bring improvements in the bear’s care and housing under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

“Sody Pop” was displayed in Quinlan, Texas, as an attraction in a roadside market. He lived in a cramped rundown cage full of fit and broken glass. The public would feed him soft drinks and candy purchased from the market. Each time The HSUS reported the violations to USDA, a report was filed, but no corrective action taken.

Finally, after years of being in violation of federal legislation, the bear’s owner was sued by USDA. However, because he told the judge he was planning for a new cage, the years of being in violation were dismissed!

A recent re-investigation revealed “Sody Pop” now does have a legally adequate enclosure. Still questionable, however, is the care he’s given, and we have filed yet another request with USDA to enforce standards.

Reflect for a moment... how can I help animals even when I no longer share their world...?

By your request for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States. Your will provide for animals after you’re gone.

Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the Society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material which will assist in planning a will.

Please send: Will information
Name
Address
City State Zip


Oklahoma City Mandates Spay/Neuter

The Oklahoma City Council has passed a progressive new ordinance requiring the spaying or neutering of all adopted shelter animals. City Manager Scott Johnson stated: “It does not make any sense to adopt out animals that are fertile, that can produce more young, so that in turn, we have to pick up those young and euthanize them.”

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Director’s Comment

By Bill Meade

The amount of unseen agony purposely inflicted on laboratory animals is staggering. All of this pain is justified and accepted as being for “the benefit of man.”

It is now believed that over fifty percent of animal experimentation is redundant and of no essential benefit to man. These needless experiments include repetitive ones performed by students; those done to satisfy government red tape; and absurd research projects carried out only to acquire grant money.

Historically, The HSUS has not opposed necessary and humane animal research. We do, however, vehemently oppose nonessential experiments or infliction of pain. We are working for the day when all animal experiments will be replaced with other nonanimal research.

People who attempt to justify animal experiments as man’s “right” because he is the “highest form of life” should reflect for a moment. If another, even higher form of life were replaced with other nonanimal research.

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The Texas legislature recently voted down a proposal to allow pari-mutuel horse racing in Texas. Oklahomans weren't so lucky; pari-mutuel racing was legalized by their legislators. Arkansas and Louisiana also allow this type racing and betting.

The HSUS has found states that legalize betting experience an increase in drugging of horses to affect race results. Further, an increase in other illegal and criminal activities goes hand in hand with betting. The HSUS successfully testified before the Texas legislature in opposition to pari-mutuel racing. The major forms of abuses prevalent in pari-mutuel horse racing are the following:

1. Two-Year-Old Racing—To make as much money as possible on their investments, owners force immature horses to race, resulting in needless injuries.
2. Excessive Racing—Horses, regardless of condition and fatigue, are raced as frequently as possible to earn purses.
3. Faulty Racetrack Surfaces—Hard surfaces are used to provide fast race times, but they also cause extreme concussion that results in lameness.
4. Abuse of Drugs—Drugs are used to mask a horse's pain, thereby allowing injured animals to race. This often aggravates injuries and causes breakdowns and spills dangerous to horse and rider.

United Press International recently investigated the horse racing industry and the recurring scandals at racetracks. The investigation disclosed that state governments were both unwilling and incapable of cleaning up the sport.

HSUS Gulf States Director Bill Meade declared, “We will strongly oppose future efforts to legalize pari-mutuel racing in Texas. It appears, however, that the problem will have to be addressed by federal law if it is ever to be solved completely.”