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HSUS Helps in Katrina's Wake

As the National Guard entered New Orleans to quell civil disorder coming in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, members of the HSUS National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) worked their way into the nearly obliterated regions of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. The situation could not have been more urgent in both areas, with reports of animals locked in homes, kennels, veterinary clinics, and other locations. It was a race against time for our first responders on the ground.

The presence of HSUS personnel was good news for nearly 130 dogs and cats in Gulfport, Mississippi. There, HSUS team members rescued these animals from the animal shelter of the Humane Society of South Mississippi, which was flooded by the combination of a storm surge with an overflow discharge of human waste from the sewage treatment plant next door. Some animals swam in their cages for hours, somehow managing to keep their heads above water. Others were not so fortunate.

An airboat moves down a flooded New Orleans street September 5 with animal rescue workers, a rifle-toting guard, and several rescued dogs. With thousands of stranded pets in the city, HSUS rescuers were frantically trying to reach as many animals as they could.

Big Cruelty Bust

What began as one couple’s desire to help animals ended this past spring with more than 100 animals fighting for their lives. When MWRO received a call for help from the Linn County Sheriff’s Office, we responded along with volunteers from two other humane agencies and an equine rescue group to a farm in rural Palo, Iowa. Local authorities had been monitoring the situation at the property for quite some time and attempting to correct the problems of neglect that they had found, but the situation had escalated to a point where immediate action was necessary. Dozens of animals’ lives were in danger.

Once the Sheriff’s Department served the search warrant, MWRO Program Coordinator Scott Wilson began assessing the animals’ situation. He observed that all of the watering troughs in the fields were empty. The food appeared to be poor-quality hay with no other grazing available on the barren pastures. There were also no mineral blocks, which are necessary for horses’ health. This lack of basic food and water was evident in the condition of nearly every horse in the pastures. Many of the horses appeared underweight, and one horse’s ribs, hips, and spine were clearly noticeable.

Further investigation of the fields produced one of the most disturbing finds of all. The bodies of two dead horses lay in a pile, burned almost beyond recognition. The bodies of three more dead horses lay nearby in the brush awaiting the same fate, and nearby, a large area of freshly turned soil marked the spot where it is suspected that even more horses may have been buried.

Evidence of the failure to provide even basic care, compounded by the discovery of so many dead horses, necessitated the removal of all of the horses on the property. With the help of volunteers, MWRO began the arduous task of individually assessing, identifying, and photographing each horse, as deputies loaded them onto waiting trailers for removal to a safe location by the Equine Rescue Network.

The team discovered that dozens of cats and dogs on the property were also suffering from a lack of food, water, shelter, and care. Many of the animals appeared underweight and seemed to be infested with parasites. As with the horses, the animals’ conditions were bad enough to warrant their removal.

The last animal found was a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig in a pen with three other large pigs. It was evident that this pig had been unable to get to food and was severely emaciated with bones clearly visible. The pigs too were removed, along with some goats and peacocks. In all, 67 horses, more than 50 cats and dogs, four pigs, and several goats were removed.
Taking Issue with Exotics

We all heard the line, “Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!” But what about the monkeys, cougars, and servals? Ownership of exotic animals is a growing problem in many parts of the country. Legislation was proposed to prohibit the ownership of any wild animal without a permit from the Department of Agriculture. Unfortunately, this bill died in committee. Current state law does not regulate primates. Wild animals by their very definition are “wild” and should not be kept as pets or as part of a “public enemy” that is now banned in more than 200 states. As HSUS West Coast Regional Director Eric Sakach says, “This film goes inside the belly of the beast, and the heart isn’t the pit bull terrier, it’s man. This is the ultimate betrayal of man’s best friend. The director exposes the fastest growing crime in America—dogfighting. ‘Off the Chain’ is a horrifying glimpse into the world where the special relationship between man and dog has been perverted.”

Gaining the trust of well-established “dog men” who allowed him to film behind their veil of secrecy, Brown shot footage of dog training, police raids, and the fights themselves. But he also captured another side: the loving nature of the dogs and their brutal misuse by those who are supposed to be their caretakers.

Brown is generously donating to The HSUS one-third of the proceeds from sales of “Off the Chain” DVDs sold through The HSUS. To order, go to www.offthechainproductions.com/store and use the redemption code: HSUSOTC. As The HSUS’s Eric Sakach puts it, “‘Off the Chain’ will grab you and shake you, and, hopefully, it will stir you into action.”

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about:
[ ] Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
[ ] Promoting the protection of all animals.
[ ] Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
[ ] Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

Promoting the protection of all animals.

If I’m ready to make an immediate gift, my donation is:
[ ] $100
[ ] $250
[ ] $500
[ ] $750
[ ] $1,000

With a gift of $1,000, $2,000, or $5,000, you can help us reach our goal of $250,000.

Send gift information to: The HSUS, 300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004-2902.

E-mail me more information:
[ ] About The HSUS.
[ ] About the animal protection laws in my state.

STATE
ZIP

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).
**Director’s Report**

By Diane Webber  
*Director of the Midwest Regional Office*

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**Send a Message to Trader Joe’s**

Unlike its competitors in the natural foods market, such as Whole Foods and Wild Oats, Trader Joe’s still sells eggs from hens confined in “battery” cages so small they can’t even spread their wings. These animals are so intensively confined that they never engage in many important behaviors, including nesting, perching, and dust bathing. Their lives are filled with immense suffering. In the past, Trader Joe’s has been responsive to customer concern for animal welfare, but the chain is refusing to stop selling eggs from caged hens.

The HSUS needs you to ask Trader Joe’s to can the cages and sell only cage-free eggs.

Call Trader Joe’s at 626-599-3817 (West Coast) and 781-455-7319 (East Coast) and ask the company to adopt a policy to sell only cage-free eggs.

During your next trip to Trader Joe’s, talk with the store manager and request that the chain adopt a policy against selling battery cage eggs.

Please send us your Trader Joe’s receipts. We’ll send them to the company to show that their consumers care about the welfare of laying hens. Send receipts to: The Humane Society of the U.S., Factory Farming Campaign, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Members of the Humane Action Network helped block the reintroduction of dove hunting in Iowa and Minnesota.