Changes Are Needed in Livestock Marketing

For the past two years, the HSUS Gulf States Regional Office (GSRO) has undertaken an in-depth study into the marketing and transportation of beef cattle. The results of our investigation have convinced us that changes must take place within the beef industry and that those changes must be made immediately.

Last year, over 33 million cattle were slaughtered in the United States. Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas were collectively responsible for a significant percentage of that total. At some point in its life, each one of those 33 million animals was sold—many have been sold three or more times. Such sales mark the beginning of stressful journeys that will eventually end on the slaughterhouse's killing-room floor, perhaps thousands of miles from where the journey began.

Throughout the country, livestock auctions are held weekly, providing cattlemen with a place to buy and sell livestock. Cattle raised on ranches and farms are herded together and transported to a new environment filled with strange animals, unfamiliar noises, and confusion.

Many animals are injured, blinded, or exhausted en route to the auction. Injured animals do not receive any special consideration or assistance during handling or continued on page 2.
Livestock Marketing
continued from page 1

transport. They are often prodded or dragged through the auction ring, their owners anxious to receive what little money the animal can still bring from slaughterhouse buyers. Some animals arrive at the auction suffering from a longstanding illness or injury. Cattle producers who see animals sicken suffering from a longstanding illness or injury. Producers would have to take greater care in loading and transporting animals to avoid injuries that might cause auctions to refuse animals upon their arrival. As meat commission members fire intentionally cruel employees and to train those who remained. The president of the Texas LMA indicated that he is willing to work to encourage association members to adopt humane handling practices.

The HSUS is attempting to involve the National Cattlemen’s Association, the largest beef-industry association, in endorsing our suggestions. We are convinced that if all beef-industry associations were to encourage humane handling practices on the part of producers and marketers alike, the needless suffering of thousands of cattle would finally end.

HSUS Animal Care Expo ’92 Scheduled

Plan now to travel to Las Vegas, Nevada, next February 2–5 to attend a one-of-a-kind expo for animal-welfare, care, and-control professionals. Sponsored by The HSUS, Animal Care Expo ’92 will feature seminars, demonstrations, and services.

Special emphasis will be given to environmentally protective, energy-efficient products and supplies. Contact the GSRO for more details.

Oklahoma Cockfighting Expose’ Aired

After months of investigation, Oklahoma City TV station KFOR-NBC aired a lengthy cockfighting expose’ on May 12, 13, and 14, 1991. Investigative Reporter Chuck Musgrove shot excellent undercover video footage; evidence of felony illegal gambling was shown. Anchorman Curt Autry interviewed GSRO Program Coordinator Dorothy Weller next to the huge, modern Blanchard, Oklahoma, cockpit. Musgrove and Autry also interviewed a group of local officials who, by a livestock operator in a western state. Fatalities are common in livestock handling.

Many animals passing through the Gulf States region’s livestock auctions suffer eye injuries.
ARKANSAS—Linda Lipe, assistant U.S. attorney, Little Rock, authored the Arkansas Retail Pet Store Consumer Protection Act of 1991. The first section of the bill, passed March 28, 1991, as Act 1225, addresses animal cruelty. The state health department has been charged with creating regulations consistent with the intent of the Act. This is the first time the Arkansas Health Department has been directly involved with an animal-welfare issue. The GSRO will assist in formulating regulations.

Another bill, S.B. 724, would have made it a Class D felony to purposely torture any animal, or cause it intense pain, serious physical injury, or death. It was introduced in response to a well-publicized case of torturing a dog named Mercy. The animal was rescued by the Pulaski County Humane Society in Little Rock. The bill survived a senate committee but was killed in the House Agriculture and Economic Development Committee. It was opposed by Gene Smith, of Benton, testifying on behalf of the Arkansas Game Fowl Breeders Association.

LOUISIANA—The Coalition of Louisiana Animal Activists and the Louisiana Animal Control Association have introduced legislation that would set minimum standards for all public and private animal shelters in the state. Last year, these two organizations were successful in helping to have passed legislation calling for the mandatory sterilization of animals adopted from animal shelters.

OKLAHOMA—Legislation aimed at combating some of the abuses of puppy mills was relegated to a subcommittee late in the session after a Tulsa group lobbied against the bill. It objected to the exemption of hunting dogs and greyhounds. The HSUS was in favor of this legislation, even though the bill was not ideally worded.

TEXAS—Several bills pending include a mandatory spay-and-neuter bill (passed last year and vetoed by then-Governor Clements); a pet-vendor bill designed to strengthen pet-selling regulations; an amendment to S.L. 182 A that would allow seized animals to be given to animal shelters or humanely destroyed, rather than auctioned; and dangerous-dog legislation. Several bills relating to the control and regulation of exotic animals were introduced.

Of special note in the aftermath of our unsuccessful fight to defeat the introduction of pari-mutuel horse and dog racing in Texas three years ago: S.B. 1263 and H.B. 2267 have been introduced to lower the amount deducted by the state from pari-mutuel pools from 5 percent to 1 percent. A big selling point in the passage of the original legislation was the size of projected state revenues. Less than two years after the first horse- and dog-racing tracks opened, this revenue will have been greatly diminished in response to the racing industry’s pleas of poverty. This legislation is expected to pass.

ARKANSAS—Gene Smith, of Benton, testifying on behalf of the Arkansas Game Fowl Breeders Association.

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Reflect for a moment...

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can 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 that will assist you in planning a will.

Please send will information to:

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Address
City State Zip code

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., NW, Washington DC 20037.

Tracking U.S. Beef

continued from page 3

sas, and Nebraska, due to the ready availability of feed grains raised in those states as well as to a climate conducive to intensive cattle production. Feeder cattle remain on the feedlot for an average of 150 days, until they weigh 900-1,200 pounds. These animals are categorized as fat cattle, or “fats.” Feedlots sell these animals to slaughterhouses, the majority of which are located close to feedlots. Livestock are trucked to slaughtering plants, which, in some cases, have a capacity to handle more than 30,000 animals a day.

Recently, the selling of large herds of cattle has taken place by video auction. As video auctions increase in popularity, local auction barns will no doubt suffer. However, auction barns will always have a place in the industry, since they are the only outlet available to smaller, independent cattlemen seeking to sell their animals.

Puppy mills are part of an industry to be regulated under the Arkansas Retail Pet Store Consumer Protection Act.