HSUS Fight against Puppy Mills Brings Results

A priority for The HSUS is the elimination of puppy mills, many of which still flourish in the Midwest region. We are making progress. In the Fall 1990 issue of the MWRO Report we told you about some of our efforts. We can now give you updated information on one of those cases.

In June 1990 the SSLC Kennel in Topeka, Kans., was raided by agents from the state attorney general’s office, representatives of other state agencies, and MWRO Regional Director Wendell Maddox. As a result of charges stemming from that raid, the owners of the kennel were convicted of cruelty to animals and violation of the state’s animal dealers act—the first conviction under that law since it was passed. They were sentenced to two years of probation, 500 hours of community service, and $16,000 in fines and restitution. They are not allowed to keep animals as pets or operate a business dealing with animals during their probation.

Investigations and raids in Kansas continued. In August 1990 a kennel in Arkansas City was raided and 30 dogs were seized. The owners were charged with violation of the animal dealers act and cruelty to animals.

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On October 5, 1990, an Ottawa kennel was targeted; 126 dogs were seized. The owner was charged with a nine-count violation of the animal dealers act and cruelty to animals. He pleaded guilty to two counts of animal cruelty for failure to provide veterinary care for 3 dogs and negligence leading to the death of another. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) revoked the owner’s license to operate a kennel.

The 3 surviving dogs were removed from the facility. One of them was found to have an advanced mammary tumor. Both of the others had gone blind, apparently as a result of severe eye ulcerations. The dead dog was sent to the University of Iowa for a necropsy, which indicated that it had died of trauma inflicted during a dogfight.

Despite the success of such investigations, thousands of dogs are suffering in mass-breeding operations throughout our region. Thousands more are likely to suffer if the pet trade keeps creating a market for puppy-mill animals.

HSUS Invites Kansas Grant Applications

Humane societies within a 200-mile radius of Kansas City are invited to apply for grants from the Ruth McDaniels Trust Fund. Ruth McDaniels was a member of The HSUS and the founder of the Nevada (Mo.) Humane Society. Her legacy is a trust fund designed to help humane organizations finance shelter construction and renovation, humane education programs, spay/neuter programs, and other projects.

In 1990 the fund gave grants ranging from $500 to $1,000 to 12 dozen organizations. Some of the money was intended to help defray the cost of sheltering animals impounded after raids on puppy mills.

The deadline for 1991 grant applications has passed, but any organization wishing to apply for a 1992 grant should contact the MWRO. Applications for 1992 grants must be completed and returned by May 1992.

Midwest Puppy Mills

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On October 5, 1990, an Ottawa kennel was targeted; 126 dogs were seized. The owner was charged with a nine-count violation of the animal dealers act and cruelty to animals but failed to appear at an administrative hearing, held later that month, at which she was assessed $3,000 in fines.

On October 31 agents from the state’s attorney general’s office, its animal-health department, and the Miami County sheriff’s department raided a kennel in Edgerton and seized more than 106 dogs. Officials said that the dogs—poodles, dalmatians, and other breeds—appeared to be malnourished and were being housed in decrepit, filthy cages.

The kennel owner was charged with one count of cruelty to animals as well as a two-count violation of the animal dealers act (for not holding a state license and cruelty to animals). He pleaded guilty to the charges in January 1991 and was sentenced to 18 months in jail. He began serving his term the day he was sentenced.

Puppy mills in other midwestern states have also been targeted. A kennel in Madison, Iowa, was investigated in January by agents from the Boone County sheriff’s department and the state high-way patrol, Tom Colvin, president of the Iowa Federation of Humane Societies, and Dr. Russell Currier, curator, chief of the Iowa Division of Disease Control.

As a result of the investigation, the kennel owner was charged with three counts of animal cruelty for failure to provide veterinary care for 3 dogs and negligence leading to the death of another. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) revoked the owner’s license to operate a kennel.

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HSUS Animal Care Expo ’92 Scheduled

Plan now to travel to Las Vegas, Nev., February 2-5, 1992, to attend a one-of-a-kind exposition for animal-sheltering, -care, and -control professionals. Sponsored by The HSUS, Animal Care Expo ’92 will feature seminars, demonstrations, and the latest in practical, contemporary, and humane equipment and services. Special emphasis will be given to environmentally friendly and energy-efficient products and supplies. Contact the MWRO for more details.

Coyote Killing

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The horrors of the war in the Persian Gulf have heightened everyone’s sensitivity to the devastation and carnage that follow in the wake of a military occupation. The deaths of both soldiers and civilians left us heartsick, but there were other victims of the war as well. Untold numbers of animals in the war zone suffered and died, and more will surely follow.

Of the more than 400 animals that were kept in the Kuwait Zoo, only one survived. At the onset of the Iraqi invasion, zoo employees fled, leaving the helpless animals to the care of inexperienced volunteers. Soon the volunteers too were gone, and the animals fell victim to the invading Iraqi soldiers. Some of the animals were used to feed the troops; others perished of starvation. A few survivors were shipped to Baghdad.

The devastation at the Kuwait Zoo pales before the ecological havoc wreaked by oil-well fires and oil spills. Thousands of birds and animals died within days after the Iraqis unleashed those disasters; the full magnitude of the death toll won’t be known for a long time.

Just as we grieve over the loss of human life in wartime without making a distinction between soldiers and civilians, so too must we recognize that the life of every creature, whether human or not, is precious and meaningful. Every death adds to the tragedy.

Coyote Killing at Kansas City’s airport stopped once animal protectionists became involved.

“Be a P.A.L.” Spells Success for Shelter’s Adoption Plan

The Newton (Iowa) Animal Rescue League and Humane Society has created one of the most successful spay/neuter/adoption programs in the country. Part of the credit for the program’s success goes to The HSUS and the founder of the Nevada Animal Rescue League, a P.A.L. — Prevent A Litter campaign. The HSUS’s media kits and educational materials for that campaign, as well as other guidance that The HSUS provided, helped the Newton organization address both the problem of pet overpopulation and the need to find homes for impounded animals.

The Newton Animal Rescue League began its spay/neuter and adoption program in March 1990. Initial funding for the program came from the Maytag-Madsen Foundation. Statistics for the program’s first year show that approximately 50 percent of the 1,998 animals impounded at the shelter were later spayed or neutered and placed in homes.

Credit for the program’s success also goes to the Jasper County Veterinarians Association, members of which performed spay/neuter procedures at reduced prices. The charges included a single fee, ranging from $35 for male cats to $55 for female dogs, that covered vac-cination, spaying, neutering, and grooming as well as spay/neuter surgery.

The program’s accomplishment was largely due to the dedication and effort of everyone associated with the Newton Animal Rescue League. The board of directors, the staff, and volunteers worked together to coordinate the program while maintaining the organization’s humane philosophy.

Judith Salier, the director of the organization, said, “Area residents can be proud of this program and the other services the Newton Animal Rescue League provides for animals. We also appreciate the ongoing efforts of The HSUS to promote the humane and ethical treatment of animals.”
The HSUS tries to keep you informed about important legislation being considered so that you can let your state senators and representatives know where you stand on bills that would help—or hurt—the cause of animal protection.

Earlier this year State Sen. Harry Wiggins introduced legislation in Missouri that would have required government-funded animal shelters to surrender unclaimed strays to research facilities. The HSUS has long opposed that practice, known as pound seizure.

Wendell Maddox met with Senator Wiggins and explained The HSUS’s position, stressing that the issue of pound seizure ought to be separated from the question of whether animals should be used in biomedical research. He also pointed out that pound seizure tends to undermine the confidence placed in humane societies and animal-control facilities by the public. Maddox added that a recent HSUS telephone survey of more than 50 Missouri shelters had revealed that only one shelter would be willing to release its animals to a research facility.

As a result of having talked with Maddox, Senator Wiggins agreed to withdraw the bill. He told Maddox that the bill had been intended to provide the research community with a cheap source of animals and that he had been advised that such legislation was necessary (by whom, he didn’t say). He also said that he had not realized that the bill would be rejected by animal-protection organizations.

Senator Wiggins has since withdrawn the bill. The HSUS has also been prominent in the fight for legislation that would eliminate the abuses in the puppy-mill industry. In May 1990, when The HSUS announced that it was urging consumers to stop buying dogs bred or brokered in six midwestern states, President John A. Hoyt said that the boycott would continue until those states enforced or passed legislation regulating the industry. Kansas had such legislation in place and had begun to enforce it vigorously, but other states in the region lagged behind.

The 1991 legislative session has brought new hope. State Sen. Merton L. Dierks of Nebraska introduced L.B. 282, aimed at regulating and licensing commercial breeding facilities, pet stores, and animal shelters. A new program would be administered by the state department of agriculture, which would inspect such facilities at least once a year.


Although Iowa has regulated commercial breeders for several years, proposed rule changes in the state’s Animal Welfare Code would provide for the seizure and impoundment of mistreated or inhumanely kept animals at shelters and commercial breeding facilities.

Other bills that would affect animals are described below. Because the status of legislation can change quickly, please contact the MWRO as soon as possible if you have questions about any of the bills.

MISSOURI—S.B. 116, S.B. 117, and H.B. 44 would redefine the crime of animal fighting and create felony penalties. Under the state’s current law, cockfighting is not illegal.

H.B. 152 would legalize pari-mutuel dog racing in the Ozarks.

NEBRASKA—L.B. 191 would establish criminal penalties for those convicted of harassing hunters.

L.B. 312 would protect farm animals and research facilities from terrorist activities.

IOWA—S.F. 167 would create a low-cost spay/neuter program for which Iowa pet owners with low or fixed incomes would be eligible.

KANSAS—S.B. 78 would transfer the responsibility for licensing and inspecting animal-breeding facilities and animal shelters from the state’s livestock commission to its department of health and the environment.

S.B. 175 would exempt dog- and cat-breeding facilities from the state’s Farm Animal and Research Facility Protection Act. That law, passed in 1990, made it a felony to enter a dog- or cat-breeding facility, photograph it, or videotape it without permission from the owner—and thus made it difficult, if not impossible, to investigate puppy mills.

H.B. 2281 and H.B. 2522 would abolish the requirement that animal-breeding facilities licensed by the USDA become licensed by the state. Such facilities would be required to register with the state.

H.B. 2514 would remove the responsibility for licensing and inspecting animal-breeding facilities from the livestock commission and assign it to a new commission, to be created for the purpose. It would also amend the animal dealers act to give enforcement agencies broader powers.

The Regional Report is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Midwest Regional Office, Argyle Building, 306 East 12th Street, Suite 625, Kansas City, MO 64106; (816) 474-0888. Wendell Maddox, Director. All contributions made to the HSUS Regional Office are tax-deductible. © 1991 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved.