SERO Thwarts Attack on Horse Drugging Law

Racehorse trainers and some track veterinarians tried to weaken Florida’s “anti-doping” law once again this year. Fortunately, the Southeast regional staff realized the danger and mounted an aggressive campaign to thwart their efforts.

Legislative proposals sponsored by Rep. Ron Silver and Sen. Tom McPherson would have allowed the prerace use of any drug as long as it was declared “therapeutic” by a licensed veterinarian. This would have legalized the use in racehorses of corticosteroids and anabolic steroids, among other substances, prior to competition.

Until the early ’80s, Florida was among those states having the most permissive drug rules. The situation improved somewhat after Florida racing was featured in a CBS “60 Minutes” expose and national attention was focused on the need for strict regulations against the racing of horses on drugs. The state’s current law bans the prerace administration of all medications except one painkiller, phenylbutazone, and a diuretic, furosemide. (The HSUS opposes even the use of these drugs in racing, but the legislature years ago caved in to horse continued on page 4

Dolphins Need More Legal Protection

The capture and display of dolphins has led to growing controversy in three southern states. Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina are now considering restrictions on the removal of dolphins from the wild and better regulations to protect those already in captivity.

The battle is perhaps most evident in Florida, where dolphin protection is seen as an issue to enhance the election-year image of Gov. Bob Martinez. Yet the governor’s concern has not prompted the state agency charged with regulating the care of captive dolphins to do a better job. During the past year, the Dept. of Natural Resources has all but dismantled its meager inspection program.

The HSUS attempted to correct the situation with a bill before the Florida legislature to restrict dolphin captures and protect all captive marine mammals. More dolphins are removed from Florida waters than from any other coastal state, and more are confined in Florida tourist continued on page 2
**Dogfighters Busted in Two States**

A humane society seminar in Mobile, Ala., last March yielded unexpected results—the breakup of an alleged dogfighting ring. During a March 8th drug raid, deputies of the Mobile sheriff’s office were surprised to find, in addition to a small quantity of drugs, over 70 pit bulls staked out on the property. SERO Director Marc Paulhus and Investigator Ken Johnson, in town to conduct an animal cruelty workshop, were recommended by the Mobile SPCA to law officers to help obtain a search warrant for dogfighting. When deputies returned to the premises with Paulhus and Johnson, only 31 dogs remained, several of which bore bat injuries.

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**Dolphins**

end of the decade. Federal minimum-care standards are woefully inadequate. Though dolphins may live as long as 45 years in the wild, they have an average life span in captivity of less than 10 years. Many dolphins die of stress-related illnesses, poisonings, and preventable injuries.

The time has come to reevaluate the exploitation of these intelligent and entertaining mammals. The public’s desire for frivolous amusement should not supersede the ethical questions now being raised about dolphins’ captivity.

**New Laws Benefit Animals in Georgia and Florida**

The Southeast Regional Office has scored major victories in two states during the 1990 legislative season. While Georgia has taken its first step to ensure a humane death for unadopted shelter animals, Florida is now required a guarantee of veterinary care for dogs and cats sold in the state. Also, if an animal becomes sick, dies, or displays a congenital or inherited disorder, the seller must report the related veterinary bills up to the purchase price and offer a refund or exchange if the buyer chooses not to keep the animal.

Until this law passed, new pet owners could incur unexpected veterinary bills totaling hundreds of dollars, while the pet store or private breeder denied any responsibility. The pet owner often ended up financially strained and heartbroken.

**Dolphins**

attractions than anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, after intense lobbying by the operators of Sea World, Seaworld, and other marine parks, the bill was stripped of any state regulation captive marine mammals.

The ensuing outcry has forced the governor and cabinet to become involved. The Dept. of Natural Resources has been ordered to develop whatever protection it can under current law and to work with the federal government for greater enforcement of its regulations.

The Mississippi legislature also proposed a measure to ban the removal of dolphins from their coastal areas. As in Florida, Mississippi’s efforts were stymied by those who protest the capture and display of performing dolphins and by the federal government’s claim to sole authority over marine mammals.

South Carolina faces a different dilemma. Animal-protection groups are trying to stop the development of the state’s first marine park. Plans call for the facility to house a large number of dolphins and other marine mammals.

The available information on captive dolphin mortality is shameful. Over one third of all dolphins captured or born in captivity during the 1980s died by the end of the decade. Federal minimum-care standards are woefully inadequate. Though dolphins may live as long as 45 years in the wild, they have an average life span in captivity of less than 10 years. Many dolphins die of stress-related illnesses, poisonings, and preventable injuries.

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Gov. Joe Harris signs the ‘humaneness euthanasia’ bill supported by Rep. Chesley Morton (right), Beverly Copeland of GCAP (left of governor), and SERO’s Laura Bevan (far left).
Annual "Dog Elimination Day" Eliminated in Georgia

The tiny town of Vienna, Ga., created a furor recently with plans for conducting its annual Dog Elimination Day. Town police were instructed to patrol the streets on that day and shoot any dogs suspected of being strays. Although news accounts reported the killing of stray dogs began 18 years ago, humane societies and animal-control agencies in the state and many town residents were unaware of the practice.

Calls flooded the Southeast Regional Office imploring us to prevent the slaughter. Investigator Ken Johnson contacted town officials to persuade them to adopt an alternate plan. In the end, animal-control officers from five nearby counties were organized by Dan Rogers of the Thomasville Humane Society to roundup unwanted animals. A total of 17 stray dogs and puppies were collected by the cooperating agencies and taken to area animal shelters to be adopted or humanely destroyed.

Town officials have given us their pledge that Dog Elimination Day will never happen again. They have promised to contract for animal-control services with a nearby shelter or to develop their own program under our guidance.

Horse Drugging

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trainer demands for some legal means to keep sore horses racing.)

Much to our horror, we recently discovered that Florida racing officials have long chosen to ignore their law-enforcement responsibilities. In blatant disregard of legislative intent, the Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering adopted an internal policy in 1983 that circumvented the law to permit the use of both corticosteroids and anabolic steroids.

Our success in defeating this year’s bill may have prevented unscrupulous elements from gaining full legal authority to use steroids on racehorses, but it has not corrected the problem. The Dept. of Business Regulation, which oversees the Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering, issued a June 8th emergency ruling to allow the prerace administration of corticosteroids.

The HSUS has written to the office of Gov. Martinez demanding that the emergency rule be rescinded. The governor has the authority to overrule or replace appointed agency heads. If he fails to act, we will pursue other legal means.

Cat Killings

Spur Felony Cruelty Bill

Dekalb County resident Mitchell Munoz was arrested last year for the torture and killing of 77 cats and kittens. State Court Judge Linda Warren Hunter has now sentenced Munoz to five years in prison and ten years’ probation, along with psychiatric counseling throughout.

The case prompted The HSUS and the Georgia Coalition for Animal Protection to propose legislation that would make such extreme acts of animal cruelty a felony. Though the bill did not pass this session, strong interest was shown by key legislators. Rep. Buddy Childers, chairman of the Health and Ecology Committee, placed the bill in a study committee and agreed to sponsor the resulting legislation. Other lawmakers contacted us to offer their support.

Cruelty is not only an act, it is also a pervasive attitude; it is generally not focused on a single victim or species. By protecting animals against wanton violence, we protect ourselves.