Veal Calves and Factory Farming

Fig. 1. These calves are well along in the feeding period, as indicated by their size and the degree of "finish" around the tail and on the flanks. The animal is held nearly immobile by a chain around the neck attached to the front of the stall and by the small size of the stall, and the faces and urine are directed by the sloping concrete floor under the slatted wood floor to the trough at the rear, facilitating removal.

It is not that the American people are entirely indifferent to what happens to the animals that wind up on their dinner tables. When they were first alerted to the cruelties involved in slaughterhouses, they created such a fuss that Congress responded by enacting a federal meat inspection act. That act in itself shows that some people are concerned about humane treatment, even if they do not choose to be vegetarians.

The general lack of awareness of conditions in the production of food animals is strikingly illustrated by the fact that even those elements of the humane movement who have been exploiting the killing of baby seals almost to the exclusion of other far greater sources of animal suffering, have overlooked the sentimental value for their fund-raising publicity of the baby calf. This animal is one of the most repugnant, comparable only with barbecues like the force-feeding of geese...that produce pate de foie gras. It is not that the American people are worth only a few dollars. The mother's milk, on the other hand, is valuable for human consumption, and will bring more dollars than the increase in weight of the milk-fed calf is worth. In the good old days, the cow was a farm animal, and not an assembly plant, the value of beef calves was even less. At calving time the farmer might ride out to the pasture to see what the night had brought. A heifer calf was welcomed with open arms, taken to the barn and placed in a pen with its mother. But the newborn bull calf was like as not knocked on the head with a ball-point hammer carried in a loop on the saddle, and left for the vultures and fer­tilizers. In fact, if the farm had its complete complement of hogs, the dead calf was thrown over the saddle and taken to the hog pen to provide protein for the swine. The calf was sometimes provided as a useful product in addition, if the farm boy wanted to take the trouble to skin it. Better than casting the better part of a day taking the live bull calf to a market in town. Obviously, even in the good old days the birth of a bull calf on a dairy (See CALVES, page 2, column 1)

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CALVES

There are different kinds of calves: beef and dairy, heifer and bull. Calves of the beef breeds are used almost solely for meat production. A bull calf is as desirable for this purpose as a heifer calf, since it is painlessly castrated and becomes a steer. Research has shown that an uncastrated calf, if marketed before 18 months of age, turns into a beef animal as good as or better than a castrated one, and that the rate of gain and feeding efficiency are better than for the latter term has been used more to designate the finishing of young calves for veal. Veal calves are nearly all of the beef breed and the interest in them is almost solely for milk production, so practically all of the vealers are bull calves; only a very small percentage of the bull calves born on dairy farms is needed for future sires, and these usually are carefully-selected animals of good breeding likely to sire better milk producers, and come from farms that specialize in production of well-bred bulls for that purpose.

WHAT WITH THE MIGRATION OF FARM POPULATION...

There are certain parallels that every humane society in the country has even referred to the plight of these poor creatures, much less tried to do something to alleviate their suffering?

This is why this article must go into much detail about calf raising and Marketing. It is not a subject that can be summed up in a few paragraphs. We really have to start from scratch.

Singers in demand that their humane societies do more than impress and create sympathy for the humane movement can kill two birds with one stone, so to speak, by helping to speed passage of H.R. 1464. This is a bill in Congress to prevent cruel methods of raising veal calves. The Agriculture Committee will not consider this bill unless the Senate Agriculture Committee gives it adequate attention to more than one of the most important deficiencies would have been in this article.

Senators, urging passage of this bill?

George E. Brown, Jr., of California. This bill is now reposing in the Senate Agriculture Committee, in Washington. Have you heard anything about it, Senator?

H.R. 1464, written by our sister society, the National Humane Society in $ $ $ $ humane movement can kill two birds with one stone, so to speak, by helping to speed passage of H.R. 1464.
CALVES — FROM PAGE 1

farm was nothing for anyone, including the calf, to celebrate. Sex discrimination against females in reverse.

In most recent years the shipment of calves by air to European countries where they are fed out and slaughtered for veal, and the increase in numbers of specialized calf feeders in this country, has increased the market value of these calves. So, the farmer is likely to keep the calf for a few days during which the mother’s milk, which is called colostrum, is available for the critical period after birth. This milk is invaluable for human consumption, so the farmer does not lose anything by permitting the calf to nurse.

As the mother’s milk is edible (about five days after birth of the calf), the calf usually is taken away from its mother and sold at a local auction, directly to a calf feeder, butcher or packing plant. Or, it may be kept on the farm and fed skim milk and calf feed for a few weeks, then slaughtered for home consumption or sold to some nearby butcher, livestock dealer or meat packer. In some cases it may be pastured for so long as it can eat grass, to be sold after varying lengths of time and at varying weights. These calves are used for veal, but do not have the weight or degree of finish (fat and conformation) which brings the highest market prices.

Putting on an air-conditioned atmosphere is the function of the specialized calf-feeding operation.

But the farmer is a dairymen, not a meat producer, so usually when the calf is a few days to a week old it is thrown into a gunnysack and slung in the trunk of a car, or tied in the back of a pickup truck, and taken to a nearby livestock auction, local butcher or livestock dealer.

Data on numbers and weights of calves marketed are very deficient, so it is impossible to give an accurately based estimate of the calves marketed by dairymen fall into these different categories. Using the available data, some of our directors, Arthur Brainard, has solved some simultaneous equations which we are unfamiliar with, and has come up with an estimate of roughly two million calves used for veal, of which perhaps two million go through a calf-feeding operation and one million are slaughtered shortly after birth. What is described in this article applies to the approximately two million animals, still marketable and important number.

Calf Marketing

The marketing and transportation of the young calves from dairy farms to slaughtering stations, exporters or calf feeders involve some of the most revolting conditions for animals to be found anywhere. The way to this station for this frequency is the local livestock auctions. The auctions are held by the thousands in rural areas. They handle all kinds of animals in addition to cattle and calves. The auctions are set up to look like horse abattoirs (an article dealing with these horse abattoirs, based on a recent visit by our field investigator, Steve Goodwin, will appear in an early issue of these reports).

The auctions really are not a part of the factory farming, but do facilitate the calf-feeding operations, although some of the calves used in the latter are purchased directly from farmers. The commercial calf feeders also sometimes have their own trucks for transporting the calves after purchase, although this is not their own interest in what the calves arrive in good condition. The same trucks are used to haul the finished veal calves to market.

The local livestock auctions, and the transportation of animals to and from them, will be the subject of an intensive investigation by Humane Information Services as soon as time and funds permit. Although we already know about these conditions in general, what is lacking is any study of what might be done to improve them. A few local humane societies more or less recently purchased nearby facilities, but it is difficult for their cruelty investigators to pin down specific acts of cruelty that will stand up in court, or to suggest what should be done.

Calf Procurement by Feeders

The calf feeders aim to buy bull dairy calves, preferably of the holstein breed, weighing between 90 and 110 pounds. The calves are about three days to a week old when purchased. They should have no obvious deformities or disease (evidenced by dull, cloudy eyes, a wet navel, and signs of scour—diarrhea). The calves frequently are doused with lime powder immediately after birth, since lime reduce the growth rate. The smaller calves in poor condition are more likely to be bought by local butchers or individuals living in the country who slaughter them for a home meat supply.

Marketing Finished Calves

The calves are fed for about 15 or 16 weeks, all they will be “well finished,” with fat on both sides of the tail and on the flanks (see Fig. 1).

The finished calves are sold to nearby meat packers, local butchers, to supermarkets and restaurants which have them custom slaughtered and dressed. The “high-grade,” pale and tender veal排骨 normally sells for good prices, being in demand by gourmet diners in expensive restaurants.

Type of Operation

Calf feeding operation is conducted on about 2,500 small specialized “farms” near a city or town, not on large general or dairy farms. It is essentially a family operation, like the contract “farms” growing pullets and producing eggs described in Report No. 41. The farmer may have a job in town, depending on his family for most of the labor. If proper management practices are followed, it may make a very profitable family business. The gross profit before interest on the investment and depreciation may run about $60 per calf. With 600 calves marketed in a year, that comes to about $36,000 annually, not bad for a rural family with an investment of perhaps $30,000 for buildings and equipment.

In recent years there has been a strong tendency in calf feeding, as in poultry and egg production, for what may be termed “franchises” operators to enter the business. The calf feeder follows the carefully worked-out plans of the franchiser in setting up the physical facilities, management, purchase of the franchiser’s specially mixed feeds, feeding practices, and the procurement and marketing of calves. The farmer furnishes the land and buildings, buys the equipment from sources suggested by the franchiser, and provides the labor. The franchiser provides the “know-how,” continuous consultation with and advice for the farmer, and a special marketing service designed to get the most out of the finished calves. The result seems to be advantageous to both the franchiser and the farmer. Other feeders provide these services themselves, buying the feed from local feed suppliers who mix it in their own facility or handle the brands of national feed manufacturers like Purina.

Physical Facilities

Almost any kind of clean, draft-free building is suitable for use as the barn...
CALVES—FROM PAGE 2
accommodate 50, 100, 250 or more calves, usually arranged in sections holding 40 or 50 calves in two rows each containing 20 or 25 calves in separate stalls (see Fig. 1). One of the more modern barns, shown in Fig. 2, is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide.

Light and ventilation in the barns vary from rudimentary to fair. It is important, in maintaining the health of calves, to avoid drafts or extremes of temperature. The objective is to keep the temperature in winter within a range of 55 to 60 degrees, and in the summer, within an arbitrary but bearable level. Air conditioning is rarely if ever installed.

Many of the feeding operations in England and Europe have made a major point of the "dark dungeons" in which the calves are kept. Calves in this country are also lighted only during the brief periods when the calves are fed and the stalls cleaned. Others we have seen in England and Europe have made in other ways--operators find some of the barns have windows to allow light or darkness for most of the time, or to permit an objective to keep the animals in absolute darkness. Outside doors may be left open as they go about their daily chores, and some of the barns have windows which make no effort to keep the animals in a state of utter darkness only by bracing them against the wall of the stall, or the edges of the slats. Many attempts may be described the resulting confusion as follows: "It was a sorry sight to see, animals trying to rise, stepping and falling again in their efforts to get up, jockeying the chain into the neck by the force of the falls. Usually several attempts were necessary before the calf could get on its feet. It is a noisy affair, with the calf climbing repeatedly against the walls and onto itself and trying to get help. Not exactly a "romper room" for the calves!

SANITATION
Every practicable effort is made to keep the calves healthy. Antibiotics are included in the feeding. The feed buckets and mixers are cleaned and disinfected after each feeding. The calves are weighed daily, individual records are kept, and the feed ration is adjusted according to the individual calf's condition. This artificial condition adjustment and ventilation and heat. After the finished calves are shipped out, the empty stalls are cleaned thoroughly with steam and the slatted floors are supposed to permit drainage of water when it reaches the calf being about 100 degrees. The mixture is designed to be palatable, nutritious, save feed and hence, the fastest possible gain in weight. The absence of water and food, the immobility of the calves, and the presumed boredom of their lives, makes this almost a case of "forced feeding." As a result of the combination of careful calf selection, attention to health of the animals, careful feeding practices, and the use of a highly nutritious feed, the calves make remarkable gains in weight and finish during the approximately 15 weeks they are kept. At one farm we visited the calves gained one pound of weight for every 1.7 pounds of feed consumed. This is a remarkable gain, not encountered in any type of livestock operation known to us.

HUMANE OR INHUMAN?
The description of calf feeding contained in the books on "factory farming" make of this whole process a chamber of horrors. As Peter Singer puts it: "Calves kept in this manner are unhappy and unhealthy animals." The principal conditions to which this end result is attributed are: (1) close confinement of the calves in semi-darkness; (2) the "forced feeding" of the calves on rations designed to make them anemic.

OBJECTIONS TO CONFINEMENT
Singer finds support for the first of these reasons in the report of the committee set up by the British Ministry of Agriculture in 1964, the Brambell committee, to evaluate factory farming methods. An appendix to that report written by W. H. Thorpe, Director of the Department of Animal Behavior at Cambridge, says: "...[w]hile accepting the need for much restriction, we must draw the line at conditions which completely suppress all or nearly all the natural, instinctive urges and behavior patterns characteristic of the high degree of social organization as found in the ancestral wild species and which have been little, if at all, bred out in the process of domestication. In particular, it is clearly cruel to retrain an animal for a large part of its life that it cannot use any of its normal locomotory behavior patterns." Accepting this view, Singer says, the Brambell committee elucidated the following modest, but fundamental, principle to govern the degree to which an animal may be confined: "...we disapprove of a degree of confinement of an animal which necessarily frustrates most of the major activities which make up its natural behavior,..." This seems to be the principal foundation for the critics' denunciation of calf feeding.

If humanitarians and humane societies, much less legislators and the general public, were to adopt this view as applied to food animals, to be consistent they would have to eliminate most of the (See CALVES, page 4, column 1.)

Fig. 3. Calf stalls are constructed of heavy lumber, with a fixed front stanchion for the calf's head when feeding (photo to upper right). The curved boards in front are built to hold the galvanized or plastic pails of milk and water (photo to lower right). The head is shown at the right above.

The three-foot chain which prevents the animal from turning around, and from backing out of the stall, also is shown.
CALVES—FROM PAGE 3
restrictions which make the lives of humanized and animals different than they were in "prehistoric" times or even a hundred years ago. All of us, people and domesticated animals, necessarily live under restrictions which have changed our existence drastically. Is the pet dog "unhappy and unhealthy" because it is caged or penned, confined to the house, yard or leash, and limited to food other than freshly-killed animals? This seems to us, not even anthropomorphism. Certainly it does not constitute the kind of argument against factory farming which will find sufficient favor with the public to induce remedial action.

We can, however, agree wholeheartedly with the greatly modified final conclusion of the Brambell committee that "An animal should at least have sufficient freedom of movement to be able to escape difficulties to turn around, groom itself, get up, lie down and stretch its limbs." These essentials are not provided in commercial calf-feeding operations.

At the same time, we must point out that some of the most humane conditions for calves encountered "under natural conditions" on the open range, where calves have freedom of movement but are subjected to bitter cold, oppressing heat, dust storms, blizzards, lack of food which sometimes results in a slow death by starvation, and an assortment of other trials, including which may have been part of the life of our domesticated animals' prehistoric existence. The dairy cow confined in a barn may be worse off because of inability to satisfy their instinctual cravings for free movement, but certainly not more food was ever as happy a scene than a barn full of cows chewing their cud and awaiting the ministrations of the mechanical milking machine.

This is not to say that the calf must "live its entire life chained in darkness" also may not be as serious as it at first appears. Consider the application of the open-range system for disposing of bull calves of the dairy breeds. The calf is an animal likely to be affected much by the beauty of his surroundings as extolled by rural poets. And compared with the unfriendly stables of veal calves in a short time after birth, and killed inhumanely in the back room of some local butcher, the assembled line-raised calf might indeed feel better off.

One thing to be avoided in trying to make veal production more humane than under the present system, is casting the poor calves from the frying pan into the fire. That would be the result of any attempt to go back to the formerly existing system for disposing of bull calves of the dairy breeds. On a few dairy farms calves themselves are raised under conditions better than those prevailing in the present specialized units, but generally speaking the bull calves of the dairy breeds have been kept in conditions analogous to that of surplus puppies and kittens: unplanned, unwanted and to be gotten rid of in the easiest and quickest way possible.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS
The most humane arrangement for calf feeding probably would be to house the calves in pens holding, say, 20 animals, with feeding arrangements similar to those now used. The floors could be slatted to facilitate removal of feces and urine; the calves would be given the best opportunity to keep their hooves clean. The calves could move about, get up and lie down, and be in touch with others of their kind. They could be fed a little oftener, and/or eat some of the straw that would be generated if it were provided. This would satisfy the craving for roughage. This is the type of situation in which raising of older cattle seems to be headed toward smaller, more confined housing for the cattle fed, but still permitting them to move around some.

There are three principal objections to such a system for calves: (1) the invest-

VEAL CALF SLAUGHTER
A substantially larger proportion of veal calves than of most other livestock is slaughtered in small establishments that have never heard of humane slaughter laws which apply in plants operated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture or state meat inspection agencies. From 1971 to 1976, federally-inspected commercial production of veal was up 57 percent, whereas other commercial production was only 4 percent, indicating that the proportion slaughtered without the necessity for conformity with humane standards is increasing. On the average, slaughter of veal calves is accompanied by more suffering than for many other food animals. This inhumane condition will be greatly improved by passage of H. R. 1464, the humane slaughter bill now before Congress. It would extend the provision of present humane slaughter act to many more slaughtering establishments having federal or state meat inspection, and permit effective enforcement.

NITROGEN—FROM PAGE 6
Our own field investigator. We have accumulated a number of descriptions of conditions observed in the cabinets while in use. Both lambs and calves by various manufacturers. We have interviewed, among others, the state meat inspection, and permit effective enforcement.

BEFORE OR AFTER UNCONSCIOUSNESS?
All observations with which we are familiar were made while the calf was conscious. The animals gasp, breathe erratically, stretch outward or ostensible results.

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LIVESTOCK AUCTIONS
Incumbrance of the livestock auctions.

Fig. 4. At contract farms the only feed used are essentially formulated mixtures which include medications and dried skim milk. The feed is mixed in specially-designed portable mixers in which the resulting semi-liquid is rolled directly to the calf's stall.

FEAR: Animal may be less affected by the fear of death if it is killed rapidly and humanely.

2. Somatic: The animal's body is in a state of stress which may affect its response to treatment.

3. Psychological: The animal's mind is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

4. Emotional: The animal's emotions are affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

5. Physiological: The animal's physical condition is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

6. Behavioral: The animal's behavior is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

7. Neurological: The animal's nervous system is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

8. Endocrine: The animal's endocrine system is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

9. Metabolic: The animal's metabolic system is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

10. Immune: The animal's immune system is affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.

11. Other: The animal's other systems are affected by the stress which may interfere with its ability to respond to treatment.
T-61 IS A HUMANE SUBSTITUTE FOR SODIUM PENTOBARBITAL?

Humane Information Services has attained an enviable reputation for objectivity, fairness and completeness in its reports dealing with controversial questions such as euthanasia, and has been particularly careful in preparing this report on T-61. The findings of this report, which are based on the manufacturer's own data, and on information supplied to others, have been made available to the manufacturer and have been discussed with others. They have returned the draft with detailed comments which have been taken into account in the preparation of this final draft. The manufacturer seems to feel that we are applying more rigorous standards to T-61 than to sodium pentobarbital. We believe, however, that the method should be full and open, and that there should be frank agreement on the most humane method. This is not unusual since the manufacturer has not, to the best of our knowledge, used T-61 for the purpose of euthanasia in any of the leading states.

In view of these circumstances, we read with great pleasure the following general observation, copied from the executive summary of one of the leading statements, as a fitting conclusion to this report.

"My respectful compliments on your factual and well-written piece. It is, in my opinion, a fitting example of the way in which humane issues should be presented in every case clearly stated. Your sending an advance copy to National Laboratories, myself, and others is a tribute to your courtesy, fairness, and concern for the facts. How I wish that the humane/animal welfare movement in general followed your example."

USE OF T-61 INCREASING

T-61 is the trade name of a comparatively new veterinary product, manufactured by National Laboratories, Inc., of Somerville, New Jersey, for use as an injectable for "euthanasia." The drug was used in west Germany in 1961 and has rapidly gained in popularity in Europe, where it is cheaper than sodium pentobarbital, for which T-61 has hardly been studied.

In the United States, T-61 has been on the market for "quite awhile," according to the manufacturer, "experimentally" by a Florida veterinarian, since deceased, who gave it in Veterinary Medicine for killing rats. It has probably been in the past few years that the use of T-61 has rapidly increased. This was largely because sodium pentobarbital is a re­stricting agent which has become progressively more difficult to obtain and use except in states having special legis­lative authority to purchase it, for the shell and pounds. In this country, T-61 generally costs more than sodium pentobarbital purchased from the manufacturer, so there is no cost advantage as there is in Europe.

A continuing survey made by Humane Information Services of 193 shelters and pounds covering a period of years ending in November, 1977, indicates that approximately six percent of shelters and pounds had purchased T-61, not in all cases as the exclusive agent for destroying animals. A mailed questionnaire survey by the manufacturer, which indicated that of the 438 respondents, seven percent used T-61, representing about five percent of the animals. On the basis of this survey, we believe that the percentage using this method will increase rapidly unless disclosure of facts under the Animal Welfare Act of 1966 should stop or reverse the trend.

INGREDIENTS AND THEIR PURPOSES

T-61 is a compound containing: (1) a quick-acting local anesthetic intended to minimize pain; (2) a curariform ingredient which, like a curariform ingredient, (3) a strong narcotic agent designed to produce anesthesia (loss of consciousness). T-61 is based on the curariform action which is based on the composition of the drug so that it is rapidly absorbed. There is a strong paralytic action and is relatively favorable for speed, and especially for use with animals which are not intractable or very active dogs which only with great difficulty can be held still for the time required for the injection of the drug slowly, there is a strong temptation for shelter personnel to ignore this requirement for proper injection.

The curariform ingredient, the paralyzing agent, is based on the composition of the drug so that it is rapidly absorbed. There is a strong paralytic action and is relatively favorable for speed, and especially for use with animals which are not intractable or very active dogs which only with great difficulty can be held still for the time required for the injection of the drug slowly, there is a strong temptation for shelter personnel to ignore this requirement for proper injection.

Some veterinarians, humanitarians, hu­man societies operating shelters, and of­ficials of public pounds welcome the ap­pearance of T-61. They have noted the dif­ficulties in obtaining and the red tape involved in using sodium pentobarbital. The manufacturer reported to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee of the National Academy of Sciences in December, 1977, "It is not intended for use in the treatment of sick, weak, injured dogs for the undesirably severe and potentially lethal experience of sick, weak, injured animals is not desirable, and the T-61 protocol does not carry any implications with re­spect to humaneness of the product."
The statement by Fitch goes on to give the essential elements of the claim that nitrogen flushing is humane.

The statement by Fitch goes on to give the essential elements of the claim that nitrogen flushing is humane.

uses a nitrogen cabinet in its shelter, in effect, "The animals just fall over and go to sleep. No problems." Well, it is not quite that simple.

NITROGEN — FROM PAGE 7 —

"The nitrogen inhalation euthanasia method is somewhat like the attitude method in that death occurs due to hypoxia. However, quite unlike the rapid decompression method, there is little physiological change and, therefore, virtually no chance of painful effects resulting from the attitude method.

It is not possible to do hyperventilation with the nitrogen inhalation procedure, nothing is physically done to the animal(s) which could cause emotion or pain.

(A reader of the above quotation could hardly believe that it was written by a member of the same research team which conducted experiments in which dogs were killed by hyperventilation.)

IS NITROGEN FLUSHING HUMANE?

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uses a nitrogen cabinet in its shelter, in effect, "The animals just fall over and go to sleep. No problems." Well, it is not quite that simple.

NITROGEN — FROM PAGE 7 —

"The nitrogen inhalation euthanasia method is somewhat like the attitude method in that death occurs due to hypoxia. However, quite unlike the rapid decompression method, there is little physiological change and, therefore, virtually no chance of painful effects resulting from the attitude method.

It is not possible to do hyperventilation with the nitrogen inhalation procedure, nothing is physically done to the animal(s) which could cause emotion or pain.

(A reader of the above quotation could hardly believe that it was written by a member of the same research team which conducted experiments in which dogs were killed by hyperventilation.)

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NITROGEN FLUSHING FOR “EUTHANASIA”

Colorado State University Tests

As succinctly stated by Dr. T. Carding and associates of the World Federation for the Protection of Animals, headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, in their “Special Report on Euthanasia of Dogs and Cats,” issued in April 1977:

“In their investigations, Fitch, et al... killed 313 dogs, 36 cats, one pig, two rabbits and eight ducks. Electroencephalograms (EEG) were recorded from 34 dogs as well as electrocardiograms (EKG) and arterial blood pressure. The animals were placed in a chamber to which pure nitrogen gas was introduced... At an oxygen concentration of 1.5 percent the nitrogen flow was stopped and the animals held in the chamber for five minutes. EEG patterns showed the characteristic for sleep and unconsciousness in an average of about 40 seconds and became isoelectric at 60 seconds... When (the animals) became unconscious and collapsed within one minute. There were no signs of pain in any animal before unconsciousness including cases in dogs with parasitic disease; after unconsciousness, there were instances of muscle twitching, gasping, convulsions and jerking. The authors suggested that these were a result of acute hypoxia occurring in the unconscious animal. They also noted that the technique was successful in all species for economic mice, rats, rabbits, reptiles and amphibians. These apparently favorable results brought early endorsement or tentative approval of nitrogen flushing by the AHA and some other humane organizations.

Commercial Applications

It was not long until several equipment manufacturers were on the market with cabinets especially manufactured for this purpose. These are of similar sizes and have Flexiglas front-opening doors so that the animals in the cabinet can be observed and in turn can see what is going on outside. This is believed to make the cabinets so much like a kennel pen that the animals will not notice any difference and become accustomed to it. The cabinets are equipped with controls and gauges to facilitate easy operation, and give various size compartments for the animals, intended to minimize the amount of gas required for each animal (Fig. 1). - Fig. 1. One of cabinet in actual use. Obviously, the dog in the right-hand bottom cabinet is too large to stand upright, and is forced into an uncomfortable position. This dog, an Alaskan malamute 28 inches tall and weighing 60 pounds, was placed in the smaller of the two bottom compartments rather than the larger one to the left because, the operator explained, the larger one costs to operate about three dollars for each use, whereas the one to the right which was actually used costs about 50 cents. Regardless of the fact that these costs appear to be a slight additional cost, it is a good example of possible or probable misuse of the cabinets because of cost and convenience considerations. An example of this is the killing of very young puppies and kittens in the cabinets, although the Colorado tests indicated this should not be.

At the present time there are to our knowledge three companies manufacturing cabinets of this type. They are: (1) Anconco, Inc., P. O. Box 1233, Kansas City, Missouri 64108; (2) Kirchner-Gollston, P. O. Box 459, Aberdeen, Maryland 21001; (3) Snyder Mfg. Co., 5500 E. Pacific Place, Denver, Colorado 80222.

The cabinets are priced FOB the manufacturer's plant, so freight and installation costs must be added. This brings the total cost of a cabinet to varied amounts in the range of $4350 to $5000.

Careful shopping by prospective purchasers is advised, because at least one of the cabinets we have viewed is reported by the shelter to have already shown defects, because of moisture from the animals getting into the glue which holds the outer coating and the wood beneath it. Some of the doors also reportedly have become ineffective and the dogs have escaped and, of course, air to enter the cabinet.

Fig. 2. Possible misuse of the nitrogen cabinet is illustrated by this view of a dog, 28 inches high, weighing 60 pounds, which cannot stand up in the cabinet. The cabinet compartment to the left was not used for this dog because the cost for nitrogen would be more.

Costs of Operation

To our knowledge, no adequate study of the costs of operation of nitrogen flushing cabinets, taking into account depreciation, interest on investment, maintenance, material (bottled nitrogen) and labor, has been made. We have seen greatly varying cost estimates even for the nitrogen used, ranging from three to three dollars per animal, depending on size of animal, the number of animals placed in each compartment, the local prices for gas in liquid or compressed gas form and the type of gas used. Obviously, with such a range of estimated costs, any shelter contemplating purchase of a nitrogen cabinet should take great pains to see that any off-the-cuff estimate be carefully checked before acceptance.

As can be said with considerable confidence, however, that this is one of the most expensive of the alternative methods of euthanasia, and much more expensive than injections of sodium pentobarbital.

Nitrogen Versus Decompression

When the volume of oxygen passing over the lung tissue is greatly reduced, the haemoglobin of the blood can pick up less of it to carry to the tissues composing the various organs. The resulting tissue impairment causes the mechanisms which control consciousness, breathing and heart action to quickly cease functioning. Thus, it is not in the kind or degree of hypoxia that makes the results of decompression and of nitrogen flushing so different. The major undesirable effects of decompression are of a "mechanical" nature. With nitrogen flushing, these same mechanical effects do not arise.

As Fitch, one of the authors of the Colorado report on nitrogen flushing, puts it in parallel as shown: (Nitrogen gas is not supplied with unit). "T" connectors, flexible tubing and regulator to connect equipment."
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

INCREASING ADOPTIONS

"I think your article 'How to Increase Shelter Adoptions' is absolutely great. All points were very well taken and gave me other reasons to purchase a pet at a shelter, in addition to a reason I already had. Many of our readers have written to ask how many shelters receive your paper, since it is their policy that needs to be changed."—Mrs. James Kesler, Framingham, Mass.

"Bravo—you hit the nail right on the head in your article "How To Increase Shelter Adoptions," in the December, 1977, issue. I am proud to say that five years ago our organization made the decisions that you advocate in your article. Animals that we receive donations from, from our staff veterinarians, they all receive whatever shots and medical care are necessary before being placed for adoption. They are either altered by us at our facility, or they are given a certificate that is redeemable for a refund when the animal is altered at the proper time.

"We have established a minimum adoption fee of $15 for a dog and $10 for a cat. When we received a letter stating, 'If it has a market value of more, we then raise the adoption fee accordingly (presently our maximum is $85). The extra monies we receive because of these adoption fees we simply pour back into giving more and better care to the animals we receive. In other words, the more we get the more we are able to give the animal and the person who adopts it. I have constantly heard the argument that we raise the adoption fee, you will adopt out fewer animals. Let me state that before we instituted this program we were adopting out approximately 15 percent of the animals that we receive, and now our adoption rate is 58 percent. All animals we receive, which is four times as many! I feel that in great part this is because those people who are looking to adopt are now coming to us on the first or second day they have done everything that is possible to assure they will be receiving a healthy pet.

"As you see, we support the concept of your article completely and are very interested in anything we can do to anyone contemplating this type of program."—Eugene J. Herrmann, Executive Director, The Humane Society, Inc., Bellevue, Washington.

"When I lived in Mount Carroll, Illinois, there was a dog shelter but nothing for cats. I had an adoptable cat, so when I was visiting in Rockford I called the shelter there. They refused to even consider me because I resided over 35 miles from the shelter and they send adoption letters to those who live 35 miles away. Now they mean well—to check up, to even send a visitor, is a great idea. But rather than turn down all of us, it would be helpful if they would have a phone number for letter checkups, with references. In fact, we have been active in animal protection for 40 years, and had an ideal home for a cat, and could give references to prove it!...The reason so many places do not handle cats or do not let them adopt is because they get things mixed up. They consider their merchandise dogs but not merchandise cats...."—Professor Rita Atkins, La Plume, Pennsylvania.

"I've put your article on increasing shelter adoptions on the shelf and am working very hard to adopt all animals in our adoption program. We adopt out about 450 dogs and cats a month. Our team of volunteer 'Adoption Specialists' is growing (no volunteers were used at our shelter until last year). They are all indispensable aid in adoption screening and follow-ups. Every adoptable pet is now vaccinated, and the new owners of an RP/SPCA pet get a certificate for a free veterinary exam from our friend, Dr. Yogi I. Feldman. The Veterinary Research Foundation of California has also written a sympathy note to owners of recent deaths. Ms. Ann Brice, Director of Public Information, The San Francisco SPCA, San Francisco, California.

HUMANE SLAUGHTER

"Find it (Report to Humanitarians) very informative, fair and of course very disturbing. Why is it imperative to exclude kosher slaughterhouses from federal regulations?"—Ms. Maria Davies, Bolton, Ontario, Canada.

REPLY:

"We receive similar inquiries from many members. To make ritual slaughter subject to the provisions of the federal humane slaughter law is politically impossible (see Report to Humanitarians No. 39, March, 1973). The problem is well illustrated by positioning the animals for slaughter. This is being worked on from another angle, by the Council for Livestock Protection. It is not easy, but I think you will find so long as it is done in a way that will be acceptable to the Jewish community. The Brown letter, B.R. 464, requires that non-hoister slaughter in kosher plants be subject to the requirements (see Report to Humanitarians No. 39, March, 1973). The Brown bill, H.R. 1766, of 1973, would be very strange to reject it merely because it does not cover actual slaughter.

SHE OBJECTS TO OUR POLICY ON WILDLIFE

"It is unacceptable for HS to object to a wildlife organization's actions on behalf of wolves, seals or tigers. One does not reasonably expect that a wildlife organization such as Defenders of Wildlife would be involved in issues like humane slaughter, particularly to humans and cruelty of, etc. I am forCats! They are to be commended for a fine effort, not criticized."—Miss Virginia Sheehack, Henlo Park, California.

REPLY:

"We agree completely with what you say. We admire and respect Defenders of Wildlife. They do what their members expect them to do, neglecting almost completely the equally important problems of domesticated animals. This is done, we believe, because it is easier to obtain contributions for the spectacular wildlife cause which are featured in publications such as ours.

We know that others share your evident erroneous belief that HS is against wildlife and wildlife organizations. Not so! We do not object to a hunt, but we are opposed to taking unnecessary national legislation, which were looking up with the appearance of the leg snare, are now gloomy. The Ohio referendum was a damaging blow. One more such disaster, and one is on the way (in Indiana, Kentucky). Our friends in the Federation of Humane Societies are hounding the Ohio Bureau of Wildlife to change their policy, which has been premature...If field tests show that (leg snares) can be effective, we know that it will be enormously simplified, for we (will) have what we have always lacked, a feasible replacement for steel-jaw leghold traps."—Tom Garrett, Legislative Coordinator, Defenders of Wildlife, Washington, D. C.

A LETTER FROM DEFENDERS!

"Your article (on trapping, Report to Humanitarians No. 41) struck me as acute and generally on the mark. The picture may be changing, however, with the advent of leg snares to catch terrestrial small mammals. The scheme, in our view, will have a chance to succeed, but is at best a half-breed, and would be happy to offer any assistance and information we can receive because of these adoption fees we simply pour back into receiving a healthy pet.

"As you see, we support the concept of your article completely and are very interested in anything we can do to anyone contemplating this type of program."—Eugene J. Herrmann, Executive Director, The Humane Society, Inc., Bellevue, Washington.

BRIEF BUT SWEET

"Re your 'Christmas message': For years I have felt this way but never quite knew how to express it. You have, perfectly! Now I see how it is to see people who want to give something and give it, when it is right inside most of us—kindness!"—Miss Roberts L. Scharath, Wollaston, Massachusetts.

"I attended the Bantanalusia Symposium sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Humane Societies September 24, at which your representative Steve Goodman was present. His fine presentation was so glad that I finally got to meet you. I was so kind in coming to our rescue when we really needed some help!..."—Mrs. Dorothy O'Brien, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

"The 10th problem, to with which we have been working very hard, is to improve our shelter facilities in the many places we receive. Today we are adopting out 58 percent of the total we have received. We take a look at any animal we receive, and..."—A.G. Armstrong, Tiffin, Ohio.

"I would like to thank you so very much for being our main speaker at our public hearing on the 6th. Without you I'm afraid it might have gone badly for our cause. You were super! I was so glad you finally got to meet me personally. Thank you again for being so kind in coming to our rescue when we really needed someone!..."—Mrs. Brown, Iowa.

"I have read your Report to Humanitarians for years and find it the most helpful publication in its field. I have many copies of it..."—Mrs. Paul Lutz, Secretary, The Seneca County Humane Society, Tiffin, Ohio.

"You are doing a tremendous job. How we need a publication like yours! The humane movement is indeed indebted to you, and all humane workers should study your publication thoroughly..."—Mrs. Peggy Monning Forret, Lomas Altas, Mexico.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Have been received from...

(Anonymously) "In memory of Lottie Houle Abbott, a woman who had the courage to speak the truth in actions that were unpleasant, to say the least. Anything and everything that I am doing today, I do because she had the courage and the courage of her heart."


"D. R. Chibert, San Diego, California, "In memory of our lovely Ruth, a German shepherd, who died on April 29, 1977, at ten years, three months and 10 days. She left a broken-hearted brother and two humans."

"Harold G. Gustafson, Providence, Rhode Island, "In memory of Cookie, the cat who added a little something to my life from 1959 to September, 1977, when she succumbed to old age."

"Mrs. Irene E. Harvey, Seminole, Florida, "And from our beautiful, big brown cat Tigers—a memorial to my husband, who passed..."