(No. 45) -- Congress Approves Humane Slaughter Bill

Humane Information Services, Inc.

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Congress Approves Humane Slaughter Bill

Both the Senate and House of Representatives of the 95th Congress of the United States have approved the "Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978," which will insure the humane handling and slaughtering of many more millions of animals than at present to provide meat and meat products for consumers in this country.

The Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 affects only meat packing establishments owned by persons or associations subject to federal government agencies, such as the Army and Navy. The law just passed by Congress requires that all meat inspected and approved under the Federal Meat Inspection Act shall be produced from livestock handled and slaughtered in accordance with humane methods named in the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act. This will affect practically all commercial meat packing plants in the United States.

Likewise, foreign plants exporting meat products to this country, which also come under the meat inspection provisions, will be required to observe the same humane handling and slaughtering provisions that apply to United States plants. The meat equivalent of over five million head annually is imported by the United States, and shall be produced from livestock handled and diligently for the new law.

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, now deceased, who had served as chair of both Humane Information Services and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, had worked untiringly for his bill in both the 94th Congress and in the present 95th Congress.

Other members of Congress who have been especially helpful in obtaining this legislation are Representatives R. Poage, of Texas, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the House of Representatives (Mr. Poage was author of the original Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 and is a longtime supporter of humane legislation); Representative Thomas S. Foley, of Washington, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee (Mr. Foley is well known for his continuing excellent work in the field of animal protective legislation); and Senator Bill B. Sole, of Kansas, who introduced a companion bill in the Senate. MEMORIAL TO DR. THOMSEN

In speaking before the entire assembled House of Representatives on September 19, just prior to a unanimous vote in favor of the bill, Congressman Brown included in his remarks the following tribute to Dr. Thomsen, who considered the treatment of food animals the greatest humane problem in the world:

"In addition to Mr. Poage's efforts and the efforts of numerous humane organizations and individuals, I would like to again acknowledge the work of the late Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, former president of the Humane Information Services. Dr. Thomsen worked for years for the passage of the legislation and for the improvement of animal protection in general. This bill should be viewed as a fitting memorial to Dr. Thomsen and a living reminder of the efforts of humane groups everywhere."

The legislation now awaits the signature of President Carter and will take effect one year thereafter.

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The Decompression Chamber

This article was written in cooperation with Mr. Fred B. Johnston, a member of the Advisory Board of the Highland SPCA, Columbia, South Carolina.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has published in the July 1, 1978, issue of its journal a new "Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia." The report is prefaced by the following statement: "In 1977, at the request of the AVMA Council on Research, the Executive Board of the AVMA appointed a Euthanasia Review Panel consisting of six veterinarians and one public representative. The purpose of the panel was to update the report of the 2nd panel, published in 1972. Advances in biomedical science and technology as well as changes in the magnitude and kinds of needs for euthanasia have been considered in developing the 1978 report." Included in the new report is a brief discussion of the decompression chamber, not unlike the discussions included in the 1972 report and the report of an even earlier (1962) AVMA panel. In short, the 1962 panel had withheld its approval of decompression; in 1972 a new panel recommended decompression "provided the equipment is properly constructed, maintained, and operated." After having made the statement that "rapid decompression is a satisfactory procedure for euthanasia if provided the equipment is properly constructed, correctly maintained, and efficiently operated," the 1978 panel goes on to say, "Because many dif­ ferences in opinion exist in using decompression and because there is a general lack of understanding of how hypoxia affects animals, other methods of euthanasia are preferable."

Quite a few months before the 1978 panel's report was published, the Humane Information Services engaged in lengthy correspondence, offering the panel evidence of the inhumaneness of the decompression chamber and letter acknowledging some of this correspondence was received with no evidence of a willingness on the part of the panel to discuss or debate the facts with us.

The 1978 AVMA panel report briefly explains how decompression produces hypoxia as a means of euthanasia. It devotes a portion of the single paragraph devoted to a generalized exploration of the effects of decompression to the fact that aircraft pilots flying at high altitude frequently experience euphoria and that this is followed by depression of the central nervous system. A similar statement was made in the 1971 panel's report. The implication of the sentence is that dogs, cats, puppies and kittens in the chamber experience, not apprehension, alarm, fear, discomfort or pain, but "a

(See DECOMPRESSION, page 4, column 1)
MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS have been received from...

Miss Anna M. Feeley, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "In remembrance of a wonderful 'wild' old 'Little Grey' - just out of kittenhood. Never shall I forget her little face - it was sublime. She suddenly disappeared! - we searched and searched but never could find out what happened."

Dr. Doris Haley, Belleville, New Jersey. "In memory of my cat Toby, who did 'light up my life.'"

Ms. Madeline Oriolo, Sydney, Australia. "In memory of Faery, my companion chihuahua Perrotoni, who just disappeared after five years. I had found her as a kitten at the age of one month, 1969, just a shadow. She turned into a glorious little Put, and never to know what happened to her to her heart."

Those whose names follow made contributions in memory of Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen:

Mrs. R. O. Allmell, Allentown, Pennsylvania.


Thomas J. Burke, Niles, Ohio.

Animal Books and Materials Wanted

Let's say you bought Peter Singer's book Animal Liberation, read it, loaned it to friends, and then put it on the shelf where it will gather dust from now on. How much better would it be made of it in the Human Information Service's modest library? We will be grateful for any book dealing with animals or humane subjects which you no longer have much use for. We particularly need books on Veterinary Medicine, dog and cat diseases, glosaries, etc. We can also use back copies of animal welfare and humane publications. For example, we would like very much to have a complete set of Dog magazine and a copy of Ruth Harris's book Animal Machines.

Members who previously sent us a set of encyclopedias and an unabridged dictionary, please be sure to know that they are in frequent use.

Miss Helen I. Linn, packages containing a wealth of excellent materials on various humane subjects, all nicely categorized in file folders, also several very useful books. Her generous contributions, which we really appreciate, prompted us to include this article appealing to our other members for similar donations.

The singing of the end of 'Toby, a great child'; "Little Grey" - just out of kittenhood. Never shall I forget her little face - it was sublime. She suddenly disappeared - we searched and searched but never could find out what happened. But she lives on.

In memory of Faery, my companion chihuahua Perrotoni, who just disappeared after five years. I had found her as a kitten at the age of one month, 1969, just a shadow. She turned into a glorious little Put, and never to know what happened to her to her heart.

Throughout the office our busy accountants are unanswering correspondence which had gathered before the past year or so during which we had insufficient clerical help. We now have more employed the busy accountants. If you are among those who wrote us a long time ago and have received no reply as yet, we sincerely apologize and do hope you will be hearing from us. Until we can bring all our records and correspondence up to date, please mark the envelope "Urgent," and will see that it is cared for promptly.

We field investigations continue to reveal that unwanted and abused animals, especially in shelters and pounds, which are badly needed, are of great need of correction. In many instances there is a distinct need for humane facilities are anxious for our assistance, particularly in making the destruction of unwanted & abused animals humanely. One community was putting healthy dogs to death, throwing them into the uncooled and unfiltered exhaust from a truck. We have heard the story of a dog being thrown into an abandoned mine. Another place another dog electrocuted with a truck cord which does not render the animal unharmed. The current passes through the animal's body and all of these conditions have required urgent action, and we have been responsible for a number of improvements.

Mrs. R. G. Amelio, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Doris Haley, Belleville, New Jersey.

Animal Liberation.

Mrs. R. G. Amelio, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Marsh, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Margaret M. Donahey, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Catherine M. O'Leary, West Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Ralph Nemo, St. Augustine, Florida.

"Also our beloved dog Toby, who died September, 1977".

Miss Judy Wolfe, Nashville, Nebraska.

Mrs. Mildred J. Wien, Boonton, New Jersey.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

Our members and friends are naturally anxious for news of the appointment of an executive director of Humane Information Services who will carry on the program begun by our late president, Dr. Thomsen. We want to assure everyone that our search is continuing for a really capable and dedicated person to fill this position. It is hoped that by the first of the New Year a decision will have been made. Please bear with us.

In the meantime our office is busy catching up on unanswered correspondence which had gathered before the past year or so during which we had insufficient clerical help. We now have more clerical help, therefore, and are busy answering complaints. If you are among those who wrote us a long time ago and have received no reply as yet, we sincerely apologize and do hope you will be hearing from us. Until we can bring all our records and correspondence up to date, please mark the envelope "Urgent," and will see that it is cared for promptly.

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LEGISLATION

Our sister society, the National Association for Human Information Services, Inc., (NAHIS), has been continuing its activities in the legislative field despite the death of its president, Dr. Thomsen, who also served as president of Humane Information Services.

The acting president of NAHIS and a member of its board of directors is one of the most well-known and indefatigable workers in the human movement, Mrs. William A. Park. She has many friends and co-workers know her.

Charlotte Parks has been very ably conducting the programs of NAHIS during the present 95th Congress of the United States. Contacts have been made with members of appropriate officials and in certain cases testimony has been presented at hearings in support of or in opposition to the following bills as noted:

Animal Protection Public Lands, H.R. 39 (Idall) and S. 1500 (Matell-Durkin), which would preserve a sufficient amount of this pristine, unmatched wilderness and wildlife resource unreserved commercial exploitation.

Anti-Trespass - S. 818 (Williams) and S. 2223 (Bayh). Appeals have been made for hearing.

Endangered Species. In an effort to preserve the integrity of the Act of 1973, NAHIS has sought to members of Congress to oppose weakening amendments and requested simple re-authorization of the Act.

Federal Loans to Municipalities for Reducen-Kate Spy Clinics, H.R. 3601 (St. Germain). There are similar bills, but NAHIS supports H.R. 3601 (Brooklyn) which provides for training of paraprofessionals.

Alternatives to Live Animals in Experimentation, H.R. 3599 (Grims). Appeals were made for early hearings.

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Wild Horses and Burros, H.R. 10587 (Roncallo) would permit individual ownership of wild horses and burros. NAHIS urged deletion of individual ownership and substituted amendments to maximum of four, and requirements for humane standards of food, water, shelter, and veterinary care, application to both Burs and Land Management and adopters.

Tule Elk Refuge. For many years the Committee for Preservation of the Tule Elk, under the leadership of Beula in Edmond, has been working to obtain for these rare and indigenous animal a several small refuges in Calif have been obtained. Present law prohi any elk from being sent out of state, this is being reconsidered. NAHIS has passed legislation in California throughout, by appealing to appropriate authorities in support.

All of the above is, of course, in direct contravention of the work that Humane Information Services on the bill recently approved by Congress known as the "Hum Methods of Slaughter Act of 1976" (see ticle on page 1).

Correspondence on any of these or other bills or any humane legislation may be directed to Mrs. William A. Parks, Box 495 Beach Road, York, Maine 03909, or the National Association for Human Information Services, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida, 33735.
Expressions of sympathy... 

have been received by Humane Information Services from many, many of our members and friends in all parts of the world following Dr. Doc's death on April 1, 1996, of our beloved Dr. Frederick Thomas, president, who died in a recent plane crash.

These are so many that we cannot list them here, but we are very appreciative of your kind messages and pledges of continued support.

"We were saddened to read of Dr. Thomas's death—but glad he didn't have a long illness. He did a wonderful job while on earth, and he will be missed. One has to look at the cheerful side that we all are to serve."—Dr. and Mrs. Forrest A. Lebied, St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada.

"What a loss! May Doc's fine work and contributions to the relief of animal suffering continue and grow."—Mrs. Virginia C. Purdy, Brooklyn, New York.

"I'm quite sure Doc's spirit will soon be back on a new body to do the good work somewhere."—William Reed, St. Petersburg, Florida.

"We were saddened to learn of Doc's death. He was such a devoted humanitarian, and the fact that the planet he lived on this lifetime was so gorgeous, is certainly a tremendous support of those who will follow his philosophy and really supportive of those who do the humane work. All best wishes."—Mrs. H. Moore and Mrs. Margot Valentine, Lithia, Florida.

"It is good to know that Doc's work will be carried on. It is well that the very loyal to him will be equally loyal to his continuing, and that whatever changes of what can be done to extend the humanizing of the earth, this change and (with whatever alterations changing the force) will remain required."—Alfred R. Babcock, Summit, New Jersey.

"I don't have to tell you my feelings on receiving the news of the death of Dr. Thomas. While I had never met him in person—had never even talked to him on the phone—he had been a very important person in my life during the past 25 years. Half of the letters to me, is very quarterly reports from Dr. Thomas. There is no other figure in the humane movement closer to me."—Charles L. Crosby, Springfield, Illinois.

"Dr. Thomas was a very, very dedicated humanitarian who left a very large place for his creatures because he passed the hard work of seeing his organization as a force for good all over the world."—Ralph Nemo, St. Augustine, Florida.

"We were sorry to hear of the death of your president, Dr. Frederick L. Thomas, but we wish to express our sympathy and assure you of our heartfelt condolences."—President, International Ecological Society, of our beloved Doc. A finer, more dedicated animal lover never lived..."—Ralph Nemo, St. Augustine, Florida.

"Your Report No. 44 has just arrived. I hasten to forward my condolences, and express my sorrow to you, on your loss in the passing of Dr. Thomas. It will not be possible to replace this remarkable man by anyone in the same mould. Such leaders and trailblazers are few and far between these days. The world is to both show the way for those who wish to follow and to stimulate them to do more than they believed possible. Doc's guidance and inspiration has been a great presence in the lives of many who followed in his footsteps. Doc's death was an unforseen blow, a farthing..."—Mrs. D. N. Nivell, Barmouth, Gwynedd, Wales, United Kingdom.

"I was indeed saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Thomas. Enclosed is my annual contribution for 1996 which I am sure will help in the work of the Humane Information Services will continue to operate as the high caliber organization that it was under Dr. Thomas's leadership. Obviously, Dr. Thomas was a highly intelligent, sensitive, thorough-going, objective, dedicated humanitarian. I do not envy the new president who must 'fill his shoes!'—Miss Barbara S. Clapp, Claremont, California.

"I am deeply grieved at the loss of one of your valued workers—and sincerely hope that you will be able to carry on as before in spite of it."—Miss Margaret A. Jackson, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"To me it is gratifying to know that the noble work of Dr. Thomas is being continued. I believe that he covered the entire field of animal abuse more thoroughly than any other individual."—Smiley Fowler, Greensboro, Indiana.

"Your special issue, 'Humane Information Services Mourns Death ofDoc,' was a most moving,崇敬的，humanitarian. Doc's greatness is evident in his article showing his admiration for Fred Myers. Doc accepted him as his human teacher and peer. Your assurance that Report to Humanizations will be published is a sure indication that the humanitarian spirit will be unyielding objective is most assuring."—Mrs. Mildred A. Wren, Boonton, New Jersey.

"I am deeply moved on learning of the death of Dr. Frederick Thomas. I cut my teeth on your publications, and I am saddened to learn of two deaths of leaders who were committed to vital work on behalf of animals: Dr. Thomas and Velma Johnston. It suddenly seems very lonely."—Miss Virginia D. Sheffchen, Menlo Park, California.

"Your latest mailing came today, and I am grateful to have a photograph of Dr. Thomas. The world abounds in hidden heroes and heroines who never make the headlines."—Miss Madeleine O'May, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"I had no way of knowing of the death of Dr. Thomas until the June issue of your Report to Humanizations was received. What can one say that hasn't already been said—these special people are forever missed. My thoughts are with you all. St. Paul said: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.' These things Dr. Thomas did—he has done well, and may his soul be with the..."
feeling of well-being or elation"

(Webster's definition of euphoria). What nonsense! There is no evidence in all our years of study of the decompression chamber to indicate that animals are euphoric. When the euphoric interpretation was criticized by Humane Information Services at a lecture in 1977 given by Martin Passaglia, Jr., appearing on behalf of the American Humane Association, responded with a long explanation of how the comment was made. The point was that if operated according to directions for decompression, the machine and thoroughly cleaned after use, no more than six German shepherd type dogs in one hour and no more than twelve dogs in four hours could come out of the machine alive, and in complete as the 1978 panel's statements to the effect that acceptable methods of euthanasia for some animals are used, mainly the large-city shelters and pounds who use them. They sincerely but erroneously believe that decompression, best adapted to handling a large volume of animals, is most convenient, involves much less expense, and produces better animal behavior than the work of those who use these methods, and the humanitarian who does not understand the physiological processes involved have made ridiculous emotional statements about the chamber. But so have all those who have had no experience that most humanitarians are willing to listen and discuss the subject with open minds and based on facts and properly about it. They want to have used the most humane method of destroying the millions of unwanted dogs and cats that pass through the shelters and pounds annually. They eagerly search for new knowledge on the subject.

The interest of the chamber, on the other hand, get huffy and pugnacious when they encounter even the mildest criticism. The popular idea of decompression, which is not a"rapid decompression" as a satisfactory procedure for euthanasia," is not a humane method of euthanasia for some animals. The decompression chamber is not properly constructed and operated. Animals below four months of age, and those that have been subjected to a high degree of decompression, cannot be present all the time. The chamber is too slow a method (contrary to the impression given by the AVMA report and press releases) to be used. We have objective evidence to refute each and every one of these myths. But so have we the people who have used these myths, and the veterinarians exposed to their propaganda, who have little or no control over what is printed about them, frequently wind up adopting the same myths. We reiterate our conclusion regarding the decompression chamber, taken from our report published in 1972: "Rapid decompression definitely is not a humane method of euthanasia for some animals. We hope our members will continue to keep us informed of any efforts in their own areas to stop the use of decompression for "euthanasia." We will help all who want help in these efforts, we will shortly make available copies of our original and full-length analysis of the decompression chamber as published first in 1972. Because of the great demand for the original two-part publication, our supply has long since been depleted. Further details will be included in the next issue of Report to Humanitarians.