For eight years two lions and two Himalayan bears lived in a cramped tractor trailer cage as part of the traveling "African Safari Zoo." While passing through Harlingen, Texas, the owner decided to leave the trailer behind for repairs. The four animals were also left behind with only a small supply of food.

The repair work amounted to over $2000 and the owner apparently decided to just abandon the truck and animals rather than pay the bill. For the next five months the truck sat idle. No one locally knew where to turn for help. Fortunately, the garage owner had enough compassion to feed and water the animals during that time.

As soon as the abandonment was brought to the attention of The HSUS Gulf States Office, good things began to happen. HSUS field investigator, Bernie Weller, traveled to the scene, organized the legal seizure of the four animals, and assisted in charges being placed against the owner.

At the court hearing, it was determined the owner was guilty of abandonment, and the animals were auctioned off as required by law. The HSUS placed a bid and was awarded the animals. Investigator Weller located a drive-thru zoo in Gentry, Arkansas, that could furnish the animals a good home. Proper cages and a large truck were obtained by The HSUS for the journey. After a long, two-day trip, the bears and lions arrived at their new natural-habitat zoo.
**Director’s Comment**

By Bill Meade

Animal shelters have always been thought of as a place that is supposed to do the best thing possible for lost or unwanted animals. For many animals this means being reunited with their owners, or placed in responsible new homes. In other cases, it means the animal must be euthanized without pain or fear. Never was it envisioned that an animal shelter would become a stock-piling place for dogs and cats to be sold or given away for animal experimentation. Yet, in many cities within our region, this is exactly what is happening.

Each of us needs to check and be sure our local shelters do not supply animals for experimentation. If you find your city does, contact us and we will help you end this misuse of animals at your local shelter.

February 1983

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**New Training for Shelter Personnel**

The new Texas Animal Shelter Standards Law requires the state to “prescribe standards and charge reasonable fees for the training of animal shelter personnel as to animal health and disease control, humane care and treatment, control of animals in an animal shelter, and the transportation of animals.”

This law was enacted through the efforts of the Texas Humane Information Network, the Texas Department of Health, and The HSUS. During 1982, the Texas Department of Health initiated this basic Animal Control Officer Certification training program. Additionally, an Advanced Program and Administrative Training Program are being planned for 1983 and 1984.

Many problems of abuse to animals and a lack of professionalism among animal-control employees prompted the law. There have been reports of shooting being used as a routine euthanasia method; animals not being fed; animals’ quarters not cleaned regularly, and no protection from weather extremes being furnished.

The law provides this training for all animal shelter personnel, whether it is a private humane society or a government animal-control shelter.

Initial programs have been a tremendous success. For additional information, contact Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin, Texas 78756.

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**Brutality Found in Livestock Auctions**

"These animals are going to the slaughterhouse anyway, so it really doesn’t matter how rough they are handled." This seems to be what many auction-barn operators around the Gulf States region are saying.

Citizens’ complaints of torment and brutality at livestock auctions prompted your regional office to investigate these operations in recent months. Sale barns in Navasota, Edinburg, Rio Grande City, Hebbronville, Beeville, Alice, and Victoria (Texas) were visited by HSUS field investigator, Bernie Weller.

What was found at many of these auctions were more fitting for a torture movie than for an industry with a vested interest in animals. The usual animal-handling tools of the auction personnel were clubs, whips, and hot shots. The intention seemed to be to move the animals from truck to pen to sales ring as fast as possible, regardless of how much whipping and hitting was involved.

Cattle and calves were relentlessly jabbed and shocked with the hot shot. In one case, a calf was trampled and killed by frightened cattle being unloaded. In this instance, the county attorney invoked the state anti-cruelty statute to prevent any re-occurrence. The auction barn owner has been put on notice by the county attorney that employees must not handle animals in a cruel manner.

The investigations show this problem of animal mistreatment in auction barns is the rule rather than the exception. Significant improvement could come about if local citizens and humane societies would investigate auctions in their area and expose any cruelty they found, using news media, and the courts if necessary.

The HSUS Gulf States Office is sending a formal letter for animals going through these establishments.
HSUS Recommends: Giving “Tickets” to Stop Stray Dogs

One of the biggest problems of animal shelters and animal-control agencies is how to capture stray animals. Part of the answer is that not all strays need to be taken to the shelter.

The “ticket” or citation system permits animal-control officers to cite a pet owner for a violation instead of impounding the animal. The animal-control citation is similar to the traffic ticket system used by police departments.

With the citation system, an officer observing an animal running at large may pursue it toward its home and attempt to identify the owner by questioning area residents. If the owner can be identified, then he or she is issued a citation.

This system eliminates the need for an animal to be taken into the custody of the shelter. Thus, pets are spared the stress of impoundment and contact with other animals carrying infectious diseases.

Also, the system can account for a substantial reduction in the cost of animal-control operations. The number of impoundments is reduced which, in turn, eliminates the problems of overcrowding.

Although pet owners and the animal shelter benefit, the greatest value of the citation system is as a deterrent to irresponsible pet ownership. Often, the most negligent pet owners are too apathetic to retrieve an impounded animal, and they escape legal penalties they should suffer for failing to restrain their animals.

Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President, believes shelters may actually be subsidizing irresponsible pet ownership by eliminating the animal that has outgrown its cuteness. Wright feels many irresponsible pet owners replace impounded animals with cuddly puppies and kittens, thereby perpetuating the community’s animal control problems.

The citation system holds pet owners accountable for their conduct even in instances where the animal is unwanted and not reclaimed. It should be noted, however, that the system is workable only when there is a vigorous, ongoing licensing program.