WCRO Fall 2007

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Preparation Pays Dividends in Huge Tahoe Fire

July's Anora Fire Near South Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County burned more than 3,000 acres, destroyed 260 homes and businesses and threatened evacuation and loss for hundreds in the area.

HSUS's Curt Ransom and Paul Bruce responded to a call for assistance from Chief Henry Brzezinski of the county animal control. Within four hours, Ransom and Bruce were on site, providing administrative assistance, logistical support, and experienced field response.

They visited emergency animal shelter facilities, coordinating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Animal Response in Emergency System (CARES) to provide support and ongoing communications between El Dorado County and state animal care officials. Ransom and Bruce continued on page 3.

Animal Fighting: Wins and Challenges

The recent media attention surrounding the sensational Michael Vick dogfighting case thrust the issue squarely into the national spotlight and revealed the sordid underground activities of canine combat that The HSUS has fought against for years.

And July marked a major milestone in our battle against animal fighting when Louisiana's governor signed a bill to outlaw cockfighting. With the passage of an HSUS-backed law in Louisiana that phases out the practice in 2008, the state joined all 49 others in banning this cruel blood sport.

California, Illinois, and South Carolina increased penalties for participating in or attending cockfights, and we helped defeat an Oklahoma bill that would have allowed possession, transportation, and training of gamecocks.

This victory follows on the heels of another success: passage of H.R. 137, the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act, which President Bush signed on May 3, 2007. After The HSUS led the six-year battle to pass this law, it now authorizes felony-level penalties for animal fighting and prohibits interstate and foreign commerce in cockfighting weapons.

Even with these successes, the pace of cockfighting investigations never slackens, and in two of our biggest cases, local law enforcement raided a large California animal-fighting ring in which more than a thousand gamecocks were seized and three key players arrested. In Oklahoma a cockfighting pit on American Indian land was raided by federal authorities who had been in consultation with HSUS staff for months. We also assisted in the investigation and prosecution of an Arkansas dogfighting ring.

Dogfighting came to the forefront with the high-profile case of NFL quarterback Michael Vick.

We conducted surveillance with Iowa police in a case of suspected dogfighters from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Our assistance in a Wyoming case resulted in authorities charging a suspect with animal cruelty and with breaking into an animal shelter to retrieve his fighting dogs.

An HSUS investigation reveals a resurgence of vicious spectacles known as hog-dog rodeos. The fights are lopsided contests being staged in southern tier states from Florida to Arizona. Pit bulls and other trained attack dogs are loosed on defenseless wild pigs whose tusks have often been removed with bolt cutters. The feral hogs typically suffer severe or fatal maulings; disturbingly, the fights attract families with children.

With help from The HSUS, five members of a hog-dog fighting ring were arrested in Florida, including the president and vice president of the International Catchdog Association. In significant state legislative continued on page 5
Oregon Makes History, Bans Gestation Crates

WITH A STROKE OF HIS PEN, Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski made a landmark advancement for farm animals by approving a measure prohibiting one of the worst factory farm abuses: gestation crate confinement of breeding pigs. Oregon is the first state in the country to ban the use of gestation crates through the legislature. The action follows Arizona and Florida, where the crates have been outlawed by voter ballot initiatives.

The landmark measure, S.B. 694, was introduced and championed by Sen. Brian Burdick (D-Portland). It prohibits the confinement of breeding pigs in metal gestation crates so small the animals can’t turn around for months on end, and the crates must be phased-out in six years. There are approximately 4,000 breeding sows in Oregon. The House approved the bill 32-25, and the Senate approved it 20-9.

“Gestation crates are truly cruel and inhumane, and this measure simply provides these highly intelligent and social creatures the ability to turn around and stretch their limbs,” said Sen. Burdick. “I am pleased that my colleagues saw fit to offer a standard of care for these animals because they, too, deserve humane treatment. I was very pleased to work with The Humane Society of the United States on this issue.”

Senator Burdick’s determined leadership and the HSUS’s legal victories are responsible for the passage of this important bill,” stated Kathy Peterson, Oregon state director for The HSUS. “The measure sends a strong message to the agribusiness industry that gestation crate confinement is simply too cruel and inhumane for anyone to support.”

Animal Agribusiness: Ungapping the Victims of Factory Farming

CONDITIONS IN FACTORY FARMS are improving thanks to significant victories for pigs, calves, and chickens. The latest success came in Oregon with passage in June of a law that bans sow gestation crates, the first time a state legislature has approved such a measure. Last November The HSUS led the drive for an Arizona statewide ballot initiative that resulted in 62 percent of voters approving a ban on gestation crates and veal confinement. Smithfield Foods, the nation’s biggest pig producer, quickly announced it would phase out the use of the crates for its 1.2 million breeding sows.

A week later Maple Leaf Foods, Canada’s largest pig producer, followed Smithfield’s lead. At the same time, Strauss Veal and Marcho Farms announced they would end the practice of confining veal calves in tiny crates. These decisions represent perhaps the most monumental advance for animal welfare in the history of modern American agribusiness. Timeless King and famed restaurateur Wolfgang Puck have also announced that they are moving away from the use of pork from producers that use gestation crates.

Our campaign to encourage restaurateurs, food service providers, and grocery chains to stop selling eggs from hens confined in tiny battery cages has made major strides. More than 150 colleges and universities have eliminated or greatly reduced their use of battery cage eggs, a trend mirrored by a growing number of large retailers. Whole Foods Market and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of North America, and the PETA are co-sponsoring a national campaign to raise public awareness about the horrors of egg-laying hens in cages.

Top Fashion Designers, Retailers Snared in a Campaign to Protect Farm Animals

CALIFORNIANS FOR HUMANE FARMS, supported by The HSUS and other local and national groups, has launched a ballot initiative campaign to place the California Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act on the November 2008 ballot. Can you spare some time to help California’s farm animals?

Volunteers must gather 650,000 signatures by February 28, 2008, to place a measure on the ballot to ban the cruel and intensive confinement of breeding pigs, veal calves, and egg-laying hens. We urgently need your help to make this campaign a success for animals. Here are just a few reasons why this initiative is so important:

• Breeding pigs are confined in metal cages called gestation crates and are unable to exercise or even turn around. Young veal calves are also confined so severely that they are not able to turn around for months on end. Egg-laying hens are kept in cages so small, metal cages that prevent them from even spreading their wings.

• Veal and gestation crates have been outlawed in several countries. The gestation crate was outlawed in Florida in 2002; Oregon in 2007, and both gestation and veal crates were outlawed in Arizona in 2006.

• Intensive confinement of millions of breeding pigs, veal calves, and egg-laying hens results in dangerous levels of animal excrement that contaminates water and pollutes the air.

• For more information about the campaign, contact Heather Carpenter at 407-897-1192 or hcarpenter@humanesociety.org.

Washington Campaign a Possibility

We are considering launching a campaign to protect farm animals in 11 states. If you are interested in being kept up-to-date on a Washington campaign, please contact Inga Gibson at igibson@humanesociety.org or 206-328-8100.

Pigs are benefitting from new laws that ban cruel, confining gestation crates.

FACTS
• Veal calves, calves are not able to turn around for months on end. Egg-laying hens are often kept with their heads down by their rear legs and skinned alive for his fur. Filmed by undercover investigators, the incident is yet another example of the widespread cruel treatment of animals in a nation that has virtually no animal welfare laws.

• Estimates of raccoon dogs killed in China for fur range from 1.5 to 4 million, and China is the world’s biggest exporter of so-called “budget fur” used mostly for trim on hoods and collars.

• An HSUS investigation tested fur trim on coats sold by some of the biggest retailers and fashion designers in the United States. Falsely advertised or labeled with such names as “raccoon,” “coyote,” “rabbit,” or “bax,” or carrying no label at all, 20 of the 25 coats tested were identified as raccoon dog fur and three as domestic dog fur. It’s illegal to import, export, sell, or advertise any domestic dog or cat fur in the United States. Fur from other animals must be properly identified in advertising and labeling, but only if its value exceeds $150.

• The retailers involved included Bloomingdale’s, Burlington Coat Factory, J.C. Penney, Loehmann’s, Lord & Taylor, Macy’s, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, and Saks Fifth Avenue. Among the designers and brands involved were Alexander McQueen, Calvin Klein, DKNY, Michael Kors, Oscar de la Renta, Sean “Diddy” Combs, Sean John brand, and Tommy Hilfiger.

• Many of the retailers and designers dis­approved prior knowledge of the problemati­cal fur and pulled offending items from the sales rack, swore off raccoon dog fur and said they would support better labeling. Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, and Foot Locker pledged to go fur-free. The HSUS named 14 companies that failed to take appropriate action in a legal petition filed with the Federal Trade Commission.

• The Dog and Cat Fur Prohibition Enforcement Act (H.R. 891), backed by The HSUS, seeks to prevent cosmetic and ani­mals by outlawing the import of fur from raccoon dogs and closing the $150 looph­ole so that all fur garments have to be labeled, regardless of value.

• cont. from “Animal Fighting,” page 1

victories, Alabama, Mississippi, North Caro­olina, and South Carolina approved new felony laws in 2006 banning dogfighting.

Our letters of complaint to slaughterhouses and to the companies in Arizona persuaded Best Buy, Circuit City, and Amazon.com to halt sales of dogfighting videos. The HSUS has now suiting Amazon.com to sell sales of dogfighting videos and cockfighting magazines such as Feathered Warrior and Gamecock.

Sells this animal fighting paraphernalia violates federal law by using the U.S. Postal Service to further illegal animal fights.

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**Recent Legislative Victories**

**Hawaii Becomes 43rd State to Enact Felony Cruelty Laws**

In our last newsletter, we stated that Hawaii was "anything but paradise for animals." Well, we're happy to report that things are looking better in Hawaii. Senate Bill 1065, a felony animal cruelty bill, has successfully passed. Sen. Clayton Hee championed the effort with companion bills in the House, sponsored by Reps. Linda Lingle and Brian Togashi. Blaker Oshiro and Tommy Waters. Gov. Linda Lingle demonstrated her unwavering support for both human and animal protection by signing the bill into law on June 1. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Hawaii Hill staff members, supporters, and the Hawaiian Humane Society, Maui Humane Society, and Oahu's Hawaiian Humane Society, Hawaii is now the 43rd state with felony level penalties for intentional acts of cruelty against a pet.

Sadly, the new law has loopholes. The felony provision applies only to pets—dogs, cats, and pet pigs—but ex-felony provision applies only to pets—horses, cows, and livestock. In addition, cockfighting, which is a felony in 35 states, remains a misdemeanor in Hawaii.

**Oregon Advances**

In addition to Oregon's historic passage of S.B. 1194, which banned cockfighting, S.B. 1193 required the Oregon Humane Society to investigate all reports of dog fighting. S.B. 1195, introduced by Sen. Gordon, U.S.🐟, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules that prohibit Internet hunting. This point-and-click "hunting" via the Internet involves fees of more than $1,500 to schedule a session and place an order for a deer antelope, or other animal.

Hunters then log on to a Web site at an appointed time and watch a feeding station on the computer screen. The animal, often hand reared, is herded in front of the camera by on-site employees, and the hunter uses a mouse to line the victim up on the on-screen crosshairs and click to fire the gun. The HSUS has been active in advocating for state legislation to combat Internet hunting, and 34 states have banned it. The HSUS worked tirelessly to keep horses out of the slaughterhouse. A favorable ruling from the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals finally enforced a 1449 Texas law banning the sale of homemade horsemeat for human food and halting equine slaughter in the state's two plants.

**Online Debut of “A Humane Nation”**

You can now keep abreast of developments in the world of animals by reading the newly published blog by Wayne Pacelle, HSUS president and CEO, at our Web site, humanesociety.org. Pacelle took the helm of the organization June 1, 2006, after serving as chief lobbyist and spokes­man, and few people are as well informed on animal issues as our chief executive. Wayne Pacelle: A Humane Nation is a lively and informative blend of commentary, criticism, and reportage. Stay up-to-date with fast-changing events as we celebrate animals and confront cruelty, and join the discussion by weighing in with your own opinions.

continued from "The HSUS’s Inga Gibson at the signing of Hawaii’s felony animal cruelty law.

**Horses Are Beloved Icons of American Culture**

Horses are beloved icons of American culture—living symbols of both the bonds we share with our animal companions and of our national heritage and character. Despite this, more than 100,000 American horses were butchered last year at two foreign-owned slaughter plants in Texas and one in Illinois, and another 41,000 were shipped to Canadian and Mexican kill floors, all to end up on European and Japanese dinner tables. The HSUS is working to end this abhorrent practice, and we are making unprecedented progress.

In cooperation with Capitol Hill staff, we helped to reintroduce the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R. 5035/S. 311) in Congress to outlaw the killing of horses for human consumption as well as their export to Mexico or other countries for this purpose. The House overwhelmingly approved the measure last September by a vote of 263-146, and it was reintroduced in both chambers this year. The legislation was reintroduced in both chambers this year, and we are already seeing progress. At the urging of the House Agriculture Appropriations bill included language to stop the funding of horse slaughter for the next fiscal year, and a Senate committee has already passed the permanent ban. We are happy to report that in the United States, all states have passed legislation to prevent the sale of horsemeat for human consumption, and are laboring to secure its enforcement in the courts.

Congressional action is urgently needed to keep the doors of the nation’s equine butchers permanently closed and to prevent the flow of American horses to Mexican and Canadian slaughterhouses. Support for Capitol Hill remains strong. The horsemeat industry in the United States is on its last legs.

**Miracle Horses Survive Kill Floor**

The rescue of 30 so-called "miracle horses" began in early April 2007 when the Cavel Slaughter plant in DeKalb, Ill., was served a court injunction to discontinue operations. Horses awaiting death inside the plant were loaded back onto trailers to be returned to their owners. The reprieve for most of the horses was short-lived as they ended up at Mexican or Canadian slaughter plants. But the owner of the horses, who were shipped back to a home in Wyoming, contacted The HSUS, and after negotiations, he relinquished them to us.

The HSUS’s Northern Rockies Regional Office in Billings, Mont., working with our equine department, arranged for most of the animals to be dispersed to sanctuaries or rescue groups in Wyoming and Montana. Two horses—a mother and daughter pair named Mariah and Sahara—took the Field Fund for Animals’ Caelume Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Texas. Many of the horses have been adopted into permanent loving homes. The remaining are healthy and awaiting placement.

The group that took the horses in the Texas slaughterhouse—Far Dinkum Horse Rescue Farm in Wyoming—Colorado’s Denka Animal Sanctuary, Horse Protection League, and Front Range Equine Rescue; the Black Beauty Ranch; and Return to Freedom Wild Horse Sanctuary in California.

Spirit was spared from slaughter in Illinois and then came to stockyards in Cheyenne, Wyo., where The HSUS helped care for him and placed him with a loving family.
Top Fashion Designers, Retailers Snared

Californiaans for Humane Farms, supported by The HSUS and other local and national groups, has launched a ballot initiative campaign to place the California Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty (Prop 25) on the November 2008 ballot. Can you spare some time to help California’s farm animals?

Volunteers must gather 550,000 signatures by February 28, 2008, to place a measure on the ballot to ban the cruel and intensive confinement of breeding pigs, veal calves, and egg-laying hens. We urgently need your help to make this campaign a success for animals. Here are just a few reasons why this initiative is so important:

- Breeding pigs are confined in small metal crates which hold them face down for their entire lives in California in 2006 banning hog dog fights.
- Our letters of complaint to several companies and to the U.S. Attorney in Texas persuaded Best Buy, Circuit City and other suppliers to stop selling dogfight videos.
- The HSUS is now suing Amazon.com to halt sales of dogfighting videos and cockfighting magazines such as Feathered Warrior and Gamecock. Selling this animal fighting paraphernalia violates federal law by using the U.S. Postal Service to further illegal animal fights.

A Great Friend, Mentor

Hired by John Hoyt in 1976, Sakach was named 25 years later as the HSUS’s Director of Humane Investigations.

As an undercover investigator for The HSUS, Eric Sakach (center) was "arrested" at a California cockfighting raid in 1978.

Standing Tall Against Cruelty: WCRO’s Eric Sakach

By Bernard Unti

The cockfighter's eyes shone with excitement. "You have to make this happen for the good, some situations. Assuming a character, going into a situation, you are in the middle of nowhere, you are there with the bad guys, you don’t know if the good guys are coming, and when they do you are going to get arrested with the bad guys and treated like one to preserve your cover." Sakach recalls.

The Long View Forward

After 30 years in the field, Sakach’s passion for the work remains high, and he’s encouraged by what he believes is a stronger commitment by The HSUS to root out animal fighting. In California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and Arizona, for example, all states in which he has worked extensively, cockfighting has gone from a misdemeanor crime to a felony in only a few years. Still, he admits, “I am a bit miffed. Animal fighting is not going away soon. But it’s going to go away a lot sooner now that we’re staying with it.”

As part of his general responsibilities, Sakach has evaluated sheltering facilities, testified and lobbied on humane issues in legislatures, contested inappropriate uses of animals in secondary and higher education, and served as an expert witness in animal fighting in the courts of several states and in Canada. An instructor at the California Humane Law Enforcement Training Academy since 1984, and in other settings across the U.S., he has taught some 11,000 humane and law enforcement personnel.

A veteran disaster responder, Sakach served as part of The HSUS’s disaster response team in the Gulf Coast states during Hurricane Katrina, doing a stint as inci-

central command in Gonzales, Louisiana.

For some years Sakach has also been a member of the awards committee for the Genesis media awards. One of the things he likes best about that assignment is the boost he receives from seeing so much animal-friendly news and entertainment. You need these "little shots in the arm," Sakach says, “and you don’t always know where and when they are going to come along.”

An example is the Smithfield Foods phase-out of gestation crates for sows by 2012. “Things happen for the good, sometimes unexpectedly in our work,” he says. "That kind of stuff keeps me going."

Contact The HSUS

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Victories, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina approved new felony laws in 2006 banning hog dog fights.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

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