HSUS Exposes Cruel Dogfighting

Dogfighting has many evils. Small dogs and cats are used as helpless victims to train the pit bulls to kill. Frequently the fighting dogs themselves die after a long, exhausting battle. Many dogs are simply shot by their owners if they fail to win a fight. In addition, dogfighting events are known to be scenes of drug and alcohol abuse and heavy illegal betting. People who attend these events are obviously desensitized by these brutalizing activities.

The Humane Society of the United States’ Gulf States Office staff has been spending a great deal of time and effort in combating dogfighting. Gulf States Director William Meade said he is working to get new state laws with heavy penalties for dogfighters. “This is only one way in which we can counter this deplorable pastime. The long-term solution is to expand our efforts at teaching respect for life to young people growing up.”

If you receive information about local dogfights, please do not try to handle the matter on your own, or divulge that you are associated with a humane society. Obtain as much information about places, times, and people involved as can be done safely and then contact The HSUS or enforcement authorities.

The HSUS Gulf States Office was recently involved in a dogfight raid within our Region. Dozens of arrests were made and much animal suffering was prevented.
Training Available

If your shelter personnel need training in animal care, field services, and record keeping, the Gulf States Office of HSUS has a solution for you. By request of your local shelter management, we will come to your facility and present a one-day training session for your personnel. The program can be tailored to meet specific needs or problems. The training includes videotape teaching sessions, lectures, handout material, and field demonstrations. The only cost for the program is a $60 fee and the expense of our staff's travel, lodging, and meals. The time, materials, and expertise are service of The HSUS. Rick Collord, HSUS Field Investigator, conducts these training classes.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, at the recent HSUS regional meeting, three individuals were honored for their outstanding work on behalf of animals.

Dr. Clifton Shepler of Tyler, Texas; Charles Hadlock of Shreveport, Louisiana; and Paul Wenske from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Dr. Shepler worked with The HSUS this past year in investigating and prosecuting a starvation case involving over three hundred horses. Dr. Shepler's concern in notifying The HSUS and initiating charges shows that his office in the Texas Department of Health has the highest interest in animal welfare.

Charles Hadlock is a television reporter for KTBS in Shreveport, Louisiana. He skillfully handled a grisly news story about The HSUS and initiating charges shows that his office in the Texas Department of Health has the highest interest in animal welfare.

In Jacksonville, Arkansas donated 2700 pounds of dog food to the Pulaski County Humane Society. These 12 to 15 year olds collected feed weight seals to obtain the food.

GARLAND, TEXAS: The 1st Annual Animal Fair was held by the Garland Humane Society to help build public city for its planned new shelter to be named “Animal Recovery Center.” There were movie stars and a new Oldsmobile grand prize to make it an exciting day.

COVINGTON, LOUISIANA: The St. Tammany Humane Society reports they will have to raise 77% of their $50,000 budget through donations. They handled 3,600 animals but the parish government has not furnished badly needed support.

VERNON, TEXAS: The Wilbarger Humane Society has received a gift of three acres of land on which to build their new shelter. The City of Vernon and a private citizen donated the gift.

AMARILLO, TEXAS: The Amarillo-Panhandle Humane Society has announced the opening of their spay/neuter clinic, fulfilling a long held dream. The clinic was made possible by several private gifts.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please place The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office on your society’s mailing list. We would like to report your accomplishments in Around The Region.

By Bill Meade

There seems to be a tendency for many newly-formed, shelterless humane societies to involve themselves totally in the adoption of homeless animals. This activity then becomes the major function of the humane society— their members' homes fill up with animals looking for permanent homes, and little other humane society activity is carried on.

As noble as this effort is, these humane societies should pause and examine their activity. Are they really using their time and efforts in ways that will reduce pet overpopulation in the future? There is a good deal of personal satisfaction in finding a new home for a pet, but are we in the business for personal satisfaction, or to change the overall problems facing animals?

I contend that an effective humane society should make education, legislation, and investigation, and reduced-cost spay/neuter programs their major objectives, with adoption programs for pets next in priority. The truth is, most adoption programs only affect a small percentage of the unwanted animals in a community. Well-designed education and low-cost spay/neuter programs can, on the other hand, reduce the surplus of unwanted animals as much as fifty percent in a few years.

Should Shelters Use Tranquilizer Guns?

There is a constant search by animal control personnel for a better way to apprehend stray dogs. Tranquilizer guns have been an often used method for animal capture. However, questions have now been raised concerning the humaneness, and even the effectiveness, of this method. Often the captured animal will die of an overdose, or the projectile will hit the animal in a vulnerable spot, such as the face, thus causing painful injury.

Recently, a widely-used commercial product intended for tranquilizer gun use was removed from the market by the U.S. Government. Many shelter personnel, as a result, were left not knowing the best chemical to use in these guns. In an effort to assist shelters, The HSUS suggested that chemicals named Rompun or Ketamine were being successfully used by some animal control agencies. The Gulf States office can furnish you additional information on these chemical substances, if you wish.

Tranquilizer guns should not be routinely used in animal control work. Their use should be restricted to situations where human life and safety are threatened. In a well-designed animal control program, other, less-dangerous methods are used to deal with stray animals. The citation for violation, handed to a hogdog's owner after the animal has been chased home, is now becoming widely used as a control measure. In cases of feral dogs, lightweight humane live traps are another acceptable solution.

New Shelter Plans Available

Following publication of our last Regional REPORT dealing with the large number of unsatisfactory shelters in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, there has been a flood of requests for shelter planning assistance.

To help satisfy this need for good shelter plans, the Gulf States office has developed several new shelter designs. These plans focus on the needs of small towns and cities that operate with very restricted budgets.

The smallest new shelter plan we have available is only 495 square feet in size. This shelter contains six dog runs, holding up to twelve dogs, and eight cages for cats and puppies. The shelter is an indoor/outdoor type of kennel, but otherwise it has the same, easy-to-maintain features of the larger plans. The indoor/outdoor kennel is usually used to minimized heating and cooling costs. However, we recommend fully-enclosed shelters in localities that have severe winter weather.

This small plan will serve communities of up to 10,000 people and can be expanded to serve 20,000 people. The cost to build the shelter in most localities would be about $20,000. If a town cannot afford its own shelter, we suggest they join with one or two other nearby towns and jointly build a shelter.

The plans for this shelter may be obtained from the Gulf States office at a $2 cost. It is not necessary to have additional architectural drawings with the smallest plan. Sufficient information has been included on the drawing for a general contractor to build the shelter.

HSUS Architectural Design Consultant, William Meade, is also available to assist in reviewing plans for any proposed shelters or shelter additions. Simply mail a copy of your preliminary plans to the Gulf States Office. There is no charge for this service.
A major goal of any progressive, responsible humane society or animal control agency is to reduce the number of animals handled and subsequently euthanized. Sometimes shelter personnel become so accustomed to the routine of "pick up, feed, euthanize" they lose sight of the real need to find solutions to the problem rather than forever treating the symptoms.

Spay/neuter programs are a proven part of the solution to overpopulation. In cities that have started well-planned programs, there have been substantial reductions in the numbers of animals handled.

Any organization, regardless of its size or whether or not it operates a shelter, can start a spay/neuter program. Here are several different approaches. Pick the one that fits your organization and get it started as soon as possible.

Humane societies without shelters should set up reduced-cost spay and neuter programs and promote them to the public. Talk to your local veterinarians and explain the local problem and your proposed goals. Ask if they would be willing to give a $10 spay/neuter reduction to any new client you can refer to him or her. Do not say he or she "owes it" or "should be willing"; rather, stress that new clients will be acquired through your group's promotional efforts.

If you cannot convince any veterinarian to be a part of the program, your group can still begin by setting up a fund to subsidize the spay/neuter operations by the $10 amount. Can you think of a better reason to raise money?

If your organization operates a shelter, your spay/neuter program should be set up for all animals adopted. You should visit each local veterinarian and explain you are starting the program. Impress upon the veterinarian that these will be new pet owners and you can furnish them as new clients if a reduction in the spay/neuter fee is given. If the veterinarians will not assist with a reduced fee, they will usually agree to divide their charge into two parts. The actual spay/neuter fee is collected at the shelter, then additional hospitalization fees are collected at the hospital after the operation. This reduces the initial adoption cost considerably.

A third approach is to establish a low cost spay/neuter clinic. If local veterinarians are not willing to assist with the other approaches, then this is a viable alternative. There is more initial expense, but cities that have taken this approach, such as Los Angeles, find the program pays for itself after it is established.

The HSUS Gulf States Office can furnish you with information and guidance in setting up any of these programs.

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