Cockfight Raided!

Injured, dying birds lay outside while families inside laughed and cheered as roosters fought to the death. It was the scene found by our investigator, Bernie Weller, and the Texas Rangers in a recent cockfight raid near Sullivan City, Texas. Nearly three hundred people attending the illegal event were arrested and charges were filed against participants seen violating state laws. The raid culminated an HSUS investigation launched after the Society was tipped that a big cockfight would be held.

Unfortunately, cockfighting occurs every weekend in many parts of our Gulf States region. Our recent investigations have revealed the so-called sport is spreading at an alarming rate.

People involved in cockfighting defend it as a traditional, wholesome sport. In reality, it is a brutal, bloody contest, often ending in painful death, that appeals to the most despicable instincts in mankind.

Director Bill Meade has stated that his regional office will give priority to working for legislation in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma that would outlaw these spectacles. Meade said, "This cruelty reaches far beyond the roosters that are ripped apart and killed. The children and young people involved are learning a philosophy which implies that the destruction of animals is justified if it entertains humans."

It will be no easy task to outlaw cockfighting. The cockfighters will spring to the defense of their cherished sport. They will call it a tradition. They will say it is a harmless activity. They will even claim the roosters like to fight. Victory, therefore, will not come easily. It will require all the help and support we can get. And that means you.

If you want to help stop this cruelty, call our office immediately at (512) 854-3142 for guidance. We will tell you what it takes to achieve anti-cockfighting legislation in your state.

The contesting birds have long blades, called "spurs," strapped to their legs in a cockfight. As they strike each other, the spurs rip flesh and arteries, causing massive bleeding and eventual death.

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HSUS Opposes Amarillo Pigeon Shoot

Pigeons, with broken or clipped wings, are released in front of a group of "brave gentlemen hunters." Guns blast away, and the mutilated bodies of hundreds of pigeons flutter to the ground. This is typical of a pigeon-shoot event.

In Amarillo, Texas, St. Anthony's Hospital decided this would be an excellent fund-raising event. Tickets would be sold for hundreds of dollars each and everyone — except the pigeons — would have great fun.

The HSUS, alerted by Amarillo citizens, learned of the plan and wrote Father Joseph Tash, coordinator of the event. We asked him to consider that killing for entertainment is not an appropriate fund-raising activity for a respected hospital. We suggested that many other activities could be substituted for the pigeon shoot.

Dr. Amy Freeman Lee, one of Texas' most respected humane leaders, wrote a powerful letter to Father Tash opposing the shoot. She said, in part, "It is a specific responsibility of clergy to encourage human beings to cease to rape and ravish His garden and, instead, to nourish and cherish it. Every aspect of the universe is God's creation and what we do to the least of His creatures, we do unto Him. We have the inescapable responsibility to practice reverence for life — all life."

The Animal Rights Association of Amarillo took a public stand against the shoot and distributed thousands of flyers opposing it.

Sadly, the pigeon shoot went ahead as planned. Dr. Amy Freeman Lee and The HSUS have now taken additional steps to get the hospital's commitment not to repeat the event. There is a good possibility the cruel event will not be held again.
Arkansas is one of seven central states that HSUS investigators feel has the greatest number of “puppy mills.” These operations are all dog-breeding kennels that sell puppies wholesale to the pet industry. Often had conditions include overcrowding, filthy, and lack of proper veterinary care. Often, puppy mill owners lack concern for their animals because they are in business strictly to make money. A recent newspaper exposé by Patrick Kelly of the Arkansas Democrat prompted the

United States Department of Agriculture to step up its inspections of these facilities in Arkansas. Effective USDA actions could produce results and, hopefully, reform.

Additionally, representative Art Goven’s will be introducing a bill to regulate puppy mills and bring additional state protection to thousands of puppies and adult dogs. The HSUS is working with the Pulaski County Humane Society for passage of this badly needed legal protection.

At the Arkansas Puppy Mill Clean-Up

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This puppy mill in Arkansas was discovered by a newspaper reporting team. Animals inside were crippled and the building was dark and smelly. The HSUS and Arkansas societies

were convicted of 2,129 complaints in the last year. Fourteen convictions were obtained, one of them a Felony Dogfighting conviction. The HSUS Gulf States Regional Director Bill Meade has proposed to Texas humane groups that all work for an emergency response plan by state agents to handle major livestock catastrophes. He has been in touch with Governor White’s office to set up a meeting to discuss legislation, regulations, or whatever measures are necessary to prevent future disasters of the Fall County kind. It is expected that this meeting, which will probably involve the most interested humane groups and individuals in Texas, will be scheduled within the next sixty days.

New Orleans, Louisiana—The Louisiana Horse Welfare League is holding free puppy training classes and canine behavior workshops for all SPCA members and pet owners. These classes help owners avoid behavioral problems and learn obedience training.

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HSUS Seeks Changes at Snake Farm

Snake farms are one example of the worst type of animal exhibit—the roadside menagerie. They attract people by exhibiting animals as if they were a freak show. Compared to true zoological parks, the atmosphere is low-grade and carnival-like, and the animals are often caged in crowded, substandard quarters.

HSUS Field Investigator Bernie Weller discovered one of these operations in La Place, Louisiana. This snake farm had provoked so many citizens to file complaints that we determined an HSUS inspection was warranted.

Weller found a monkey housed in a dark, stinking cage. He saw a pig confined in an area littered with cement blocks and metal pipes. Much of the available water was dirty and stagnant. Weller's frank assessment was, "This place has some of the worst conditions I've seen anywhere."

Following the investigation, we contacted the United States Department of Agriculture, which licenses the facility. We were shocked to learn that USDA felt the snake farm met required minimum standards for those species of animals covered by the Animal Welfare Act. Part of the problem is that farm animals and reptiles are not covered under this federal law.

The HSUS has requested USDA to take a closer look at this snake farm, keeping in mind the conditions we reported. USDA has responded positively and has asked our investigator to accompany them on a future inspection. We will continue to work for improvements at this roadside zoo.

At a "snake farm" in La Place, Louisiana, this pit is filled to overflowing with alligators. The water appeared dirty and stagnant; no flow of fresh water could be detected. Unfortunately, reptiles are not covered under the federal Animal Welfare Act.