WCRO Summer 1988

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How Much Is that Doggie In the Window?

It's a complaint that West Coast regional investigators receive all too frequently: a sick puppy, an anguished customer, an unrepentant pet store. The issue is one of needed protections for consumers as well as animals. Approximately 400,000 dogs are sold in the nation's pet stores each year, and, while some pet-shop puppies come from reputable local breeders, too often their lives begin in the decrepit, cramped confines of a puppy mill. The Humane Society of the United States has been working diligently in recent years to expose the gross cruelty associated with the pet industry. For the past year, Regional Investigator Kurt Lapham has been documenting the problems in the retail pet trade.

In California, one of the nation's largest markets for puppy-mill puppies, pet-shop operators are currently mandated by state law to (among other provisions) "take reasonable care to release for sale, trade, or adoption only those pet animals which are free of disease or injuries." Additionally, retail sellers of dogs and cats must provide the purchaser with a written statement, prescribed by the Department of Consumer Affairs, containing the following information: the origin (if obtained continued on page 2

These puppies will soon be displayed behind the sterile stainless-steel bars of a retail pet store—far removed from the conditions of their birth.

INSIDE

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It's Time To Speak Out Against Fur

Furs are fashionable. Furs are fun. Furs are symbols of affluence, status, and maturity. Shocked? Don't be, for furs are any or all of these things to people who easily succumb to slick advertising. It is a simple matter of how a basic principle of advertising works. Create an image or fantasy with the product built into it, present it in a wide range of formats that will make it seem attractive, and then reinforce the message as often as possible.

The fur industry has been employing this basic principle, quite successfully, for the better part of this century. It has had to, because furs aren't necessary to keep people clothed and warm. If it had not been able to draw people into the fantasy it created, the fur industry would have died a natural death some time ago—as it should have. The opening statements above are the essence of what American consumers are told to believe in advertising throughout the year, and especially during the fall. It is the fur industry's way of keeping itself alive by artificial means, totally reliant on people who are easily influenced by expensive advertising and whose vanity will lead to the expenditure of large sums of money.

Today, consumers are better educated continued on page 4
Puppy-mill dogs may spend their entire lives in wire cages such as this.

Doggie continued from page 1

from a USDA-licensed dog breeder), date of birth (unless unknown because of source), a record of immunizations; and a record of any known disease or sickness affecting the animal at the time of sale. This information must also be verbally disclosed to the purchaser. Despite these provisions, which in many cases simply impose a fine that must not exceed $250 for violations, the West Coast Regional Office has found that pet industry abuses abound.

At eight weeks of age, puppies are cramped into crates and shipped from the puppy mill to any one of thousands of pet shops across the country. These animals, jostled from truck to truck and finally to py’s, may spend their entire lives in glistening kennels alongside racks of the latest in pet accessories. Con­sumers leave the store with a puppy (often an uneasy one) and are possibly dependent upon impulse pur­chases and the cuteness of very young puppies to boost sales, $450 million dollars worth of pet merchandise are sold in the state of California for the purpose of com­mercial resale. (For more information on “Puppy mill,” see “Legisla­tion,” page 3.) AB 4500 would have helped to stop some of the physical abuses endured by the baby dogs and the emotional burdens of the new pet owner with a sick animal. Its failure before the California legislature point out the more work there is to do to make sure the suffering inherent in the puppy-mill trade is to be corrected. The nearly $4 billion pet industry in California, fearful of losing its grasp of the nearly lucrative business, is expending a great deal of time and money to fight any legislative efforts to improve conditions in puppy mills. The WCRO will continue to monitor pet stores in the region and work to gain appreciation for those individuals who suffer the vulnerable charges to suffering and neglect or rip off consumers for the sake of profit.

If you have encountered problems with the purchase of a puppy from a pet store, the WCRO would like to hear about them. Please write to: Pet Store Investigation, HSUS/ West Coast Regional Office, 1731 J St., Suite 218, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 447-3295. We will send you an information packet on how to deal with your problems.

California Judge Rejects Proposed Mountain-Lion Hunt

An environmental report by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) that would allow trophy hunting of moun­tain lions was rejected by a San Francisco superior court judge in June, possibly end­ing the threat of such a hunt this fall.

In what has been termed a major victory for mountain-lion preservationists, Judge Lucy McCabe overturned last spring’s mountain-lion hunting regulation on June 20 and sent the environmental evaluation back to the Fish and Game Commission.

The action effectively stopped plans for the killing of up to 900 of the big cats over a seventy-nine-day hunting season, sched­uled to begin October 8, until the commis­sion circulates a report on the environmental impact of the hunt among hundreds of in­terested organizations and appropriate state and federal agencies.

California imposed a moratorium on hunting mountain lions for sport or trophy in 1971, although they could still be killed if they threatened humans or livestock. The ban expired in 1986 and mountain lions again became fair game when Governor George Deukmejian refused to extend it. The DFG proposed a hunt for the fall of 1987; however, plans were scrapped last November when Judge McCabe ruled that the state had not adequately studied the cumulative effect of hunting upon the animals or the environment. Changes had to be made to meet the re­quirements of the California Environment­al Quality Act. Those changes came too late for the 1987 hunting season but were carried over into the 1988 regulations.

Unfortunately, after long and hard-fought battles, two very important bills were lost this year in the California Legislature: AB 2623 by Assemblyman Tom Bates, and AB 4500 by Assemblyman Sam Farr.

AB 2623 would have greatly improved conditions for calves at white veal opera­tions. “White” or milk-fed veal calves spend their entire lives in small, crowded, narrow crates; AB 2623 simply mandated that veal producers provide their calves with enough space to stand up, lie down, turn around, and make other normal postural ad­justments. This bill was met by heavy opposition from the veal industry and numerous other agricultural lobbyists.

AB 4500, Mr. Farr’s “Puppy Mill” bill, was also defeated in the last months of the 1988 session. AB 4500 would have prohibited the importation of puppies under twelve weeks of age into the state of Califor­nia. A proposal to importation of puppies into the state was introduced in the Washington Federation of Humane Societies in early May in Wenatchee. HSUS services and assistance to organiza­tions in other jurisdictions are invited to contact the West Coast Regional Office for additional information.

The West Coast Regional Office is at­tempting to help the Committee for the Preservation of Tule Elk in its fight to stop sport hunting of this unique animal. On April 28, 1988, the Fish and Game Com­mission approved proposals by the Califor­nia Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to hunt Tule elk for the first time in nine­teen years. State law has prohibited hunt­ing the elk until their numbers reach two thousand, and the DFG claims the popula­tion has, in fact, grown to that size. As usual, the estimates appear inflated to those of us who care about Tule elk. The Com­mittee for the Preservation of Tule Elk has filed suit against the DFG to relocate 105 endangered Tule elk to the historic Tule elk lands, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and Henry Coe State Park.

The HSUS is following the case, and will report on further developments.
unavailable for public viewing. Thus, consumers would be unable to find out whether a veterinarian had been disciplined for past violations. At our request, Assemblyman Jack O’Connell had amended his bill, A.B. 2756, so that it would remove that confidentiality clause from state law.

Just when it seemed that the cite-and-fine problem had been solved, the board proposed yet another set of harmful regulations. This set would prohibit anyone but veterinarians and their technicians from cleaning pets’ teeth, and, therefore, subject laymen who are removing tartar to criminal prosecution.

Almost 100 percent of veterinarians insist on anesthetizing animals before cleaning their teeth—groomers and lay people do not. Many pet owners don’t want to take the risk of having their animals anesthetized, and some can’t have them anesthetized for health reasons. Testimony at a recent hearing on these regulations demonstrated that lay people are safely removing tartar and are referring any serious problems to veterinarians.

Should the board pass these dental regulations, and it seems likely that they will, we must once again go to Michael Kelley, the director of the Department of Consumer Affairs, or to the Office of Administrative Law and ask for a veto. If you wish to protest the dental regulations, please write to Governor George Deukmejian, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

The WCRO will continue to fight legislation and regulations like the ones I have described that are unnecessary and/or anti-consumer and anti-pet.

Fur continued from page 1

and more aware. Fewer are allowing the fur industry and its collective advertising to make decisions for them about what is fashionable or humane and morally correct. It matters little whether the animals that died for that coat were cruelly trapped and clubbed to death or were raised on a ranch and electrocuted. Today’s consumers are aware that animals suffered and died needlessly in order to make it. For most of us that is enough. But is it enough to just say no? When we see people wearing fur we can pity them for being slaves to their own vanity and victims of unrelenting advertising. We can be embarrassed for them as they stroll about in public, caught up in some fantasy created for them by an advertising agency. At the same time, we’re not indifferent to the suffering and cruelty involved in making the garment. Our silence accomplishes nothing. We need to say, “You should be ashamed to wear fur;” to those who do, for they are ultimately the ones who are responsible for allowing such unnecessary cruelty and death to continue. It’s that simple. And it’s time we started saying it.

The Regional Report is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States West Coast Regional Office 1713 J Street, Suite 211 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 447-3295 Charlene Drennon, Director

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office serves California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. All contributions made to The HSUS West Coast Regional Office will be used for regional purposes and are tax-deductible.

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Reflect for a moment....

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you’re gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the Society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

Please send will information to:

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ______ State ______ Zip code ______

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/General Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.