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Preparation Pays Dividends in Huge Tahoe Fire

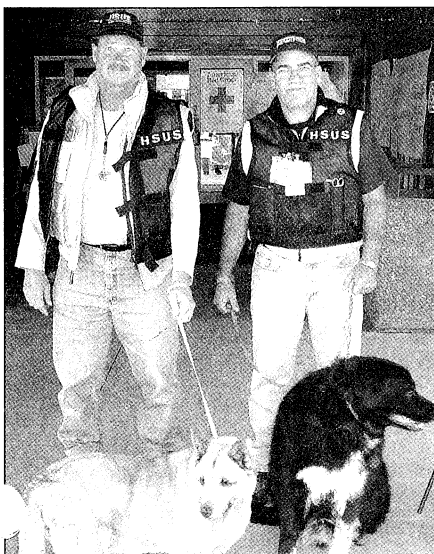
JULY'S ANGORA FIRE NEAR SOUTH Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County burned more than 3,000 acres, destroyed 260 homes and businesses and threatened evacuation and loss for hundreds in the area.

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

HSUS's Curt Ransom (left) and Paul Bruce with two dogs rescued from the Lake Tahoe fire in July.

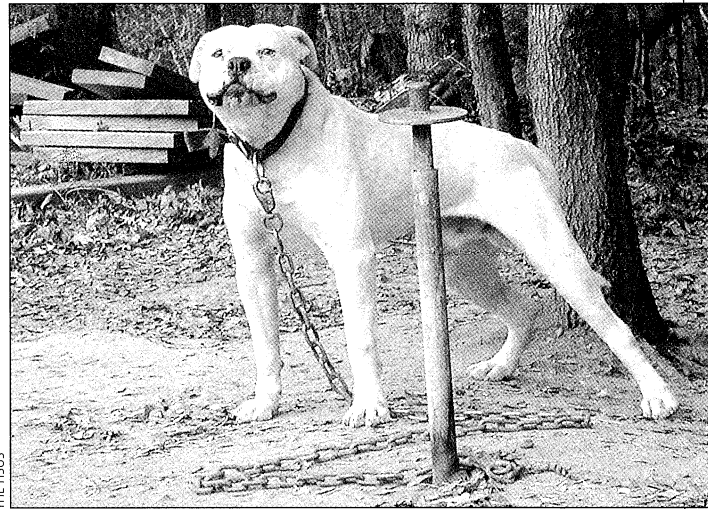


Animal Fighting: Wins and Challenges

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



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

months. We also assisted in the investigation and prosecution of an Arkansas dogfighting ring. 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

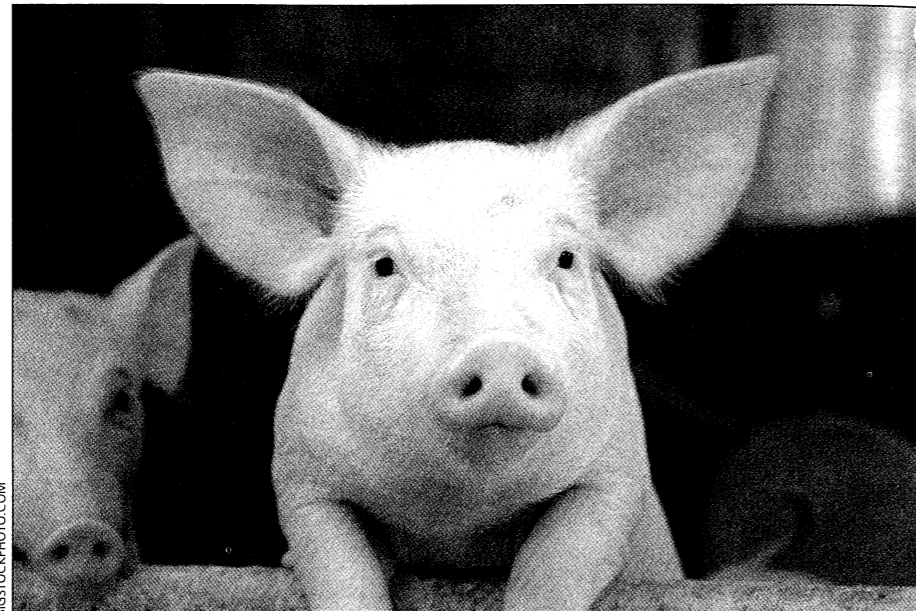
WITH A STROKE OF HIS PEN, Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski made a landmark advancement for farm animals by approving a measure prohibiting one of the worst factory farm abuses: gestation crate confinement of breeding pigs. Oregon is the first state in the country to ban the use of gestation crates through 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. Ginny 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," states 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 humane sensibilities are responsible for the passage of this important bill," states Kelly 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: Uncaging the Victims of Factory Farming



BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

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 calf crates. 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. Burger 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 restaurants, food service providers, and grocery chains to stop selling eggs from hens confined in tiny battery cages has also made major strides. More than 150 colleges and

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

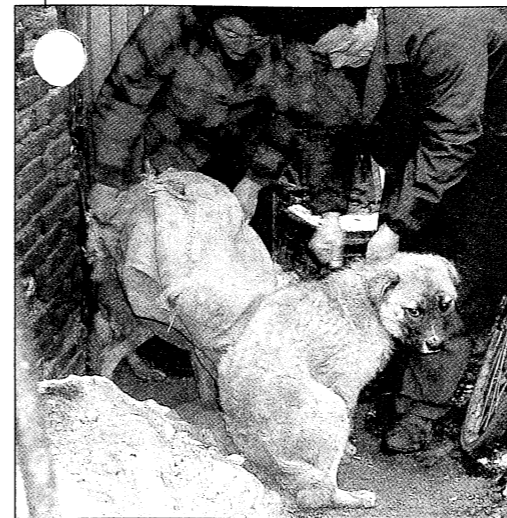
universities have eliminated or greatly reduced their use of battery cage eggs, a trend mirrored by a growing number of large retailers. Whole Foods Market refuses to sell them and Trader Joe's rejects them for its private line of eggs.

Other companies that have made progress on the issue include Yahoo, Oracle, AOL, Nordstrom, Best Buy, Ben & Jerry's, and Bon Appétit's chain of 400 cafes. In response to The HSUS's No Battery Eggs campaign, the president of United Egg Producers was quoted in an issue of *Egg Industry* magazine as saying, "I'm afraid we're losing the battle."

We moved on two related fronts to reform poultry killing methods that cause enormous suffering for many of the more than nine billion birds the USDA claims are exempt from the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA). After filing suit in 2005 against the U.S. Department of Agriculture to enforce the HMSA protections for poultry, we began an intensive lobbying campaign to require this protection.

The HSUS is encouraging the poultry industry to adopt a more humane slaughter method in which the birds suffer far less when killed, using inert gasses such as nitrogen or argon. 🐔

Top Fashion Designers, Retailers Snared



THE HSUS/CARRERMAN

AT A CROWDED STREET MARKET in China, a small raccoon dog is hung upside down by his rear legs and skinned alive for his fur. Filmed by undercover investigators, the incident is yet another example of the widespread cal-

lous 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 "faux," 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 Andrew Marc, Calvin Klein, DKNY, Michael Kors, Oscar de la Renta, Sean "Diddy" Combs' Sean John brand, and Tommy Hilfiger.

Many of the retailers and designers disavowed prior knowledge of the problematic 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, aims to protect consumers and animals by outlawing the import of fur from raccoon dogs and closing the \$150 loophole so that all fur-trimmed garments have to be labeled, regardless of value. 🐾

CA 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 kept purposely confined so they are not able to turn around for months on end. Egg-laying hens are often kept with several other birds in the same, small metal cage that prevents 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 Washington as well. 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. 🐾

cont. from "Animal Fighting," page 1 victories, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina approved new felony laws 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 dogfighting 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. 🐾



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Recent Legislative Victories

Hawaii Becomes 43rd State to Enact Felony Cruelty Laws

IN OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, WEST Coast Regional Director Eric Sakach stated that Hawaii was "anything but paradise for animals." Well, we're happy to report that things are looking better. Hawaii S.B. 1665, a felony animal cruelty bill, has successfully passed. Sen. Clayton Hee championed the effort with companion bills in the House, sponsored by Reps. Blake 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 members, support from the Hawaiian Humane Society, Kauai Humane Society, Hawaii Island Humane Society, and Maui 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—including dogs, cats, and pet pigs—but excludes other animals such as horses, birds,

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. 694 banning pig gestation crates, Gov. Lingle signed into law three other animal-friendly bills:

- S.B. 570, sponsored by more than 16 lawmakers, requires that Oregon's pets, service animals, and farm animals be included in state disaster plans.
- S.B. 1017, introduced by Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-18), addresses the link between family violence and animal abuse. This bill allows public and private officials to report incidents of known or suspected aggravated animal abuse to law enforcement without fear of liability.
- S.B. 490, introduced by Sen. Vicki Walker (D-7), requires the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules that prohibit Internet hunting. This point-and-click "hunting" via the Internet can involve fees of more than \$1,500 to schedule a session and place an order for a



HAWAII OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle (left) with The HSUS's Inga Gibson at the signing of Hawaii's felony animal cruelty law.

deer, antelope, or other animal. The hunter then logs on to a Web site at an appointed time and watches 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 in the on-screen crosshairs and clicks to fire the gun. The HSUS has been active in advocating for state legislation to combat Internet hunting, and 34 states have banned it. 🐾

Online Debut of "A Humane Nation"

YOU CAN NOW KEEP ABREAST OF developments in the world of animals by reading the new daily blog by Wayne Pacelle, HSUS president and CEO, at our Web site, humanesociety.org. Pacelle took the helm of the organization June 1, 2004, 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 "Fire," page 1

provided regular status reports to CARES and The HSUS disaster services department, which was prepared to provide additional support if needed.

Shuttling animals and supplies occupied much of their time, as well as making contingency plans in case the situation worsened. Several emergency sheltering sites were identified and secured, and other regional animal disaster groups and animal control organizations were placed on standby.

"Wildfires like this are extremely volatile and the situation could have changed at any moment," said Ransom. "Contingency planning is crucial to being ready for whatever may happen and assuring the safety of the animals and people in the affected areas." The director of the City of South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department, Gary Moore, was extremely helpful, providing a facility for expanded animal care if needed and making sure that animals brought to a Red Cross shelter were provided for until other arrangements could be made for their care.

Ransom and Bruce also accompanied Chief Brzezinski and his staff in patrolling the burned and evacuated neighborhoods to look for lost or injured animals. "It's heart-breaking," said Bruce. "So many homes and lives shattered. But at least there were no known human deaths, and very few pets. The message must be getting out, because most of the people who evacuated from here took their pets with them."

The HSUS, Sacramento County Animal Control, Sacramento City Animal Control, Placer County Animal Control, Amador County Animal Control, Sierra Veterinary Hospital, Alpine Veterinary Hospital, Noah's Wish, Pet Network of Incline Village, and 4 Paws Grooming and Boarding all played a part in this massive effort. Chief Brzezinski was grateful for the support. "We are so thankful to everyone who gave their time, energy, and hearts to this effort. We could not have done it without you," he said. 🐾

Last Roundup for U.S. Horse Slaughterers

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.

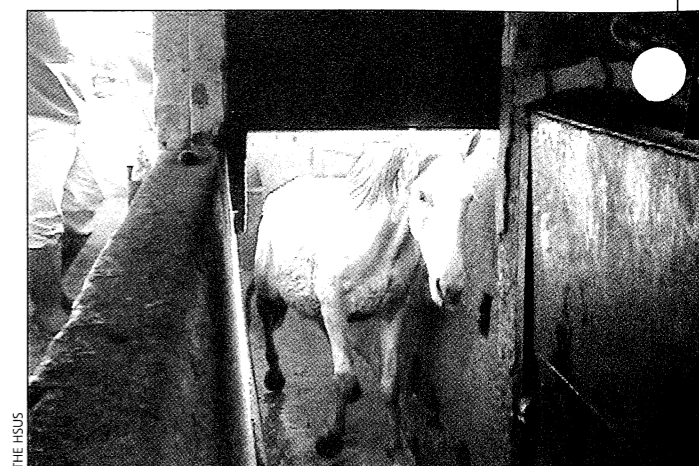
In cooperation with Capitol Hill staff, we helped to reintroduce the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R. 503/S. 311) in Congress to outlaw the killing of horses for human consumption as well as their export to Mexico or other countries for this purpose. The House overwhelmingly approved the measure last September by a vote of 263-146, but time ran out in the Senate. The legislation was reintroduced in both chambers this year, and we are already seeing progress. At our urging, 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.

Our undercover investigation into horse slaughter has documented the cruel conditions the animals endure during the vast distances they are transported from auction to slaughterhouse. We also revealed a barbaric killing method in a Mexican abattoir. Repeated stabs in the neck with a short knife

leave the horses paralyzed—but still conscious—before they are hoisted by chains for their throats to be slit.

Our litigation staff worked tirelessly to keep horses out of the slaughterhouse. A favorable ruling from the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals finally enforced a 1949 Texas law banning the sale of horsemeat for human food and halting equine slaughter in the state's two plants. Another federal court ruling temporarily closed down the remaining plant in Illinois. We worked closely with Illinois legislators to



THE HSUS
A horse enters the killing chute in a slaughter plant in Juarez, Mexico.

ensure the passage of H.B. 1711, a state bill to prevent horse slaughter 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 butcheries permanently closed and to prevent the flow of American horses to Mexican and Canadian slaughterhouses. Support on Capitol Hill remains strong: The horsemeat industry in the United States is on its last legs. 🐾

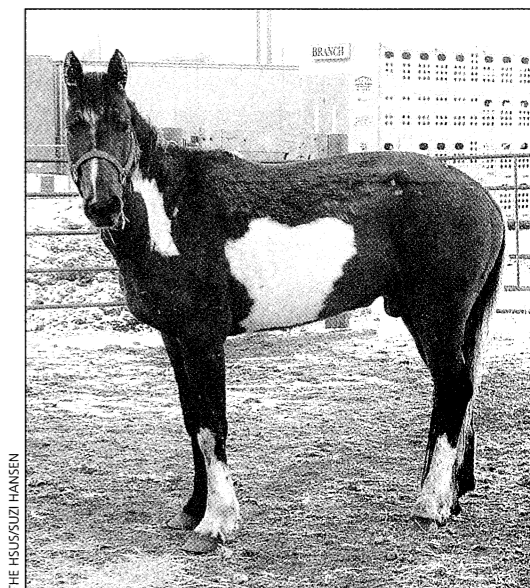
Miracle Horses Survive Kill Floor

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 30 of the horses, who were shipped back to a Cheyenne, Wyo., stockyard, contacted The HSUS, and after negotiations, he relinquished them to us.

The HSUS 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 Colorado. Two horses—a mother and daughter pair named Mariah and Sahara—went to The Fund for Animals' Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Texas. Many of the horses have been adopted into permanent loving homes. The remainder are healthy and awaiting placement.

We thank the groups that took in the horses: Fair Dinkum Horse Rescue Farm in Wyoming; Colorado's DenKai Animal Sanctuary, Horse Protection League, and Front Range Equine Rescue; the Black Beauty Ranch; and Return to Freedom Wild Horse Sanctuary in California.



THE HSUS/SUZIE HANSEN
Spirit was spared from slaughter in Illinois and then came to stockyards in Cheyenne, Wyo., where The HSUS helped care for him and place him with a loving family.

Top Fashion Designers, Retailers Snared

lous treatment of animals in a nation that has virtually no animal welfare laws.

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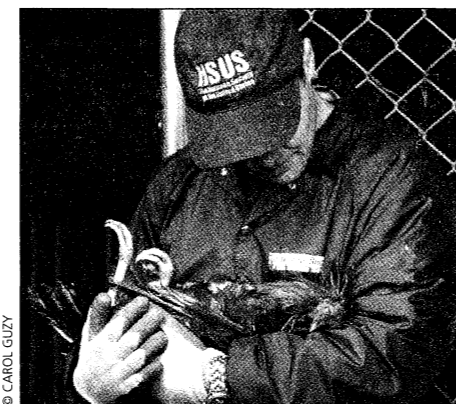
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Standing Tall Against Cruelty: WCRO's Eric Sakach

By Bernard Unti

THE COCKFIGHTERS LAY SPREAD-eagled on the ground near the fighting pits as law enforcement officials swarmed the site, collecting live and dead gamecocks, gaffs, drugs, cash, and other evidence. As the lead detective approached, one of the suspects, a large, imposing figure, stood up. "We were just having fun, why have you got to come in and spoil it?" The detective reacted quickly, bent one of the man's arms around his back, and upended him with a sweeping kick behind the knees. "Arrest him and put him into a patrol car," he told deputies.

Later, poking his head into the police vehicle, the detective said, "Hope I wasn't too hard on you, Eric."

The "suspect" in this 1978 northern California bust was Eric Sakach, a field investigator for The HSUS on one of his earliest undercover assignments. In subsequent years, he would demonstrate special proficiency at infiltrating animal fighting rings, helping to secure the arrests of more than 500 people involved in illegal animal fights, as well as some of the first convictions ever under the Animal Welfare Act.

And that's not all. In 30 years with The HSUS, the last 11 as director of the West Coast Regional Office, Sakach has investigated animal cruelty in myriad contexts: in slaughter plants, rodeos, the Iditarod race, the Class B dog dealer pipeline, the Omak Horse Stampede, Safari Club Intl., hoarding cases, game farming, and more.

A Great Friend, Mentor

Hired by John Hoyt in 1976, Sakach worked under the WCRO's Charlene Drennon but answered to Frantz Dantzler at HSUS headquarters. Dantzler, who directed the regional office system and the investigations section, would often pull field investigators out of their regions for special assignments.

"I felt an immediate affinity with Frantz, in part because he was six foot six and I was six foot five," Sakach recalls. "He had intelligence and persistence, which you need to be a successful investigator."

Some of the greatest challenges Sakach faced came during the years he worked under Dantzler. "There were some danger-

ous situations. Assuming a character, going into livestock auctions, and slaughterhouses, and fighting pits, all that stuff."

Then too, there was the classic dilemma the humane investigator faces, "the difficulty of having to look at something that's awful, knowing that this is what it takes to get the evidence you need." Once in your role, Sakach relates, "you don't have much access to outside information, 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."

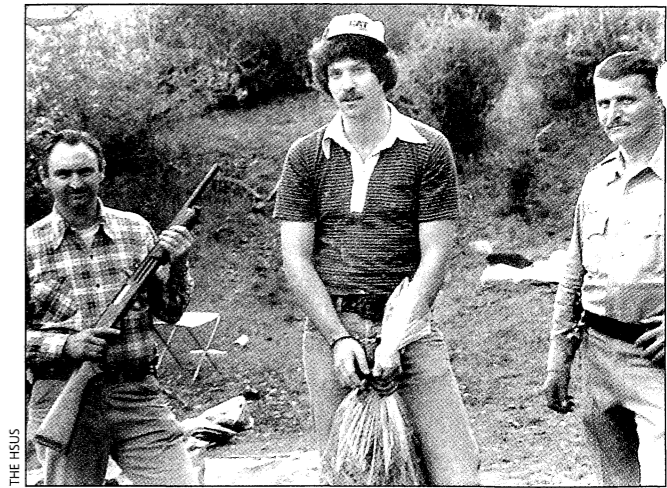
"I was drinking a lot of Pepto-Bismol in those years," Sakach recalls.

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 considers a stronger commitment by The HSUS to root out animal fighting. In California, Nevada, Washington, and Oregon, 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 realist. 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 on 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-



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

dent commander 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 2017. "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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