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## Greyhound Racing: Gambling with Dogs' Lives

The HSUS is asking Florida residents not to sign petitions in support of a constitutional amendment allowing slot machines in pari-mutuel facilities. We are joining forces with other animal protection organizations and critics of expanded gambling, including No Casinos, to oppose that ballot initiative because of the impact it will have in perpetuating cruelty to racing greyhounds.

The HSUS has actively opposed greyhound racing for years because of the abuses of the dogs and the suffering of the animals used in their training. We are campaigning in opposition to the amendment because it will bolster the tracks financially and keep greyhound racing in the state indefinitely. "This effort to add slot machines to greyhound tracks is a desperate attempt to breathe life into a dying industry," says Laura Bevan, SERO director. "The greyhound racing industry has a long record of exploiting and abusing dogs. Any citizen concerned about the welfare of dogs should vigorously oppose this ballot initiative."

With attendance at race tracks  
*continued on page 2*

**Much of a racing greyhound's life is spent in a cage.**



## Combating Animal Fighting in the Region

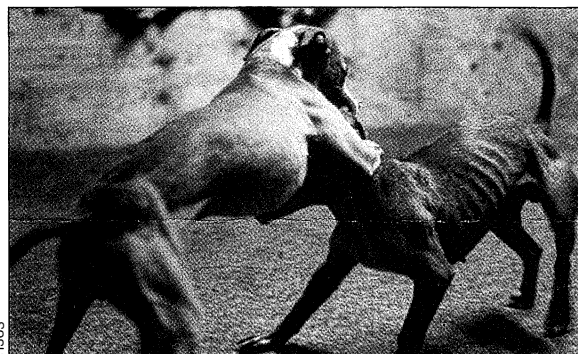
Animal fighting is a brutal activity and one of the more blatant forms of animal cruelty in our society. In these so-called "sports," two dogs or roosters are placed in a large boxed-off area called a pit and urged to fight until one gives up or dies. While the animals are tearing at one another, attendees cheer on their favorite and make bets on the winner.

The HSUS has long opposed animal fighting and led the charge years ago to pass existing laws making animal fighting illegal. However, we now see signs of resurgence in its popularity, which may be attributed to the presence of animal fighting Web sites that give fighters the ability to network and find new members.

At SERO we have had a swell of complaints from citizens who suspect animal fighting, calls from law enforcement agencies seeking advice about how to handle these cases, and animal shelters receiving increasing numbers of dogs with scars and open wounds from fighting. While we try to help these and all callers, the time has come for a more proactive approach to stopping this growing problem.

### Working for Tougher Laws

Nationally, dogfighting is illegal in all states, but cockfighting is still legal in New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma. Throughout the Southeast, dogfighting is a felony. However, cockfighting is a felony only in Florida. In the other states, it is only a misdemeanor for the fighters and sponsors, and attending a fight may be legal. Finding an animal fight in progress can be extremely difficult because the



**Few things are more barbaric than setting animals upon each other to fight. Unfortunately, this unsavory practice seems to be on the rise in the Southeast.**

events are held in secret. However, in the last few years there have been some successes with dogfight raids in Georgia and in a number of Florida counties, including Palm Beach, Broward, Charlotte, Seminole, and Nassau.

For the last two years, The HSUS has partnered with the Animal Rights Foundation of Florida to introduce a bill to strengthen Florida's animal fighting statute. This year, we came very close to improving part of the law, but lost the bill when the Legislature ended without final approval. The good news is that we found some strong allies, and we will be back next year.

Currently, Florida law focuses on the actual fight and doesn't make the possession, breeding, sale, or transport of fighting animals illegal. In essence, law enforcement officers have to raid a fight in progress in order to make arrests. Those involved in hosting the fight and those in the pit are charged with the felony crime and the spectators are charged with misdemeanors.

The intent of the original legislation was to give law enforcement the incentive and legislative tools it needs to combat animal fighting at its roots. Activity related to the  
*continued on page 2*

## Greyhound Racing Facts

- A greyhound can live to be about 13 years old as a companion animal. Racing greyhounds' "careers" are over between 3 and 4 years of age. Some racing greyhounds are adopted after their racing days end, but thousands are not. These dogs are killed, usually in the least expensive manner possible, which may include gunshot.
- Racing greyhounds spend the majority of their adult lives in crates, pens, or fenced enclosures. Human companionship is limited. Many enclosures are not climate-controlled, causing the dogs weather-related distress.
- Greyhounds aren't the only animals harmed by the dog racing industry. The HSUS has found that training activities cause as many as 100,000 domestic rabbits and wild jack-rabbits to be maimed and killed yearly. One event, known as "coursing," involves greyhounds chasing and eventually killing rabbits within fenced enclosures.
- Revenue made by dog tracks amounts on average to far less than one percent of a state's annual income.

continued from "Greyhounds," page 1  
 dwindling, greyhound racing is on the decline but still entrenched in Florida. With 17 operations, Florida has one-third of the nation's dog tracks. According to Bevan, "If this constitutional amendment passes, the tracks will make their money off the slot machines. However, the greyhounds will continue to run for their lives because the law says they have to in order for the tracks to keep the machines. The abuses will never stop."  
 Currently, the Florida Supreme Court is set to review the ballot initiative, pushed by an organization named Floridians for a Level Playing Field. The HSUS and others plan to argue before the Court that the proposal violates

continued from "Animal Fighting," page 1

fighting of animals would be a felony, including everything from owning a fighting dog or rooster to being a spectator at a fight. Our position is that without spectators, the fights would not occur, so their participation should be considered an equal crime to those who stage the events.

Unfortunately, the bill hit roadblocks from the beginning. Admitted cockfighters toured the Florida Capitol and convinced lawmakers that they should be allowed to raise their birds as long as they ship them elsewhere to fight. In hearings before House and Senate committees, the bill was changed to allow this. Most lawmakers did agree that anyone caught at an animal fight should be charged with a felony. However, while the bill made it through committees and the Florida Senate, it died waiting to be heard by the full House.

There were some positives that came out of this effort. Law enforcement agencies around the state signed letters of endorsement for the bill and officers traveled to the Capitol to urge passage. A Tallahassee law firm that also lobbies the Legislature offered its services and opened doors to lawmakers we could not reach. Our sponsors, Sen. Ron Klein and Rep. Joe Negron, were persistent in their efforts to get the bill passed and we look forward to working with them again.

### Offering Needed Training

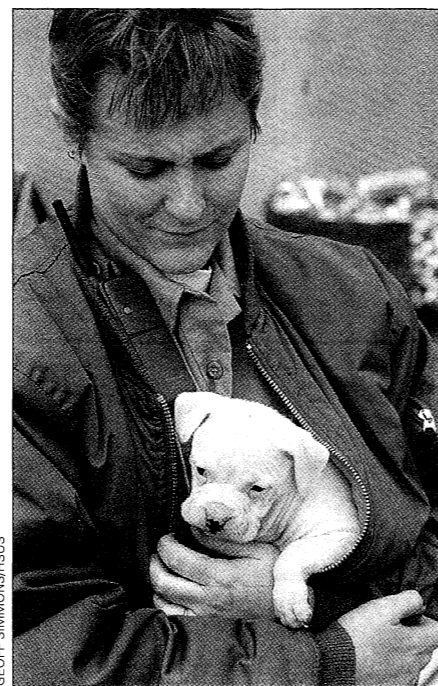
This summer, SERO provided training for law enforcement officers, humane investigators, and animal control officers on investigating animal fighting activities. Eric Sakach, regional director of The HSUS's West Coast Regional Office, and Detective Chris Sanford of the Galt Police Department in California, toured the Southeast, conducting day-long workshops. Sakach and Sanford are national experts on animal fighting and have been instrumental in major cockfighting and dogfighting raids on the West Coast. Their ability to share their knowledge and experiences will hopefully encourage even more investigation into illegal animal fighting in this part of the country.

We will also reintroduce the bill in the Florida Legislature's 2002 session to outlaw all aspects of animal fighting. We hope lawmakers see animal fighting for entertainment and profit to be the horrible crime it is, and that they will take steps to eliminate it from the state.

If you would like to assist us in this effort, please join our Action Alert Team by writing to our office or sending an e-mail to [hsussero@aol.com](mailto:hsussero@aol.com). For more about animal fighting, go to [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

requirements for an amendment to be placed on the ballot. Florida's Attorney General Bob Butterworth has already signaled his opinion that the amendment doesn't qualify.

If the State Supreme Court approves the amendment, petitioners must seek more signatures to get it on the 2002 ballot. The HSUS will continue to educate its members



HSUS-sponsored training for law enforcement officers can help stop animal fighting and bring criminals to justice.

GEOFF SIMMONS/HSUS

and the public on the industry's surplus breeding practices, the often cruel methods by which unwanted dogs are disposed of, and the daily conditions in which many dogs are forced to live. We believe Florida voters won't support slot machines in greyhound tracks once they understand that a vote for expanded gambling is a vote perpetuating abuse of these dogs.

## SERO Training Helps Protect Horses

The Southeast has a large population of horses, and they are often the victims of animal cruelty, whether through ignorance of their care or by deliberate violent acts. They can also become victims of disasters—either natural, such as hurricanes, or manmade, such as horse trailer accidents.

SERO continues to offer educational opportunities concerning horses for humane societies, animal control, law enforcement agencies, and emergency responders. Last year, we hosted an equine cruelty investigation workshop in Georgia that drew participants from several states. This year we are hosting a large

animal/equine emergency rescue training session in Florida to teach how to rescue horses from all types of emergencies.

SERO staff attended a workshop earlier this year in Georgia that was hosted by that state's Emergency Management Agency and Department of Agriculture, with veterinarians from Clemson University in South Carolina teaching the course. We were so impressed that we are working with Volusia County Animal Control to host the training this October. If you are interested in attending the class, contact SERO.

**Right: Workshop attendees prepare a horse for evacuation by helicopter.**



LAURA BEVAN/HSUS

## Volunteers Needed in Historic Campaign Against Factory Farming

The HSUS has joined other animal organizations in support of a historic ballot initiative campaign in Florida to protect pigs from cruelty and abuse. It is the first ballot initiative in any state advanced to combat factory farming. The HSUS is working under the banner of a coalition called Floridians for Humane Farms to qualify a ballot initiative for November 2002 to ban the use of gestation crates—narrow metal cages that confine pregnant sows for the duration of their pregnancies. The crates are so compact that they do not allow the animals to turn around, causing their muscles to atrophy



FARM SANCTUARY

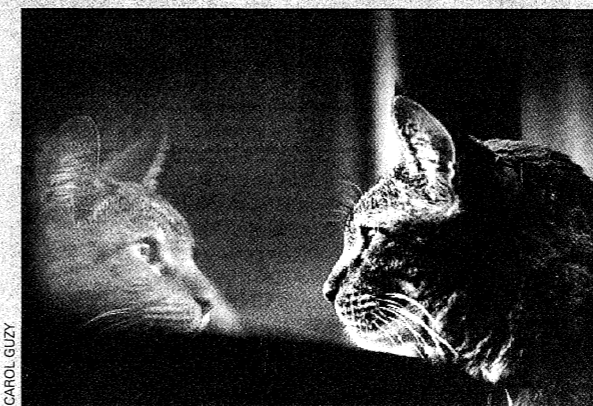
and producing enormous stress and psychological torment. This is unacceptable cruelty, especially for such intelligent,

social animals. Before a sow is "spent" and sent to slaughter, she may endure five to 10 pregnancies in the crate, spending up to three years in complete confinement.

We must gather 650,000 signatures of registered voters by June 2002 to secure a place on the ballot. We need all HSUS members to help. If you are willing to circulate a petition and collect signatures—and we desperately need your help—please contact Floridians for Humane Farms today at 954-946-1691, or send an e-mail to [info@bancruelfarms.org](mailto:info@bancruelfarms.org). You can learn more about the campaign by going to [www.bancruelfarms.org](http://www.bancruelfarms.org).

## Reflect for a moment...

*How can I help animals and receive income and tax savings at the same time?*



CAROL GUZY

By making a planned giving gift to The Humane Society of the United States, you can assure that animals will receive the protection they need while providing significant tax savings and income to yourself. Naming The HSUS as a beneficiary of your estate or trust demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for future tasks. We will be happy to send our latest information on planned giving and our programs to help animals.

Mail this coupon in the envelope enclosed or send it directly to The Humane Society of the United States, SERO, 1624 Metropolitan Cir., Ste. B, Tallahassee, FL 32308.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# Director's Report



**By Laura Bevan**

*Director of the Southeast Regional Office*

## Man's—and Woman's—Best Friend

**M**an's best friend—that's what we call dogs. They have earned this distinction for their devotion to humans over the thousands of years of our mutual existence. To take an animal who is known for allegiance to mankind and twist him into fighting for our enjoyment is the ultimate betrayal of that friendship.

Over the years I have been involved in dogfighting raids, and my memory of the dogs is of them going into a frenzy of joy to hear kind words and be touched by a friendly hand. I have petted them sadly, knowing that we would encourage the courts to order that they be destroyed. Fighting dogs are, in essence, lethal weapons, and to allow them to be adopted into a community is a death sentence for other animals they come across.

The dogs who fight are not the only victims of dogfighters. In the training process, other animals are used as bait for the dogs to teach them to be better fighters. Those victims are often stolen dogs and cats, or ones collected from "free to good home" ads in the newspaper.

It is time that we as a society decide to

## Contacting HSUS

### Write:

HSUS Southeast Regional Office  
1624 Metropolitan Cir., Ste. B  
Tallahassee, FL 32308

### Call:

850-386-3435

stop animal fighting of any type. Laws must be strengthened, and law enforcement agencies must put time and energy into investigating animal fighting cases. Animal fighting may be in the shadows, but it is everywhere, and it will take concerted efforts to vanquish it.

One of the reasons I despise dogfighting so much is my love for my own dogs. The newest member of my family is Catfish (at right), whom I found as a puppy in an Alabama animal shelter last November. I had visited the shelter with members of the Alabama Humane Federation to perform a shelter evaluation. In the middle of the tour, a small puppy in a large pen kept watching me. I tried not to look, but his sad eyes haunted me. Finally, I could take it no longer, and much to the amusement of my companions, wrapped him in a towel and promised to take him to Tallahassee and find him a new home. We named him Catfish because of his smell and some strange dark hairs on each side of his chin that look like catfish whiskers.

Catfish was a sick little puppy, and after four weeks of quarantine in my kitchen, I was a goner. However, I hadn't owned a puppy since I was a teenager and didn't remember that puppy cuteness is to make you love them ... then they wreck your house. At one point, most of my furniture was hidden in the garage. Things I never considered possible chew toys were in pieces on the living room floor for my viewing entertainment when I came home. The best was when he carried several flowerpots of dirt into the house. When I got home the entire living room was covered in soil. That was a Catfish classic!

But Catfish has also been a wonderful addition to my household. At the end of January, my little poodle mix Pooh died in her sleep unexpectedly. I was grief stricken, and Catfish was a comfort to me as he snuggled in the chair as Pooh once did. He



Laura Bevan/HSUS

has also breathed new life into my other dogs, all getting into their senior years. He jumped and chewed on them until they played with him like they haven't in ages. My 17-year-old cat, who had taken joy in tormenting the older dogs in the past, actually allows Catfish to give her kisses. He is an amazing pup, and I look forward to many happy years together. He is truly man's—and woman's—best friend.

## Save These Dates!

When: May 29–June 1, 2002

Where: Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas

Why: The HSUS National Conference on Animals in Disasters. You'll gain valuable information about disaster planning, preparedness, and response, as well as important hands-on training. For more details, call 301-258-3063.

When: April 3–6

Where: Fontainebleau

Hilton Resort, Miami Beach, Florida

Why: 2002 Animal Care Expo



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