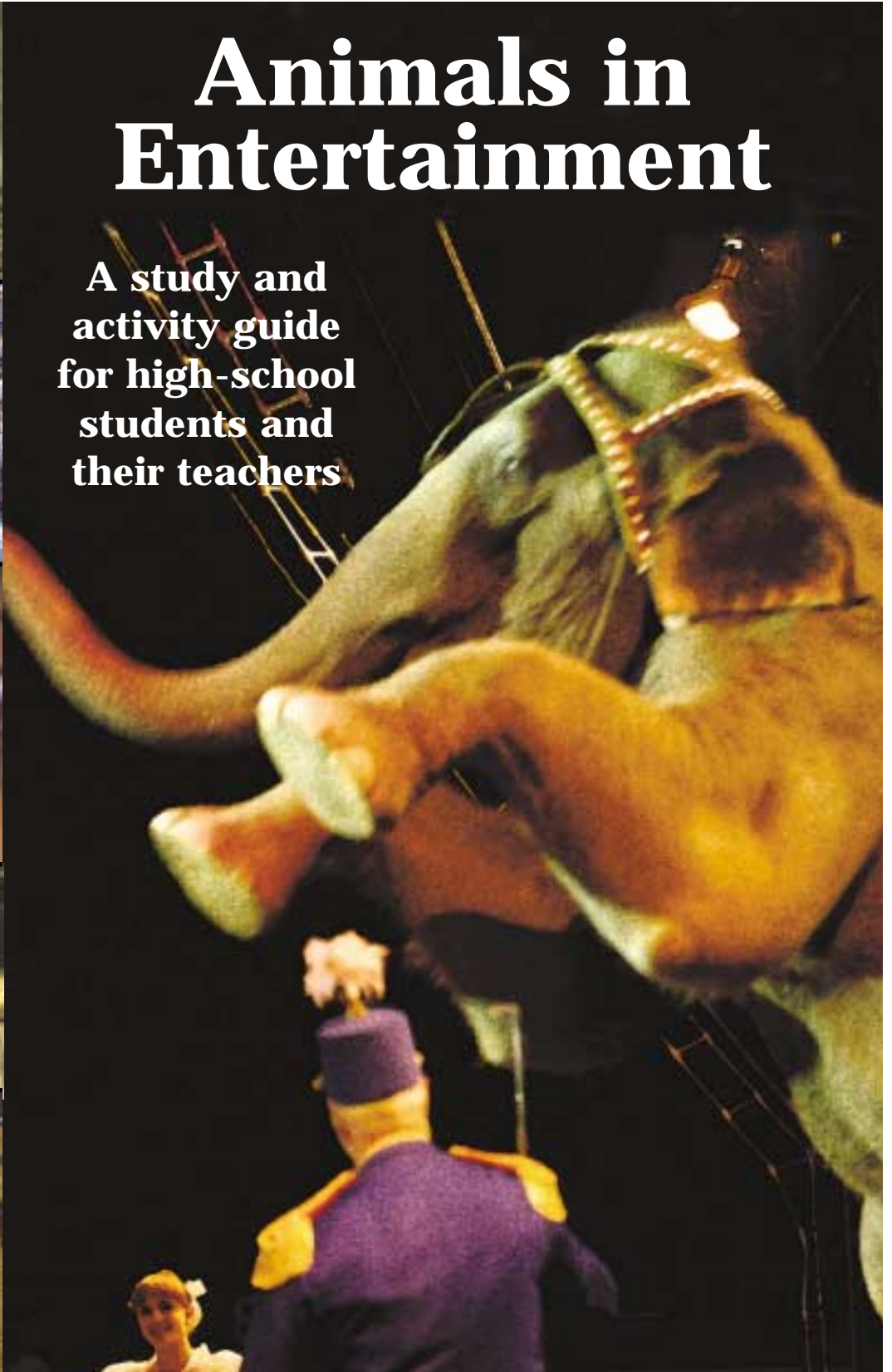


Animals in Entertainment

A study and
activity guide
for high-school
students and
their teachers



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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For more information on animals in entertainment and other animal protection issues, write to The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, or call (202) 452-1100. Visit The HSUS on the Web at www.hsus.org.

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Millions of people—more than half of all households in this country—share their lives with companion animals, from hamsters and horses to dogs and cats. Countless others take a deep interest in native wildlife, turning their backyards into urban sanctuaries that provide habitats for songbirds, squirrels, rabbits, and raccoons.



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Our interest in animals, of course, extends beyond companionship and backyard observation. In the U.S. alone, nearly 9 billion farm animals are killed for food production each year. Some 30 million animals are used in research and product testing. Animals are also used in police and military operations, including drug and land mine detection. In addition, animals are hunted for sport and killed for their fur, blubber, shells, and tusks.

Animals have also long been used as a source of entertainment. For many American families,

Looking for information for a school report? For detailed information about the history of animals in entertainment, read The Rose-Tinted Mengerie at www.iridescentpublishing.com/rtmcont.htm. The online book takes a close look at the use of animals in circuses and zoos from ancient Rome to the twenty-first century.

oughbred racing are part of a multibillion dollar gambling industry that includes live events and off-track betting. And dogfighting matches, although illegal, are increasingly common.

The concept of using animals for entertainment is hardly a new one. People have been fascinat-

a night at the circus or a trip to the zoo or aquarium offers a relatively inexpensive opportunity to see wild animals up close. In some parts of the U.S., rodeos attract thousands of people. Greyhound and thor-

ed by animal acts for thousands of years. In China, unarmed men once battled dangerous animals for sport. In the arenas and amphitheatres of ancient Rome, gladiators fought bears and lions before cheering crowds. In the U.S., a lion was brought to Boston, Massachusetts, for exhibition as early as 1716, and circuses with wild animal acts began forming in the late 1700s. The first American zoo was established in Central Park in 1864.

Today, animal entertainment exists in various forms. The underlying reason for the more

obvious types of animal entertainment, such as circuses and greyhound racing, is prof-



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it. Like all businesses, these operations exist to make money—as from ticket sales, concessions, betting, or the sale of related merchandise. The welfare of animals in such venues is secondary to turning a profit. In the case of some zoos and aquariums, which often have nonprofit status, money plays an important role as well.

Think About It

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it is acceptable to use animals in entertainment? What forms of animal entertainment, if any, would you object to? Hold on to your answer. We will come back to it later in this guide.

On Their Side

Founded in 1954, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the world's largest animal protection organization. Working with veterinarians, teachers, and other professionals, The HSUS seeks to help animals through investigations, legislative and consumer advocacy campaigns, and a variety of animal protection programs. Key to all of The HSUS's efforts to preventing animal suffering is public education about the issues.

As a young activist for animals, one of the most important steps you can take to help animals is

to learn as much as you can about the issues. *Animals in Entertainment* is one in a series of study and activity guides that offer a detailed look into animal protection issues, from factory-style farming to the use of animals in research and product testing. You may view all of the guides online in “Get Into the Issues” at www.humaneteen.org. *Animals in Entertainment* will help you learn more about the various ways in which animals are



Let us know about your efforts to help animals. Send details about your activities to humaneteen@nahee.org. We may publish a profile of you or your animal protection club on www.humaneteen.org, our website for teens active in animal protection. The site offers interviews with young animal activists, message boards, useful links, step-by-step projects, interactive surveys, and up-to-date information about important animal protection issues.

tions, which are useful not only for exploring your own attitudes and opinions but also as conversation starters in classrooms and club meetings. “Explore the Issues” offers school project ideas and activities to help you delve into issues and enhance your research, writing, and public speaking skills. And “Take Action” offers opportunities for you to help animals in your own community and beyond.

Think About It

- Animals used for food or research purposes are often caused pain or distress. Does this bother you as much as when animals are harmed in the entertainment industry? Explain.
- As a child, what animal exhibits or acts did you

attend or witness? What thoughts or concerns did you have about the treatment of performing animals, if any? Did you believe that those experiences were valuable in any way? If so, how?

Explore the Issues

- This study guide focuses on animals in the United States; however, animals are used in entertainment



around the world, from bullfighting in Spain to camel racing in India. Select a country. Using the Internet, investigate how that country regards animals in entertainment. What animal entertainment industries are found there? How widespread are these activities? Do any surveys assess that country's attitudes towards animals in entertainment? What laws govern the treatment of animals in entertainment in that country? (Some good sources of information are www.sharkonline.org, www.peta.org, and www.wspa.org/uk.) Present your findings in a report for your English or social studies class.

- All 50 states have animal anti-cruelty laws. Some cities and counties have bans on entertainment acts that use wild animals. What animal-related laws does your state or town have in place? You can gather information by visiting your state's official homepage. Type your state's abbreviation into [www.state.\(STATE ABBREVIATION\).us](http://www.state.(STATE ABBREVIATION).us). You may also investigate your state's laws at www.AnimalLaw.com, which includes a searchable database of animal-related laws. To learn about ordinances in your city or county, contact your local government. Laws to research include:

- Does my state allow greyhound racing? If so, do any of my state's laws address how

greyhounds should be treated at the track? When their racing careers are over? Who is responsible for enforcing these laws?



© Getty Images

■ What are my state's anti-cruelty laws? How do those laws affect animals used in the entertainment industry?

■ Does my city allow performing acts that include wildlife? Under what conditions? Which ones are banned, if any?

Send your findings to humaneteen@nahee.org. We may publish them on www.humaneteen.org.

Take Action

- The first step towards becoming an effective activist for animals is education. If you are planning to undertake activities to help animals used in entertainment, learn as much as you can. Explore the "Resources" section at the end of this guide.
- Do you disagree with one of the animal-related laws (or lack thereof) in your city or state? Contact your local or state government members to express your concerns and explain what you would like to see changed. To contact your state or local leaders, log on to www.YOURSTATEABBREVIATION.gov or www.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html. To educate members of your community, send a modified version of your letter to your local newspaper as well.

Animals in Entertainment and the Animal Welfare Act

Passed in 1966 and amended several times since, the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is a set of laws that govern the ways animals are acquired, transported, housed, and treated in research, testing, experimentation, exhibition, and some forms of entertainment. The government agency responsible for enforcing the AWA is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

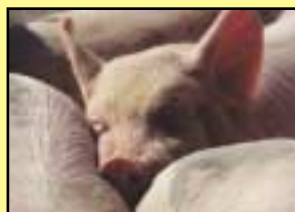
Under the AWA, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to set humane standards for the use, care, and transport of animals in zoos, aquariums, and circuses. The AWA also prohibits sponsoring or exhibiting animals in fighting ventures (e.g., dogfighting) and the transport of animals across state lines for such purposes.



© West Stock

Think About It

Cows, pigs, donkeys, chickens, and other farm animals are not protected under the Animal Welfare Act. What do you think about this?



© Photodisc/Getty Images

The AWA does not extend protection to any animals used in state or county fairs, livestock shows, or rodeos. It also excludes animals ordinarily used for what it terms "food and fiber" (including cows, sheep, donkeys, and goats) as well as mice, rats, and birds. The AWA does not cover greyhound or horseracing. Some of these events are regulated by state laws or industry organizations.

Domestic Animals in Entertainment

Over thousands of years, people have **domesticated** certain species of animals for a variety of purposes. Through selective breeding, we have created animals who, unlike their wild cousins, have adapted to life under the close care of humans. Many of those animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, and turkeys, were domesticated for the sole purpose of providing food or material for clothing. Dogs were domesticated more than 10,000 years ago to serve as our friends and allies; cats joined our ranks as companions and mousers some 7,000 years ago. Horses were the primary method of transportation for thousands of years and remain cherished companions.



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Like wild animals, covered later in this guide, domestic animals have endured a long history of being used for entertainment. Here we'll take a look at some of the most common ways in which they are used.

Animal Fighting

Cockfighting and dogfighting are centuries-old blood "sports" in which two animals (roosters or dogs), specifically bred and trained to fight, are forced to fight in a pit before spectators who bet on the outcome. The animals often suffer painful injuries, such as puncture wounds, lacerations, and broken bones. Cockfights, which may last several minutes to half an hour, usually result in at least one animal's death. Dogfights may last one or two hours and end only when one of the dogs is no longer able or willing to continue. The HSUS is unalterably opposed to brutal animal contests, such as dogfighting and cockfighting, which result in suffering, torture, harassment, and death for animals forced to participate.

Dogfighting and cockfighting generate millions of dollars in unreported income every year. Illegal gambling accounts for a large percentage of this money, and evidence of heavy gambling frequently turns up when officers investigate. For example, law enforcement officers discovered \$500,000 at a dogfighting convention in Arkansas. More than \$90,000 was seized by state police during a raid of a large cockfighting derby in Oregon. Another way for those involved in animal fighting ventures to make money is by breeding and selling animals. Stud fees for fighting dogs can go as high as \$1,000. Puppies from proven fighting stock can cost as much as \$1,500. Gamefowl can cost more than \$300 for a single battle cock. Most advertising of animals and animal-fighting paraphernalia is done through underground publications or on the Web.



© HSUS

In addition to illegal gambling, other crimes are frequently associated with animal fighting. The presence of weapons and illicit drugs is common. According to drug enforcement agents, major drug networks trafficking in marijuana and methamphetamine have been tied directly to animal fighting in several states. Raids on dogfighting and cockfighting operations have resulted in the discovery of large-scale marijuana operations and secret drug laboratories. During one raid on a cockfight in California in 1992, law enforcement agents seized thousands of rounds of ammunition along with 27 guns and assault weapons. Violence, including homicides, associated with these activities also appears to be on the rise.

Despite increasingly strict laws that prohibit animal fighting, these blood sports continue to flourish throughout the U.S. Here, we'll take a look at some specifics.

About Dogfighting

There are three categories of dogfighting participants. **Serious** or “professional” dogfighters breed, train, and fight their own dogs. They operate on a national (sometimes international) level and are often featured in underground publications. Professional dogfights are usually high-stakes matches between dogs with established bloodlines.



© HSUS

Hobbyists are people who live within a reasonable distance of one another and know everyone involved in their dogfighting ring. They tend to put a greater emphasis on gambling rather than selective breeding for “game” bloodlines. Hobbyists often purchase dogs of average ability through classified ads and enter them in a match with little or no physical training. Though some of these individuals see themselves as serious, their goal is to regain their initial purchase price as quickly as possible through bets and winning matches. They often use the same fight location over and over again.

Street fighters have become common in problem-plagued urban areas, where the pit bull has become the “macho” dog of choice. Ownership of pit bulls and pit bull crosses has increased among juveniles and gang members in inner cities. Fighting dogs used at this level are frequently stolen or obtained from local animal shelters that lack strong adoption policies. Some are purchased from low-level breeders. Impromptu matches may take place in public parks, playgrounds, and back alleys as a way for street fighters to project a tough image. This is a particularly difficult group to apprehend, because participants can quickly disperse when law enforcement officers arrive on the scene.

Dogs Used for Fighting

In the U.S., fighting dogs are almost exclusively American pit bull terriers. The term “pit bull” is

commonly used to describe several similar breeds of dogs, including the American Staffordshire terrier, recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC), American pit bull terriers, and mixes of these and other breeds.

Historically, the American Staffordshire terrier and the American pit bull terrier trace their ancestry to the bulldogs of the nineteenth century. These large, somewhat slow animals were commonly used for “bull baiting” in England, where two or three dogs attacked a bull. Prizes were awarded to the owners whose dogs showed the greatest “game-ness” (enthusiasm for fighting), endurance, and tenacity in their attacks.



© HSUS

Serious fighters breed their own pups from dogs proven to be game in the fighting pit. They maintain contact with established fighters around the country and gain substantial income from gambling and the sale of fighting animals. Through an intensive process called **culling**, these fighters kill puppies they have bred if the puppies do not exhibit aggressive behavior.

More than a century of breeding dogs for bull baiting and fighting has had a profound effect on the genetic makeup of these breeds. Characteristics of fighting breeds may include the following:

- **aggression against dogs and other animals.** Most wild and domestic dogs fight one another only to drive a rival away from food, a mate, or territory. The fight ends when one dog withdraws or displays signs of submission. The most common tactic used to win a confrontation is a bluff: growling and staring. Actual attacks are a last resort.

In fighting breeds, this inhibition has been removed through generations of selective breeding. In fights, the dogs appear to be insensitive to normal “cut-off” behaviors that signal an end to aggression. For example, rolling over to

expose a soft underbelly is usually an effective display of submission, but fighting pit bulls will continue attacking dogs who roll over. Fighting dogs will fight to the point of complete exhaustion or death. In this sense, they are not “doing what comes naturally.” This behavior is totally abnormal from an evolutionary standpoint, as it requires animals to go against their instinct for self-preservation.

Predatory attacks in wild and domestic dogs are usually triggered by the flight of a prey animal. Because dogs selected for bull baiting and dog-fighting were bred to attack animals who were either restrained or confined, these animals and their descendants attack targets that do not flee or exhibit other behaviors we might think of as provocation for attack.

- **attack behaviors.** Dogs use different styles of attack that reflect the purposes for which they were bred. Guard dogs such as German shepherds tend to restrain their subject by grabbing and holding. Fighting breeds have been selected to inflict maximum damage to their opponents. This is usually accomplished by grabbing, holding, shaking, and tearing. Animals selected for fighting do not use normal canine body language to reveal their intentions. They offer little or no indication that they are about to attack.

It is worth noting that not all pit bulls are bred or raised for fighting. Many are bred and socialized for qualities that would make them acceptable household companions. The breed's short history as a companion animal, however, compared with its longer history as a fighting dog, makes it difficult to predict an individual dog's temperament and suitability as a pet. In view of the dogs' lack of inhibition to aggression, the strength and tenacity of attacks, and the failure to show warning signs of attack, many animal control officers regard these animals—when they are seized as evidence in dogfighting investigations—as potentially dangerous unless proven otherwise.

However, the dogs are the true victims of this organized crime, and all dogs should be treated as individuals. The HSUS has a policy of recommending that all dogs seized from fighting

operations be professionally evaluated, according to agreed upon standards, to determine whether they are suitable candidates for adoption. Dogs deemed suitable for placement should be offered as appropriate for adoption or to approved rescue organizations.

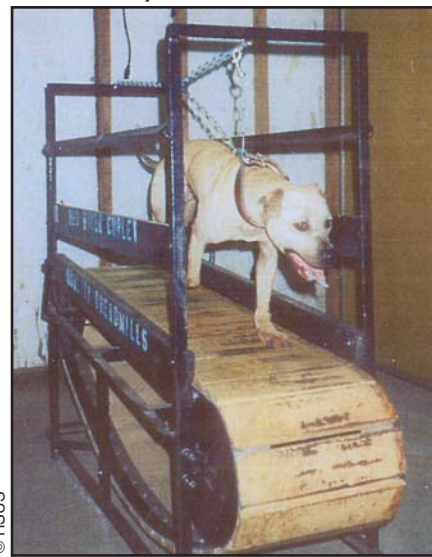
Think About It

Do you agree with The HSUS's policy regarding the evaluation and possible adoption of fighting dogs? Why or why not?

Training and Fighting

During their training, fighting dogs are pitted against other dogs in a series of combats designed to build confidence and expose them to a variety of fighting styles. Dogs who pass these “game tests” are then prepared intensively for four to six weeks prior to a match. This conditioning period is called a “keep.” During this time, dogs follow a grueling exercise regimen, often involving treadmills, and their food and vitamin intake is strictly monitored.

Because the dogs are an investment, and their success depends on their physical condition, they are often in excellent shape before a match. The keep may also involve the use of bait animals, such as cats, rabbits, or chickens, who have been caged or tied just out of reach of a dog. Sometimes dogs are allowed to kill the bait animals when the exercise session is over.



Staged dogfights can be held wherever and whenever fighters are willing to assemble. Many matches are staged in rural areas on Friday and Saturday nights. Pit sites are repeatedly moved to avoid detection, another factor that makes it difficult to catch professional fighters. Outdoor pits hidden in wooded areas are popu-

lar in southern climates and during warmer months in other parts of the country. In regions where the weather is typically cold or wet, fights are usually held in barns and sheds.

Dogfights are also staged in suburbs and inner-cities. Since pit bulls are relatively quiet during combat, it is possible for matches to be held in basements and garages, where any noise from spectators might be interpreted by neighbors as a loud party. Abandoned buildings, fenced construction sites, and warehouses also serve as fight locations.



To avoid being caught, dogfight organizers often set up checkpoints and

identify escape routes before a scheduled match. The use of police scanners and cell phones and the presence of one or more armed guards is not unusual.

A typical dogfighting arena measures up to 20 square feet and has wooden walls up to 3 feet high. The floor is usually covered with carpet or canvas to improve traction. Most matches take up to 2 hours and end when one of the dogs has been killed or is unable to continue because of exhaustion, broken bones, or other injuries. Fighting dogs typically die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, or infection from their wounds.

About Cockfighting

Cockfighting can be traced back for thousands of years. It is believed to have started in Asia and spread to Greece and Rome by way of



India and China. Cockfighting was eventually introduced to Britain, where it remained a favorite pastime of English nobility from the early sixteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century. Though cockfights were patronized by all people, only the wealthiest cockfighters could afford to breed their own strains of roosters in large numbers. In the 1800s, cockfighting came under increasing criticism and was finally prohibited in Britain with the passage of the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1849.

Cockfighting was introduced to American colonies early on but was soon prohibited in the older states. The first state to outlaw cockfighting was Massachusetts, in 1836. Though cockfighters frequently make the claim that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were avid cockfighters and that Abraham Lincoln earned the moniker “Honest Abe” by refereeing cockfights, historians have provided documentation that shows such stories to be untrue or grossly exaggerated.

Birds Used for Fighting

Fighting birds are male chickens, called roosters, cocks, or gamecocks. Before they are fully mature, gamecocks have their combs, wattles, and earlobes surgically removed in a procedure known as “dubbing.” This operation is usually performed using scissors, without anesthetics.

There are several reasons for dubbing roosters. Some experts advise that these appendages are prone to injury and infection and that removing the comb will prevent frostbite in colder climates. Cockfighters know that the absence of these parts reduces a bird’s overall weight (an important factor in determining opponents) and lessens the opportunity for injury, as a comb will bleed profusely when cut and can seriously impair a bird’s sight and fighting ability. Cockfighters also typically saw off fighting roosters’



natural spurs, leaving a short stump to serve as an anchor point for attaching artificial spurs.

Cockfighters often claim that gamecocks are aggressive by nature and do not need to be trained to fight. In fact, these birds are the product of centuries of breeding for “game-ness,” and serious cockfighters subject their birds to an intensive program of training and conditioning before every fight. During this “keep” period, fighting cocks follow a strict training schedule and are fed special foods and vitamins designed to promote top physical condition and fighting ability. Many cockfighters give their roosters injections of digitalis (heart stimulant), vitamin K (to increase blood clotting), and the male hormone testosterone.

Think About It

Given the information above, how might you respond to a cockfighter’s claim that gamefowl are “natural” fighters?

The Fight

In the U.S., cockfights are typically held in converted barns or outdoors in remote locations. Entry fees for fighters range from \$100 to \$1,000, and spectators pay an admission fee of \$5 to \$25, used to pay for utilities, security, referees, pit maintenance, and the disposal of dead birds.



Although fights may be held year-round, the cockfighting season usually runs from about Thanksgiving through July.

After arriving at the pit site, roosters are weighed and banded. During the time it takes to weigh each bird and record information, there are sometimes “hack fights” in which birds of lesser quality are fought for side bets.

When it’s their turn, owners are requested to “heel” their roosters for the first fight and head to the pit. Heeling is the act of attaching steel

gaffs or knives to the roosters’ legs. Gaffs resemble curved icepicks and are designed to cause deep puncture wounds. When used, long and short knives are attached only to the birds’ left legs and are designed to slash and create gaping wounds.

The rules of cockfighting are complex and vary from pit to pit, but most fights follow a basic pattern. Unless a rooster



tries to escape the pit, which is an automatic loss, a cockfight typically ends in one of three ways: one of the cocks dies, one of the handlers concedes the fight, or a cock fails to attack several times in a row. Injuries sustained by roosters during fighting are often life-threatening or fatal.

Animal Fighting and the Law

Dogfighting is illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and the interstate transportation of dogs for fighting purposes is prohibited by the federal Animal Welfare Act. The District of Columbia and 47 states have made dogfighting a **felony** offense (serious crime). Idaho, Iowa, and Wyoming treat it as a misdemeanor with smaller fines and little or no jail time. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia prohibit possession of dogs for the purposes of fighting, and all states except Hawaii prohibit being a spectator at a dogfight.

Cockfighting is illegal in 48 states (Louisiana and New Mexico are the exceptions) and the District of Columbia, and all interstate transportation or export of cocks for fighting purposes is prohibited by the AWA. In the District of Columbia and 30 states, cockfighting is a felony, and the possession of roosters for fighting is prohibited. Forty states prohibit being a spectator at cockfights. As with dogfighting, being a spectator may bring either misdemeanor or felony charges, depending on the state.

Animal Fighting: Behind the Scenes

Meet Eric Sakach. As a veteran investigator for The HSUS, he's conducted extensive undercover work in the world of animal fighting. Here are the hard facts from someone who has seen firsthand how these "sports" operate.

How long were you an undercover investigator for The HSUS? I began my investigative career in 1976 and started working undercover the following year. I continued in that capacity through the mid-80s, participating in numerous searches and raids. Those efforts led to the arrests of more than 500 people involved in illegal cockfights and dogfights and the first convictions ever under the federal Animal Welfare Act. Now I'm the director of the West Coast Regional Office of The HSUS.



How did you come to have such an unusual career? At an early age, my brother and I learned that we have a duty to protect people and animals who cannot speak for themselves. We were blessed with parents who brought us up in an environment where animals were considered part of the family and deserving of our care and attention. I've always believed that I had a responsibility to try to intervene when I've encountered someone tormenting an animal or bullying someone else smaller, weaker, or challenged. Working for The HSUS has given me a chance to do something positive about an uglier side of human behavior.

When you witnessed a dogfight, what troubled you the most? You might expect me to say something about the cruelty, violence, and savagery. Certainly, a staged dogfight is all those things, but I've also seen a certain look in the eyes of the dogs who are abused this way—a haunting look of despair and a betrayal of trust. Probably the worst thing I've witnessed is the fact that children are brought to these events.

Just how dangerous is a dogfight investigation? Dogfighting and cockfighting involve extreme violence and are associated with large sums of money related to gambling and the sale of animals, as well as peripheral crimes. Not surprisingly, people are killed in connection with these activities, so there is some personal risk in investigating.

At what point do you call in the police? What usually happens to the perpetrators? When we get credible information, we usually try to put the informer in touch with the appropriate law enforcement agency. In the past few years, these agencies have become much more aware of the serious nature of illegal animal fighting, thanks in part to training programs and materials offered by The HSUS. In addition to rewards, The HSUS offers direct assistance to police and prosecutors to investigate and convict criminals.

What do you think teens should do if they suspect dogfighting is happening in their community? Don't take matters into your own hands. People engaged in animal fighting can be extremely dangerous. Always call the police if you suspect a crime is being committed. You can learn more about illegal animal fighting by contacting The HSUS or visiting www.hsus.org.

What is the current state of animal fighting? Is it decreasing, the same, or on the rise? Unfortunately, all indications are that it is on the rise. But I believe this trend can be reversed with increased public awareness and education, better laws with stiffer penalties backed by the courts, and standardized training for police and prosecutors.

Although great progress has been made in treating animal fighting as a serious crime, enforcing animal-fighting laws is frequently difficult. Because of its specialized nature, animal fighting has participants scattered over a wide

area. This presents certain difficulties and means an investigation effort has to be tightly coordinated among law enforcement agencies in many jurisdictions. To address those problems, The HSUS has created the National Illegal

Animal Fighting Task Force, a group of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with an interest in combining efforts in enforcement and reporting. The HSUS also offers rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone who promotes, stages, or participates in a cockfight or dog-fight.

Think About It

Young children are often spectators at dogfights and cockfights. What do you think might be the psychological or emotional effects of watching such events? Why are Eric Sakach (see “Animal Fighting: Behind the Scenes” on p. 9) and others in the animal protection movement especially concerned about the impact on children?

Explore the Issues

The HSUS’s packet *The Final Round* includes fact sheets, sample letters to the editor, and a seven-minute video to help you clue people in to the facts about animal fighting. Show the video in your animal protection club meetings, debate class, or in an assembly (National Animal Cruelty/Human Violence Awareness Week takes place in April). You may need to get permission from school officials first, as the video includes graphic images of fighting and injured animals. To order *The Final Round* video packet, send \$9.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling to The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.



Take Action

Help spread the word about organized animal fighting. Conduct a public awareness campaign in your community by creating fliers, sponsoring a school assembly, or presenting a project to your class about the problems associated with animal fighting. In your handouts, include tips for reporting animal fighting as well as contact information for local law enforcement. In case people would like more information, you may wish to include The HSUS’s website, www.hsus.org.

Greyhound Racing

Sleek and swift, greyhounds are one of the oldest dog breeds in the world. Historians have traced their earliest ancestors back some 4,000 years. Once the prized companions of



Egyptian royalty, greyhounds were first brought to the U.S. in the 1800s to control jackrabbit populations. Greyhounds are sight hounds, bred to hunt prey with their sharp vision and incredible speed. They are the fastest dogs in the world, capable of reaching speeds up to 40 miles per hour.

Thanks to their great speed, greyhounds have long been used in lure coursing, an event that recreates a hare chase with a fake lure. Dogs are judged by their speed, enthusiasm, agility, endurance, and accuracy in following the path of the lure, and winning dogs are typically awarded ribbons or other prizes. Betting on these events is uncommon.

With the invention of a mechanical lure in 1912, greyhound racing as we know it was created. Today, it exists in 15 states, with even more allowing off-track betting on televised races. Unlike lure coursing, greyhound racing has the sole purpose of generating profit for track operators, greyhound owners, and others in the industry. Spectators don’t come to racetracks for the enjoyment of watching beautiful animals but rather to bet on the outcome of the races. Millions of dollars are spent at racetracks annually, although the industry has been declining in recent years.

Dogs Used in Racing

With any business, profit is the bottom line. Motivated by the desire for a cash purse and the chance to turn impressive race records into stud and breeding fees, greyhound racing enthusiasts breed large numbers of dogs, hop-

ing for the next big winner.

In 2000, the industry registered 26,464 greyhound pups. The true number is probably much higher, however, because those pups who appear unpromising as racers are killed early on. In the U.S., there are about 1,500 breeding farms. The top greyhound breeding states are Florida, Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma.



Racing greyhounds are typically raised in kennels of up to 60

dogs. Training begins after the dogs are about one year old, when they are more physically mature. Dogs are typically “turned out” for exercise and to relieve themselves 4 or 5 times a day. Hard running takes place twice a week.

Greyhound training activities have been known to maim and kill thousands of domestic and wild rabbits every year. This estimate is based on HSUS investigations into the illegal importation of rabbits and the use of animals in training events. One training event involves greyhounds chasing and killing rabbits within fenced enclosures. Some industry representatives argue that this enhances the dogs’ racing ability because it helps them develop a “taste for blood.” But greyhounds are sight hounds, not scent hounds, and their inclination to run is triggered by a moving object, not the scent of blood. The use of live lures is not permitted in at least 16 states, but such laws are difficult to enforce.

Currently there are 46 tracks in 15 states. Some operate seasonally; others are open year-round. At the racetrack, dogs spend the majority of their adult lives—22 hours a day—in crates, pens, or in fenced enclosures. Human companionship is limited. When they are considered fully trained, usually by the time they are 18-24 months old, dogs are raced two or

more times per week. Driven by the desire to make money, trainers and owners have been known to cut costs by providing their dogs with low-quality food and substandard veterinary care. Greyhound advocates argue that this is untrue, because to give their dogs the best possible chance at winning, they need to be treated as prize athletes. Animal protectionists quickly point to the physical condition of many dogs coming off the racetracks into their adoption programs, many of whom suffer from untreated injuries and illnesses.

One issue that the greyhound industry cannot argue is the need for homes for “retired” racing dogs. Greyhounds have normal lifespans of about 12 years, but a typical greyhound’s racing career is over by the time he is 4 years old. A greyhound who is no longer capable of bringing in income is an unwanted expense. Though estimates vary from group to group, The HSUS calculates that roughly 19,000 greyhounds (including puppies and “retirees”) were killed in 2000 alone.

Greyhounds are often destroyed using the least expensive methods, including gunshot and starvation. Others are sold to research laboratories, returned to breeding facilities to serve as breeding stock, or sent to foreign racetracks. Some trainers drop off their unwanted greyhounds at animal shelters or have them humanely euthanized by veterinarians.

Loving, gentle, intelligent, and responsive to human contact, greyhounds can make wonder-



ful companions. Across the country, greyhound placement

groups are working hard to find homes for unwanted greyhounds. These vary from pro-racing groups funded in part by the racing industry to nonprofit organizations with no direct ties to greyhound racing. Many racetracks also have in-house adoption programs

and kennels so that people can adopt greyhounds right as they come off the track. The National Greyhound Association and the Greyhound Racing Association of America, the leading pro-racing organizations, both advocate the adoption of greyhounds. Critics say that although greyhound adoption is a noble endeavor, it will never be a solution to the greyhound industry's practice of overbreeding. There will never be enough homes for all of the unwanted greyhounds. The only long-term solution to the problem is the elimination of greyhound racing altogether.

A Failing Industry

Lawmakers once perceived racing as a way of raising needed revenue. Most were unaware of the inhumane treatment involved. The reality, however, is that state revenue generated by dog tracks amounts to far less, on average, than one percent of a state's annual income and has been declining steeply in recent years. During the 1990s, the greyhound racing industry's gross betting handle (total amount wagered) declined by 45%. In recent years, the greyhound industry has been struggling to stay afloat. First, increased public awareness of the cruelties inherent in greyhound racing has influenced people to stop attending. Also, there has been a marked increase in the number of casinos, state lotteries, and other legalized gambling, which means fewer people rely on greyhound racing for their betting purposes. In the U.S., dogracing bets now represent less than 1% of all wagers.

Because of the unavoidable economic trends, many tracks have lost enthusiasm for dog racing and are instead concentrating on other types of gambling. Currently, five tracks in three states (Iowa, Rhode Island, and West Virginia) have slot machines, and tracks everywhere are pushing to add video lottery terminals and other forms of gambling to prop up their faltering dogracing operations. In almost every state where greyhound racing exists, dog tracks are pressing for tax relief or state subsidies to survive. Since 1991, at least 16 greyhound tracks have closed due to economic decline.

Greyhound Racetracks by State	
State	Number of tracks
Alabama	3
Arizona	3
Arkansas	1
Colorado	3
Connecticut	2
Florida	16
Iowa	2
Kansas	2
Massachusetts	2
New Hampshire	3
Oregon	1
Rhode Island	1
Texas	3
West Virginia	2
Wisconsin	2

Explore the Issues

Create a pie chart or bar graph illustrating the data in the table above. Note that the number of greyhound tracks in Florida far exceeds the number in any other state. Florida accounts for what percent of the nation's total number of greyhound racetracks? Given what you know about the state's leading industries and economy, what do you think accounts for the disproportionate number of racetracks in Florida?

Greyhound Racing and the Law

Unlike other commercial animal enterprises (such as commercial breeding, zoos, and circuses) and animal transportation via airlines, greyhound racing is not governed by the federal Animal Welfare Act. State racing commissions regulate the industry, but their primary function is to protect the state's financial interests, not to enhance animal welfare practices. Although they have the power to revoke racing privileges of trainers and owners for mistreatment of animals, in reality there is little oversight, due to lack of time, money, knowledge, and laws. Few states even address humane standards for racing dogs or what happens to them once their racing careers are over. The racing industry is virtually self-regulated.

Thanks to persistent efforts by animal protection organizations, live and televised greyhound

Homes for Hounds

David Wolf is president of the National Greyhound Adoption Program (NGAP), based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has helped find homes for thousands of retired greyhounds.

Why did you decide to start this program? I saw a need for an organized effort, using a businesslike approach, to find adoptive homes for greyhounds. Since 1990, we have adopted out more than 5,000 greyhounds, and we continue to find homes for about 500 greyhounds each year.

Why should people consider adopting a greyhound? They're gentle, usually quiet dogs. They want to be your friend. They mourn when you mourn and are happy when you're happy. They'll always be there for you. By adopting one of these wonderful dogs, you will be saving a life.

What is an average day like for you? I'm involved in NGAP seven days a week. We usually have about 70 dogs there at any given time. In addition to paperwork and e-mail, I also take a lot of calls from veterinarians and adopters regarding dogs' health issues. I do run my own business, so on my way to work, I normally stop at the kennel and bring a different greyhound with me to the office each day!

How can teens help? They should educate themselves about the plight of the greyhound, spread the word about their mistreatment, and encourage people to consider adopting these gentle dogs. They can also contact local adoption programs to explore volunteer opportunities, such as walking and grooming. NGAP has teenagers who walk the dogs every weekend. It's excellent exercise—both for the teens and the dogs!



Courtesy of M. Vanase

racing have been banned in several states. For updates on the legal status of greyhound racing, see www.hsus.org.

Think About It

- Do you think it's possible for an industry that relies on animals for profit to genuinely care about the animals' welfare? Explain.
- It's been argued that the greyhound racing industry's support of greyhound adoption is merely a public relations ploy to make the industry seem concerned about the dogs they use. Without such adoption programs in place, the racing industry would have to admit that even more dogs are killed when their racing careers are over each year. What do you think of this argument?
- How does the greyhound racing industry add to the current pet overpopulation problem?

Explore the Issues

Explore your state's "greyhound culture." For example, does your state have a greyhound racing track? If so, what state laws, if any, govern

how those dogs are treated? Does your state allow betting on televised races? Are there local greyhound adoption groups? Present your findings to your animal protection club or in a social studies or debate class.

Take Action

- Never attend a greyhound race or bet on one, and urge others to avoid greyhound racing.
- Is your family ready for a furry friend? Consider adopting or fostering a rescued greyhound. An Internet search will quickly turn up information on greyhound adoption groups in your area.
- Does your state allow greyhound racing or off-track betting? Write to your state representatives and explain the problems associated with greyhound racing and why it should be banned. Tell them that greyhounds belong in loving homes, not on racetracks. To find a list of your local government leaders, visit www.YOURSTATEABBREVIATION.gov.

The Iditarod

In 1925, two children in Nome, Alaska, were deathly ill with diphtheria, a serious and contagious respiratory illness. The only hope for a cure was an antitoxin located far away in Anchorage. Severe blizzards prevented planes or trains from carrying the lifesaving medicine to the children. Instead, a relay of 20 dogsledding teams traveled 674 miles over harsh terrain and through blinding snowstorms, from Nenana to Nome, to deliver the antitoxin in just five days. Although two children died before the medicine reached them, a diphtheria epidemic was averted.

That lifesaving dash through Alaska's wilderness is now commemorated every March in an event known as the Iditarod Dog Sled Race. Begun in 1973, today's race has nothing to do with delivering medicine. Dozens of dog-and-mush teams race approximately 1,100 miles from Anchorage to Nome in pursuit of hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money. The winning teams typically run the course in 9 to 14 days, with the current record at just under 9 days.

Produced by the nonprofit Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC), which operates on a budget of nearly \$2 million, and sponsored by a host of mostly Alaska-based businesses, the event is promoted as a celebration of Alaskan culture and heritage. The race is also considered a salute to the original 674-mile, noncompetitive mushing run. However, not only is the Iditarod nearly twice the length of the original run, but dog teams must cover that *entire* distance. (The historic run was comprised of several relay teams, so each team of dogs traveled fewer than 100 miles.)

Nicknamed "The Last Great Race on Earth," today's Iditarod is an international event featuring **mushers** (sled-dog drivers) from many states and several countries. Many of them compete in races and breed sled dogs for a living. With the annual cost of putting together a competitive Iditarod team estimated at up to \$60,000, very few native Alaskans are able to participate.

Dogs Used in the Iditarod

Dogs used in the Iditarod are usually Alaskan

huskies or, less commonly, Siberian huskies or Alaskan malamutes. With thick coats, obedient natures, and great stamina, those breeds have been developed for the purpose of pulling sleds through harsh climates. Iditarod dogs begin their training in early fall, usually by pulling a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle weighing about 500 pounds.



Sled dogs are often raised completely outdoors in harsh northern climates. They are confined by **tethers**, short chains or leashes, with as many as 200 other dogs in large "dog yards." The tethers allow them access to doghouses, but they also purposely prevent the dogs from freely interacting with one another. One of the reasons is to prevent injuries, which would cost money to treat. Because dogs are social animals whose natural behavior involves playing with other dogs and humans, and because tethering can cause considerable physical and emotional harm, tethering is strongly opposed by The HSUS and other animal protection groups. Also of concern is the practice of **culling**, in which pups and dogs who are deemed unpromising as sled dogs are killed.

The Race

The Iditarod alters its course every other year. It uses two different routes, each more than 1,000 miles long. Dogs race over difficult terrain, including forests, rivers, mountains, and tundra, and through severe weather with temperatures far below zero. The dog team may consist of a maximum of 16 dogs. Along the race are various checkpoints where mushers stop for food and other supplies. Iditarod rules require one 24-hour and two 8-hour rest stops. Depending

on the weight of the musher, sleds weigh between 300 and 400 pounds.



Mushers “drop” dogs from the race if they are sick, injured, or otherwise slowing down the team at any of the checkpoints. Injuries and ailments include pulled tendons, sore muscles and joints, cut paws, dehydration, heat stress, and diarrhea. It is not uncommon for teams of 16 dogs to drop down to 8 or 10 dogs by the end of the race. Dropped dogs are taken by airplane back to Anchorage.

The HSUS and other groups claim that the race forces dogs to run too far and too fast in often grueling trail and weather conditions. In 1997 alone, five dogs died, and at least one dog has died every year since. Causes of death during the last decade have included strangulation in towlines, internal hemorrhaging after being gouged by a sled, liver injury from collision, heart failure, and pneumonia. “Sudden death” and “exertional myopathy” (a condition in which a dog’s muscles and organs deteriorate during extreme or prolonged exercise) have also been blamed. Throughout the race’s history, mushers have been disqualified for, among other things, striking a dog with a snow hook, kicking a dog, and causing a dog to die after forcing the team through waist-deep slush.

When speaking to the press, Iditarod veterinarians and other officials frequently compare dogs who die during the Iditarod with young, healthy, human athletes who unexpectedly die while participating in sports; however, if the Boston Marathon suffered deaths at the same rate as the Iditarod (2.9 deaths per 1,000 par-

ticipants), 290 runners would have died during the 1990s alone.

The HSUS opposes the Iditarod in its current form and any other mushing event in which dog deaths and injuries are regular consequences. The HSUS is not opposed to noncompetitive mushing or competitive mushing events in which the welfare of dogs is not sacrificed for the sake of entertainment.

The Iditarod and the Law

Many state anti-cruelty laws prohibit the “overdriving” and “overworking” of animals. Alaska’s anti-cruelty laws do not. And although some communities have banned the tethering of dogs, the practice remains legal throughout most of the U.S., including Alaska.

Think About It

Most Iditarod veterinarians belong to the International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association, a group that sponsors the race and whose stated mission is “furthering the cause of the sport of mushing.” Do you think that affiliation might influence the way Iditarod veterinarians describe to the media the care and treatment of Iditarod dogs?

Explore the Issues

- *Mushing*, racing teams of dogs who pull a sled and driver, is not only a competitive sport but also a popular pastime for amateur enthusiasts. Research the Internet to learn more about noncompetitive mushing. How does it compare to an event such as the Iditarod? Do you think that noncompetitive mushing is acceptable or inhumane? Explain your view. Search www.hsus.org and other animal protection organizations’ websites to read their views on recreational mushing.
- The ITC spends considerable time and money promoting Iditarod-themed activities and events to elementary-school teachers. Each year, one teacher is chosen to tag along on the trail and report back to students. Visit www.iditarod.com and view the information in the “Teachers and Students” section. How accurately do you think the information is presented? Why, do you

think, is the event being marketed to teachers?

- What are Alaska's anti-cruelty laws, and how might they apply to the Iditarod? Write a paper exploring how legislators could use Alaska's existing anti-cruelty laws to prosecute a case against a musher whose dog dies on the trail. View state anti-cruelty laws at [www](http://www.animal-law.org)

[.animal-law.org](http://www.animal-law.org).

- The Iditarod may be the most famous dog sledding race, but it is only one of four different types of sled races run every year in the U.S.



Besides long-distance racing, there are also sprints (less than 20 miles), mid-distance

running (up to 200 miles), and combinations of long and mid-distance races of more than 300 miles. Does your state hold any sled races? Search the Internet. How does your state's racing compare to the Iditarod in terms of animal welfare? Backgrounds of contestants? Prize money?

Take Action

- The Iditarod has many corporate sponsors. Find out who is sponsoring the Iditarod this year by visiting www.iditarod.com. Alone or with your animal protection club, write letters asking those corporations to stop supporting the race. Be courteous and stick to the facts. Doublecheck your spelling and grammar. A well-written, truthful letter will be taken more seriously than one with exaggerations and mean-spirited comments. For additional facts about the Iditarod, visit www.hsus.org.

- Write to Alaska's major elected officials, including the governor, its U.S. senators and representatives, and the mayors of Anchorage and Nome. You can find contact information at www.gov.state.ak.us. Express your concerns about the welfare of the animals who race the Iditarod.

- Contact your local elementary or middle school to see if Iditarod-themed activities or lessons are planned. Ask if you or your animal protection club can schedule a meeting to present Iditarod information to teachers and the principal. In your presentation, explain the problems associated with the Iditarod and encourage educators to teach both sides of the issue. For additional information about the Iditarod, visit www.helpsleddogs.org.

Horseracing

Horseracing, and the gambling that goes with it, has been around since approximately 1500 B.C. Chariot racing, the precursor to today's harness racing, was popular in ancient Rome and an Olympic event in ancient Greece. Horseracing has long been called "the sport of kings," since raising and racing horses was a favorite pastime of wealthy people and nobility in England.

Capable of reaching speeds up to 40 miles per hour, the thoroughbred is the breed most commonly used in horseracing. Descended from three foundation stallions—the Darley Arabian, Godolphin Arabian, and Byerly Turk—with 80% of racing thoroughbreds tracing back to a single horse named Eclipse—thoroughbreds are bred for strength, endurance, and speed.

Horseracing in the U.S.

In the U.S., informal horseracing began as long ago as 1665. Organized racing did not get under way until the late 1800s. Today, about half of all U.S. states have racetracks, and even more allow wagering on televised races.

Horseracing is big business. Tens of millions of people attend races each year and spend billions on pari-mutuel wagering directly at racetracks, online, or in OTB (off-track betting) operations. According to the American Horse Council, it is estimated that the horseracing industry has an economic impact of around \$34 billion a year on the U.S.'s gross domestic product. Additionally, horseracing provides full-time employment to more than 130,000 people, from jockeys, breeders, groomers, and trainers, to OTB and racetrack employees. Hundreds of

thousands more are employed part-time or are indirectly employed through the racing industry. Horseracing also contributes to the economy through taxes. Horse owners, breeders, race-track operators, and others in the industry pay state and federal taxes on their incomes. In 1995, U.S. racetracks paid \$511 million in taxes and fees.

In 2003, the national consumer research firm TNS Intersearch, in conjunction with ESPN and the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA), conducted a poll to assess horseracing's popularity. Among people 18 years and older, 35% said they were "a little bit" or "very" interested in horseracing, up from 31.2% in 1999.

The most popular form of horseracing in the U.S. is **flat racing**, in which mounted thorough-



bred horses are raced on flat tracks at distances of one to two miles. The most widely

known races are the Triple Crown, comprised of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. Through 2003, only 11 horses have won all three races (run when the horses are three years old), an achievement that is now worth a multimillion-dollar bonus payout from Visa. Approximately 750,000 horses are involved in the industry at any given time. This figure includes horses who are actively racing, training, or in breeding programs. More than half are thoroughbreds.

The more money gambled, the higher the purse—the amount awarded to race winners. Purses can range from just a few hundred dollars to hundreds of thousands. A few races, including the Triple Crown races and the Breeders' Cup series, offer purses of \$1 million or more. These are **stakes** races, and they're the races most people are familiar with, because they're frequently shown on television and featured in newspapers and magazines. Stakes

races, which require an entry fee, are for higher-quality racehorses, graded I, II, or III, depending on the overall quality of horses entered and the reputation of the race. Less-known are **claiming** races, in which every horse entered is up for sale at a specified price. (For example, in a \$10,000 claiming race, each horse entered may be purchased for \$10,000.) Horses who are unpromising as stakes winners or who are at the end of their race careers are often entered in claiming races, because their owners hope to recoup some of their financial loss through the sale of the horse.

When the Race Is Over

Horseracing is a physically grueling sport. Many horses begin racing when they are just two years old, before they are physically mature. Horses can live 30 years or more, but injuries and lameness usually end horses' racing careers within a few years. What happens to them when they are no longer able to race? Not surprisingly, a racehorse's fate depends on whether he can continue to make a profit for his owner.

Although "superstars" are relatively rare, some top stakes winners have amassed millions of dollars for their owners. When they're retired from the racetrack, those horses



are entered into breeding programs and put out to stud. Valuable horses can generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in stud fees and breeding shares for their owners. The majority, however, are not prized as breeding stock. Because they are very expensive to care for, those who are unable to "earn their keep" winning purses or commanding stud fees are a serious financial liability to their owners. As with all businesses, profit—not the long-term welfare of animals—is the primary goal of the horseracing industry.



© Photodisc/Getty Images

Some of horse-racing's most celebrated stars, such as Cigar and Secretariat, retire to

peaceful places—such as the Kentucky Horse Farm—where people can visit and admire them. Through the efforts of adoption programs, some “retired” racehorses are placed into permanent homes as companions. Others are purchased for dressage, show jumping, or polo. Some have gone on to work as police patrols.

Horse Auctions and Horse Slaughter

Still other retired racehorses are sent to **auctions**, where they are sold to the highest bidder. Horse auctions are held in every state in the U.S., with the largest number of horses auctioned in Texas, California, Kansas, and New Mexico. Some are sold as polo ponies, riding horses, or companions. However, many are sold to be killed for human consumption. Federally licensed **slaughter buyers** (often called “killer buyers” by those in the equine rescue community) purchase horses at auctions and

transport them to Texas for slaughter. (Although it is rare for “glory horses” to be sent to slaughter, it is not unheard of. It was recently revealed that Ferdinand and Exceller, two of thoroughbred racing's top earners, were most likely killed for human consumption.) Animal protection experts and others are uncertain how many thoroughbreds or other racehorses are among the thousands of horses slaughtered each year. Slaughterhouses do not record what horse breeds they kill, because breed is unimportant in the horsemeat industry. Although it is not eaten in the U.S., horseflesh is considered a delicacy in other countries.

Number of horses slaughtered annually				
	Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Total
1989	133,000	560,000	348,400	1,041,400
1991	113,800	590,000	276,900	980,700
1993	85,200	610,000	167,300	862,500
1995	59,600	626,000	109,200	794,800
1997	64,500	630,000	87,100	781,600
1999	62,300	626,000	61,700	750,000
2001	66,300	626,000	62,000	754,300

Source: *Horse Slaughter White Paper: An Unnecessary Evil*

For the time being, horse slaughter is legal in this country as well as Canada and Mexico. Back in the 1950s, there were some 35 horse slaughterhouses in the U.S. Today, just two plants remain operational. Both are in Texas, and both are owned by European companies. Horses are often shipped there from all parts of

The Drug Debate

Although state racing commissions ban the use of most drugs in racehorses, a drug called **furosemide** (the common brand is Lasix) is administered to as many as 80% of thoroughbreds several hours before a race. The drug is given supposedly to help prevent respiratory bleeding, a common condition in racing thoroughbreds during strenuous activity. (The condition is technically called exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage.) A study by Ohio State University, which analyzed the race records of more than 22,000 thoroughbreds, found that horses given furosemide were 1.4 times more likely to win a race and 1.2 times more likely to finish in the top three.

Critics point out that furosemide, which is commonly used as a diuretic in humans, can enhance race performance in part because it causes horses to lose about 20 pounds of their body weight through urination. The drug is also linked to irregular heartbeats due to depleted potassium, dehydration, and reduced blood volume. They contend that trainers are quick to give their horses furosemide not for the potential health benefits but for the edge it may provide on the track. Critics also suspect that the drug is used to flush out illegal drugs from a horse's system. Although the drug remains legal on U.S. and Canada racetracks, its use has been banned in most other countries.

the country to be processed into a pricy delicacy sold in Japan and Europe. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 42,000 horses were killed at the two Texas plants in 2002. In addition, more than 30,000 horses were exported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter.

Critics point out that horses suffer both in transportation to slaughter and during the slaughtering process. Because the only two U.S. slaughterhouses are in Texas, and horse auctions are held throughout the country, horses may be trucked long distances before reaching the slaughterhouse. Hauled in trailers designed for cattle—sometimes doubledeckers—horses may be overcrowded, injured, or go for days without food or water. In addition, they are difficult to render unconscious with a captive bolt gun, leading slaughterhouses to slit some horses' throats while the animals are still conscious.

Horseracing and the Law

Like greyhound racing, horseracing is not covered under any federal laws but governed instead by state racing commissions, which are usually operated by people within the racing industry. Their primary purpose is to promote horseracing and gambling, not ensure the welfare of horses. Racing commissions' rules and regulations vary greatly from state to state.



The federal 28-Hour Law and the USDA's more recent Final Rule on the Commer-

cial Transportation of Equines to Slaughter seek to provide some protection to horses during transportation, requiring horses be fed, watered, and rested. The Final Rule calls for the use of doubledeckers to be phased out by 2006. However, as with all laws, this legislation is useful only if it is enforced.

Animal protection advocates point out that the

laws are rarely enforced and that no USDA inspectors are on hand at horse auctions to ensure that horses are transported humanely. Because it is possible (and more profitable) to transport more horses on a doubledecker, some operators will continue to disregard laws prohibiting their use. Animal protection groups believe that the only way to eliminate inhumane methods of transporting horses is to eliminate the horse slaughter industry altogether.

Several groups, including The HSUS, support the passage of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, which would prohibit the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Additionally, the bill would ban the import and export of horseflesh or live horses intended for slaughter for human consumption. This legislation would keep horse slaughterhouses out of Texas and any other state. Efforts to pass this bill are ongoing. For updates, see www.hsus.org.

Think About It

- What are some similarities between horseracing and greyhound racing?
- It's been said that horseracing could be a humane sport if money weren't at stake. What do you think this statement means? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Do you think that horses who have been given drugs that may enhance performance are true "champions"? Why or why not? Does your argument apply to human athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs?
- Do you think that owners should be responsible for their racehorses for the horses' entire lives? Why or why not?

Explore the Issues

- Thoroughbred racing isn't the only form of horseracing in the U.S.



Quarter horse racing and harness racing are

also popular. Choose one of these industries and research it on the Internet. How is it similar to thoroughbred racing? What are the differences? Write a paper comparing and contrasting quarterhorse or harness racing with thoroughbred racing.

- Should furosemide be allowed on American racetracks? For a science class, write a research paper about furosemide. Many articles can be found online and in archives of horse magazines and journals. You may also wish to read *Run, Baby, Run: What Every Owner, Breeder, and Handicapper Should Know About Lasix in Racehorses*, by Bill Heller (Russell Meerdink Co., 2002).
- Some animal protection organizations are critical of horseracing not just because of its connection to the horse slaughter industry but for other reasons. Those include physical abuse of horses in training and racing, the high prevalence of injuries in racehorses, racing injured horses, abuse of performance-enhancing drugs, and overbreeding horses. Contact animal protection organizations to learn more about horseracing and what they are doing to address issues of animal abuse in the industry. Contact information is provided at the end of this guide.
- Steeplechase is the racing of horses over a



course of hurdles and water jumps. The Grand National Steeplechase

(popularized in the book and film *National Velvet*) is England's equivalent to the Kentucky Derby in terms of fame and popularity. Research the history of steeplechase with emphasis on how steeplechase horses are treated during and after their racing careers. How do British animal protection organizations regard steeplechase?

- Why has horse slaughter declined in the U.S.? Why do some in the horse community believe

eliminating slaughter would increase horse abuse? What role do other countries play in horse slaughter? For a detailed look into horseracing and its connection to horse slaughter, read *Horse Slaughter: An Unnecessary Evil*, by Raymond Goydon and Stephen Kindel. Commissioned by the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, Inc., the paper is available online at www.trfinc.org/white_paper.htm.

Take Action

Do you and your family have the desire and resources to help a retired racehorse? If so, consider adopting or providing a foster home to a horse in need. A simple Internet search will help locate horse adoption groups in your area. For a list of racehorse adoption programs, you can also contact the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation and their Racehorse Adoption Referral Program at (859) 846-9981 or www.trfinc.org.

Carriage Horses

Before the invention of the automobile, people relied on horses as their primary means of transportation. Horse-drawn carriages weren't an option—they were a way of life. Obviously, horse-drawn carriages are no longer a necessity in modern American culture. However, in some cities, including New York and Chicago, you can still take a pleasure ride in a horse-drawn carriage. Retired harness racing horses, already trained to pull carriages and people, are commonly purchased at auction as carriage horses. When horses are no longer able to pull heavy loads, carriage horse operators bring them back to auction, where they are typically sold for slaughter.

Along with several other animal protection organizations, The HSUS is opposed to horse-



drawn carriages in high-density urban areas because of the risks

Heroes for Horses

Allan and Kathleen Schwartz founded their Days End Farm Horse Rescue in 1989. Located in Lisbon, Maryland, Days End has provided care for thousands of severely abused and neglected horses. Horse rescue is hard work, but the Schwartzes are up to the challenge. Here, Allan explains what horse rescue is all about.



How did you get into horse rescue? By mistake! My wife and I had a few horses at a boarding facility. There was a horse named Toby who was in really bad shape there. We asked if we could take him in and care for him. Then somebody told us about another horse who needed help, and another, and another....and horse rescue turned into a full-time job!

How many horses do you have at Days End? On any given day, we have 30-60 horses, depending on the time of year. We take in horses who have been reported to us by local animal control officers. Some have been severely abused. Many are starving or sick. All are in desperate need of care.

What happens to horses who come to your farm? We work to get them healthy. That doesn't mean a horse necessarily has to be rideable again. As long as the horses are able to be happy and pain-free, we'll rehabilitate them. Horses are great buddies even if they can't be ridden. On occasion, we do have to put severely ill or abused horses down.

Most of our horses are eventually adopted. These animals are real individuals with different personalities and abilities. That's why we require would-be adopters to work 4-5 times with a horse before bringing him home. That makes sure that they're compatible and that horses won't be returned because they didn't meet the adopter's expectations.

Are you affected by the horseracing industry? I think all horse rescue groups are affected in some way. There are just so many retired horses out there in need of homes. And there are certainly some owners who neglect racehorses who are no longer able to race. But from my personal experience, in the past ten years, it seems that racehorse owners are becoming more responsible for what happens to their horses when they're no longer able to race.

How do you think teens can help? If you're thinking about getting a horse, do your homework. Horses are wonderful companions, but they're very expensive to feed and board. Be sure you can take care of a horse for his entire life—which can be up to 30 years. If you can't keep a horse right now, volunteer your time. Rescue groups can always use a hand.

To learn more about Days End Farm Horse Rescue and how you can volunteer or adopt a horse, visit www.defhr.org.

posed to the horses. What are the risks? They range from collisions with motor vehicles to heatstroke and muscle cramping. Additionally, there have been numerous documented instances of abuse to carriage horses, including overworking, overloaded carriages, working in dangerous or inclement weather conditions, inadequate veterinary care, water deprivation, ill-fitting harnesses, malicious cruelty, and inadequate stables.

Carriage Horses and the Law

Carriage horses are not protected under the

Animal Welfare Act. Cities with carriage horse operations may have their own laws regarding the licensing of carriage operators and treatment of carriage horses, but the laws are often too lenient, and enforcement is weak. For example, in New York City, which has approximately 200 carriage horses and 300 operators, horses are allowed by law to work up to nine hours a day, seven days a week.

Recognizing that urban communities will continue to allow horse-drawn carriages, The HSUS provides guidelines to ensure more

humane treatment of horses. Local activists and coalitions can use the guidelines to help draft laws aimed at improving conditions for carriage horses. The guidelines include the following:

- Only equines [both horses and mules] in good health, with adequate muscle tone and proper body condition, and who have been certified as fit to work by a licensed equine veterinarian, will be used to pull carriages.



- No equine will be used to pull a carriage if he has injuries or wounds, is lame or unsound in one or more limbs, or has any other ailment, without the specific written approval of a licensed equine veterinarian.

- Hooves of working equines will be properly

shod, including shoes designed to prevent slipping and absorb shock if working on paved surfaces.

- Each equine will be properly sized relative to the carriage it will pull and the terrain over which it will operate. The weight, size, and load capacity of the carriage will be carefully considered when making this determination. There will be a limit of four adult passengers per carriage.

- Working carriage animals will be examined by a licensed equine veterinarian at least four times per year (quarterly) and receive all necessary immunizations and appropriate preventive and diagnostic care as stipulated by the attending veterinarian and local and state laws and regulations.

- Equines will not be worked whenever the temperature exceeds 90 degrees Fahrenheit or falls below 30 degrees Fahrenheit. They will not be worked in adverse conditions or on surfaces

that are slippery or otherwise unsafe.

- Equines will not be worked more than three consecutive hours without a one-hour rest period and will not be worked more than a total of six hours per day. A ten-minute rest period will be provided every hour. They will not be worked more than five consecutive days without at least one day off.

- Equines will not be taken into areas of high-density motor vehicle traffic, onto any roadway where the legal speed limit exceeds 25 mph, or onto any roadway where there is not a safe lane for a carriage to operate.

- Clean water should be made available and each animal given the opportunity to drink at all passenger pick-up points, at the midpoint of the route, and during an hourly ten-minute break.



Think About It

What are some of the differences between horse-and-carriage use in the 1800s and today's urban horse-drawn carriage rides?

Explore the Issues

- Like The HSUS, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has proposed legislation to improve the lives of New York City's horses. To learn more about the proposed changes and how you can help carriage horses, visit www.asPCA.org.

- Search the Internet for recent cases of carriage horse deaths or abuse (two famous cases include horses named Misty and Whitey). Which of The HSUS's or ASPCA's proposed changes could have prevented those incidents? Why do you think that such provisions are not in place to protect carriage horses?

Unfair to Animals?

Rodeo, horseracing, and greyhound racing are all big businesses, affecting hundreds of thousands of animals. But what about those small-time animal acts that we encounter from time to time? Agricultural fairs and church and school fundraisers frequently host such events as horse and cattle pulling contests, donkey basketball, traveling petting zoos, frog-jumping contests, pig chases, and pony rides. But at what cost to the animals involved? Most animals used in these events are owned by contractors who travel from fair to fair, and numerous public safety and animal welfare concerns are associated with the events.

Horse and oxen pulling contests are popular at state agricultural fairs.

Yoked to extremely heavy loads—usually logs or concrete blocks—the animals must pull them as far as they possibly can. Owners often shout at and whip the exhausted animals to force them to continue to pull.

Inspired by the 1865 short story that launched Mark Twain's career, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, the Frog Jump in Calaveras County, California, has been a celebrated tradition since 1928. The event draws as many as 40,000 visitors and 2,000 bullfrogs per year. After the contest is over, the majority of frogs are released into nearby woods and ponds. The California Department of Fish and Game has objected because bullfrogs are not a native species to California, and releasing them can have negative effects on existing wildlife. The bullfrogs may also spread disease

to native frog populations. Animal protection groups point out that frog jumping contests send the wrong message about animals to the thousands of children who attend these events. They point out that capturing, transporting, and forcing wild animals to jump and then discarding them suggests that animals' lives are worthless.



© Getty Images



Donkey basketball is a popular fundraiser for schools and civic clubs. In this game, teachers or students ride donkeys as they play basketball. Inexperienced riders often hit, kick, scream, or whip the donkeys in an attempt to get them to cooperate, and donkeys have been known to kick or bite participants and bystanders out of fear or stress.

Petting zoos and pony rides may seem like innocent fun for young children. But they pose many problems for animals. Ponies and petting zoo animals are cramped in trailers and trucks and transported from event to event. Ponies may be subjected to long periods of work without rest. Other animals are exhibited in small cages that allow them no place to escape from prying hands. Animals in petting zoos may range from the usual goats, sheep, llamas, and donkeys to exotic wildlife, such as wallabies and zebras. (Such animals are usually kept in small barred cages for viewing only.) In addition to poor treatment of animals, petting zoos have been linked to serious illnesses in children, most notably from exposure to *Salmonella* and *E. coli* bacteria.

Take Action

- Does your town or city offer horse-drawn carriage rides? Using The HSUS's guidelines for proper treatment of carriage horses, determine whether local carriage horse operators are providing humane care for their animals. If you have any concerns, discuss them with your local humane society.

- Anna Sewall's classic tale, *Black Beauty*, is considered an important part of the history of **humane education** (teaching children to be kind to animals). By 1909, George Angell, founder of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) had distributed some three million copies of the book to public schools. To help children develop compassion and respect for animals,

arrange to read *Black Beauty* to elementary-school students in your community. The book is fairly long (more than 200 pages), so schedule a series of visits.

- If an animal event is coming to your town, write to the organizers and politely point out your concerns. Ask them to cancel the event and offer animal-friendly alternatives instead. Make sure your letter is polite, neat, and well-written. Have an adult proofread the letter for you. Also write to the editor of your local newspaper. Describe the upcoming event and explain why it is harmful to animals and/or people. Ask readers not to attend or support the event in any way.

Rodeo



Rodeo is the Spanish word for “surround.” In the late 1700s and into the 1800s, Spain controlled most of the American

West and used the vast, open land for raising cattle. The U.S. gained control of this land in 1848, and after the Civil War, cattle herds began to spread across the western states. So, too, did the need for skilled horsemen and “cowboys” who could manage and handle livestock. Informal contests of roping and riding skills would take place from time to time, much to the delight of spectators.

The use of barbed wire to confine cattle and trains to transport them to market resulted in a marked decline for cowboys, who began searching for new sources of income. Showmen began organizing contests for these cowboys, charging admission for spectators. By 1929, the Rodeo Association of America had formed to organize and promote rodeo as a competitive sport.

Today, rodeo is an enormous industry that bears little resemblance to the vital skills of cattle ranching in the American West. With approxi-

mately 10,000 members, the largest professional rodeo association is the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). With the financial backing of corporate sponsors, such as Coca-Cola Bottling Company and Coors Brewery, the PRCA holds some 700 rodeos across the U.S., offering more than \$30 million in prize money annually. Many more rodeos are sponsored by other organizations, including the National High School Rodeo Association. Professional rodeo contestants travel year-round on the rodeo circuit. They may earn hundreds of thousands of dollars by competing in events. Sports channels often televise national competitions, bringing rodeo to millions more viewers.

Animals used in rodeos are owned and leased by **stock contractors** who charge fees to rodeo organizers for renting their animals. There are 20 PRCA-sanctioned stock contractors, located mostly in the western half of the U.S. Rodeo animals are transported, sometimes long distances, from stock contractors’ ranches to rodeo locations. Stock contractors have intense breeding programs for their top bucking bulls, with some bulls costing \$10,000 or more.

Virtually all of the cattle used in rodeo events are eventually slaughtered for human consumption. When they’re no longer able to compete, rodeo horses may also be sent to slaughter.

Rodeo Events

Rodeo is comprised of several different events. **Bronc riding** (which may take place bareback or on a saddle) involves contestants riding bucking horses. Contestants are judged on how



long they can stay on the backs of the horses. They wear sharp spurs on their boots, which they rake constantly on the horses’ necks and shoulders. Because

contestants get higher scores if horses buck wildly, leather cinches called **flank straps** (or bucking straps) are tightened around the horses' sensitive abdominal areas. The rodeo industry claims that horses in bronc-riding events buck because they are wild and want to rid themselves of their riders. In fact, the horses usually stop bucking once the flank straps are released, not when the riders are thrown.

Bull riding contestants must stay on the bulls for at least eight seconds. They are judged on



how well they coordinate their riding skills with the bull's bucking. As with other riding events,

the animal's performance contributes significantly to the score. The wilder the ride, the higher the score, so there is great incentive to encourage animals to buck. Prior to the ride, bulls are restrained in narrow chutes. Ropes are tied around their midsections and sensitive abdominal areas. Contestants often pull the ropes back and forth over the bulls' abdominal areas, rubbing the skin raw. While they're in the chutes, bulls may be shocked with electric prods to agitate them further. When the chutes are opened, the bulls run and buck. It appears that they are only trying to rid themselves of the rider when in fact they are in pain, both from the chafing ropes and from the prods.

Contestants often rake the animals with their spurs to encourage wilder bucking. Bulls also wear tight



flank straps. The rodeo industry claims that these straps "enhance the natural bucking motion of the bull" and do not cause harm.

In **calf-roping** (also called tie-down roping), contestants' scores are based on how quickly they can rope a running calf from horseback, dismount, and tie three of the calf's legs together. When the rope tightens around the running calf's neck, the animal is jerked into the air and crashes to the ground. Animal protection experts point out that on the range, the object of calf-roping was to capture and immobilize sick calves in order to give them medical treatment without causing harm. In a rodeo, however, the object is only to capture and immobilize a calf as quickly as possible. It is not uncommon for calves to be injured (or, less often, killed) during this event. A contestant's score is

not affected if a calf is injured or killed.

About Farm Animals



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Each year in the U.S., more than 9 billion animals are raised and killed for food. Most of them are found in factory farms, large-scale farming operations where great numbers of animals are kept in the smallest possible space to maximize profit. Many animal protection organizations are concerned about this use of animals for profit, as it often results in inhumane treatment of farm animals. Educate yourself about the problems associated with modern methods of farming at www.humaneteen.org. Click on "factory farms."

In **steer wrestling** (also called bulldogging), contestants on horseback chase steers (castrated bulls) out of chutes, throw themselves on top of the steers, and twist the steers' necks until they are forced to the ground. Similar events are **steer busting**, in which con-

testants pull steers off their feet with ropes, and **team steer roping**, in which two-contestant teams lasso steers' heads or horns and hind feet while pulling them in opposite directions to

bring them to the ground. Such events often result in injury to steers, but contestants are seldom, if ever, penalized.

In **barrel racing**, contestants ride quarter horses at high speeds around barrels set in patterns. There are no other animals involved. Contestants are simply scored on how fast they can complete the course.

Rodeo and the Law



In some states, rodeo is specifically exempted from animal-cruelty statutes. In most other states, farm

animals—including those used in rodeos—are not protected by anti-cruelty laws. The federal Animal Welfare Act specifically excludes rodeo animals from its protection.

Some towns have ordinances banning steer busting or specific practices, such as the use of flank straps or electric prods. Some call for certain humane standards for animals, such as having veterinarians or humane officers present at rodeo events. The town of Fort Wayne, Indiana, bans all rodeo events.

Think About It

- According to *Webster's College Dictionary*, a tradition is "the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, etc. from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice." Many activities that use or exploit animals are defended because of their cultural significance. The Iditarod, for example, is said to be a celebration of Alaska's heritage. Rodeos recall the spirit of the Old West. "It's an American tradition" is frequently offered as a justification for using animals in entertainment. Do you think that such arguments have value? Why or why not?
- Have you ever watched a rodeo on TV? Why do you think certain events, such as calf-roping, are sometimes edited not to show the animal striking

the ground or close-ups of the animals' faces?

- Why might the rodeo industry prefer the name "tie-down roping" instead of "calf-roping"?

Explore the Issues

- "A picture is worth a thousand words," as the expression goes. There are thousands of rodeo photos online; a gallery is available at www.prorodeo.com, the PRCA's official website. View the photos. Ask friends and family members to look at them as well and come to their own conclusions about the humane treatment of animals used in rodeo.

- The PRCA also has several paragraphs about its treatment of animals at www.prorodeo.com. (Click on "Animal Welfare.") The organization claims to enforce dozens of humane standards recommended by its stock contractors. Using the information provided on the website, write a letter to the PRCA with any questions or concerns you may have about the treatment of animals used in its rodeos. Be sure your letters are polite, well-written, and neat.

- Nature or nurture? Genes or flank straps? What really causes broncs and bulls to buck so wildly? Using the Internet, research stock contractors' claims that their animals have been carefully bred to buck wildly and that flank straps and spurs have little to do with their animals' performance. Do you agree with their arguments? Why or why not?

- For a social studies report, research your town or state's "rodeo culture." Some questions to research include: Does your town or state host rodeos? If so, how often? Where? What events are permitted? Which (if any) are forbidden? Is your town or state home to any rodeo contractors? Does your town or state have laws regarding rodeos? Does it have laws that might be applicable to animals used in rodeos? For state laws, you can search www.AnimalLaw.com. Many larger cities also have searchable databases of local laws, or you can call your city hall for more information.

Take Action

- Educate your classmates about the problems of the rodeo industry with The HSUS's *Bucking*

the Myth: The Cruel Reality of Rodeos video and brochure. The six-minute video is a compilation of undercover footage gathered by The HSUS at events sanctioned by the PRCA. (Be advised that the video includes graphic scenes of animal abuse.) To order *Bucking the Myth*, send \$5 to The HSUS, *Bucking the Myth*, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

- Is the rodeo coming to your town? On your

own or with your animal protection club, write to the rodeo's organizer or sponsors and ask them to reconsider hosting a rodeo. Urge the sponsors to schedule a cruelty-free event in its place. If the rodeo will still be held, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Ask people not to attend the rodeo or any other events that harm animals.

Wildlife in Entertainment

Wild animals have long held a fascination for people. Think about it: If you're like many people, you've probably never traveled to Indonesia, Africa, Australia, or Asia. Yet zoos, aquariums, circus shows, and TV have provided you countless opportunities to observe (or in the case of some marine mammals, interact with) animals from every part of the world.

Why are we so fascinated with wildlife? What are the benefits and drawbacks to this fascination? Are our interests motivated by a desire to learn, a desire to be entertained, or a complex combination of the two? In this section, we'll take a look at some of the most common ways in which wild animals are used in entertainment. This section is intended as an overview of the use of wildlife in entertainment. We encourage you to continue to learn more about wild animals in entertainment with the resources listed at the end of this guide.

[Zoos and Aquariums](#)

You would be a rare individual indeed if you never visited a zoo or an aquarium in your lifetime. Each year, more than 130 million Americans across the country visit zoos and aquariums. Many of those are schoolchildren on field trips and families with young children.

According to a 1992 survey commissioned by Sea World, 85% of people agreed with the statement, "My family enjoys going to the zoo or other places where we can see animals close up," (Roper Organization). The survey also found that 86% agreed that people are more

likely to be concerned about animals if they learn about them at zoos, aquariums, and animal parks.

So, what is your view of the zoo? If you're like many, you picture state-of-the-art naturalistic exhibits, ongoing education programs, and conservation programs that help endangered species. Animal protection experts, however,



believe this image to be a distorted one.

Currently, there are more than

2,000 animal exhibitors licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture. Fewer than 15% of those exhibitors are accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA). Today's zoos and aquariums are a varied lot, ranging from enormous facilities that spend significant resources on animal care, conservation, and education to roadside attractions (see "Roadside Attractions," p. 36). Though AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are generally of a much higher standard than non-accredited facilities, animal protection experts have noted that even reputable AZA-accredited zoos in the U.S. often contain inadequate and outdated exhibits.

[Zoo and Aquarium History](#)

The first American zoological parks and aquari-

ums were built in the late nineteenth century. While wealthy individuals enjoyed private collections of wild animals, such menageries were not usually open to the public. The notion of wild animal collections for public viewing became popular in the 1800s as large, landscaped public parks began including caged wild animals. One of America's first zoos was the Philadelphia Zoo, founded in 1874. The first aquarium was founded by Phineas T. Barnum (of Barnum and Bailey circus fame) in New York in 1856. Early aquariums were more likely to be smaller sections of public zoos. Only in the last 30 years have separate aquariums and marine parks become widespread. Between 1900 and 1949, 77 zoos and 6 aquariums were established.

Early zoos and aquariums displayed animals as “freaks” and marvels. Most animals, including

lions, bears, monkeys, and wolves, were kept in concrete, steel-barred cages with no hint of a natural habitat. Animals had little opportunity or space to engage in natural behaviors or to interact with others of their own species. Veterinary care was nonexistent. Animals frequently became ill and died as a result of inadequate housing or food.

Zoos and aquariums began to see some improvement in the mid 1900s, as animal protection



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Building a Better Zoo

Concerned about abnormal behavior brought on by boredom and stress—and complaints from zoo visitors—reputable zoos have begun to improve captive animals' lives through **environmental enrichment** programs. For example, more zoos and aquariums now recognize the social needs of animals such as gorillas, wolves, lions, and elephants and allow them to live in groups, where they can interact with others of their species.

To satisfy a natural need to roam and explore, accredited zoos are also moving away from small, barren exhibits in favor of larger, more naturalistic exhibits, complete with waterfalls, plants, trees, streams, and even snow. Using deep moats (instead of steel bars) to separate animals from people allows both zoo visitors and animals a better view. Some

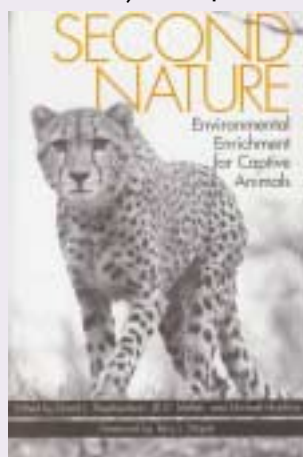
zoos have even begun piping in nature sounds—singing birds and waterfalls—for a more realistic-sounding environment. The more elaborate displays can cost millions of dollars, so they are still fairly uncommon.

Environmental enrichment programs seek to stimulate both animals' minds and bodies. Many zoos and aquariums provide toys—from rubber balls to intricate handmade creations—to expand play opportunities for animals such as monkeys, wolves, and whales. To engage animals in natural food-seeking behavior, some zoos hide food in logs or stock ponds with live fish.

To learn more about the innovative ways zoos are attempting to make a better life for captive animals, check out *Second Nature: Environmental Enrichment for Captive Animals*, edited by David Shepherdson, Jill Mellen, and Michael Hutchins (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998).



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groups raised the American public's understanding of and compassion for animals. Zoo ownership shifted from cities and towns to privately funded, nonprofit organizations. Within the reputable zoo and aquarium community, a great push was made to improve zoo conditions and the quality of animals' lives by adding more naturalistic zoo designs and enrichment programs.

Education and Conservation

It's easy to see why a visit to the zoo or aquarium would be entertaining. Who wouldn't enjoy watching wild animals up-close? For the typical American, a trip to the zoo or aquarium provides the only exposure to exotic animals such as chimpanzees, lions, flamingos, killer whales, and elephants.

But does the value of zoos and aquariums extend beyond entertainment? Most of these facilities would say yes. In fact, many pride themselves on teaching visitors about animals' natural habitats and conservation. Reputable zoos make an effort to increase people's knowledge and concern about animals. For example, they offer interpretive aids, such as signs, maps, and photos near animals' exhibits that give information about the animals' natural history and conservation concerns. Interpretive aids are relatively low-cost and allow interested visitors to learn about animals at their own pace and discretion.

In studies of visitor behavior at zoos and aquariums, however, it has been noted that many people bypass such aids, indicating that the visit to the zoo may be purely recreational. Other zoos and aquariums offer guided tours, audio tapes, and education rooms with hands-on exhibits and activities. Some have trained staff who give prepared presentations and answer questions about the animals.

To attract visitors, zoos and aquariums rely on "charismatic megafauna," including elephants, giant pandas, polar bears, whales, dolphins, giraffes, gorillas, and tigers. In aquariums, the biggest draws are usually bottlenose dolphins, belugas, and killer whales. Because baby animals are wildly popular, some zoos publicize

Education or Recreation?

Is a day at the zoo really educational or just for fun? Can visiting zoos and aquariums help inspire positive action for animals? For the latest research on zoos' effectiveness at teaching visitors about animals, read the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's *Visitor Learning in Zoos and Aquariums: A Literature Review* at www.aza.org/ConEd/VisitorLearning/.

baby animals born in their captive-breeding programs.

Zoos widely tout captive-breeding programs as a way of increasing endangered animal populations and diversifying the gene pool of certain animals. Begun in 1981, the AZA's Species Survival Plans (SSPs) are intended to save approximately 140 animal species from extinction through captive breeding, habitat preservation, and research. To maintain genetic diversity, zoos voluntarily exchange animals for breeding purposes. Giant pandas, okapis, and Bali mynahs are just a few of the animals that SSPs seek to save from extinction. Critics point out however, that few—if any—captive-bred animals are ever released into natural habitats and that zoos actually do little to preserve the wild habitats that animals so desperately need. Rather, captive-breeding programs primarily supply zoos with baby animals for display. (The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES] placed severe restrictions on acquiring certain species of animals from the wild for display purposes.)

The danger of breeding programs, oddly enough, is that they create surplus zoo animals—including species that are endangered in



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the wild. Animals from zoo captive-breeding programs are rarely introduced into their natural habitats. Most remain on display at the zoo, with baby animals as a top crowd-pleaser. But if space and resources at zoos are limited, baby animals or new, exciting animals may displace other zoo animals. The AZA publishes a newsletter, *Animal Exchange*, that advertises its animals for sale to other zoos. Some zoos, including AZA-accredited ones, may also sell their surplus zoo animals to commercial animal dealers or at animal auctions. Dealers often sell the animals to roadside zoos, private collectors, circuses, or even commercial hunting operations that hold canned hunts. In canned hunts, people pay money to kill a wild animal within an enclosed space.

Think About It

- Many of the animals offered in canned hunts have been captive-bred and raised by humans. Shooting them in an enclosed area does not present the same challenges as hunting truly wild animals in their natural habitats. Many hunters side with animal protection groups in their disapproval of canned hunts. Can you think of other

issues that might cause unlikely allies—such as hunting, fishing, and other animal welfare groups—to join forces and work together?

- Should zoos and aquariums be required to provide “cradle-to-grave” care for the animals?
- Zoos pride themselves on breeding tigers. But a main reason tigers are endangered in the wild is that they are rapidly losing their homes to deforestation. They also face constant danger from poachers. Should zoos breed animals who have no natural home to be released into?
- Do you think zoos have a responsibility to educate the public and conserve endangered species? Explain your answer.

Explore the Issues

Certain animals, most notably polar bears, whales, elephants, and gorillas, are difficult to care for. Illness, psychological distress, and premature death are not uncommon among these species in captivity. For example, one study (Clubb and Mason, 2003) found that wide-roaming carnivores, such as polar bears, have significantly worse reactions to being caged than do animals who naturally roam less.

Wolves in Zoos

Sometimes a picture can say it all. *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West*, by Eric Baratay and Elizabeth Hardoiun-Fugier (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2002) includes a photograph of San Diego



© Getty Images

Zoo’s “wolf house” in 1916. The image shows a small concrete cage with wire mesh and steel bars. The wolves inside are pacing back and forth along the bars; one stands perfectly still, gazing off into space. Captured from the wild and kept in small cages that offered them no room to roam, little or no social interaction, and no chance to exercise their minds, captive wolves were prone to abnormal behavior, such as licking and pacing.

Wolves are a good example of how early zoos failed to meet the needs of animals. In the wild, wolves are among the most social and intelligent of all mammals. They live in highly organized packs led by a dominant male and female. Wolves tend to occupy a defined territory that may be anywhere from 50 to 1,000 square miles. They spend their days hunting a wide variety of prey, from bison and elk to beavers and rabbits.

Accredited zoos have made great improvements to better accommodate the natural behavior of wolves. Enclosures are larger and more naturalistic, and wolves are more likely to be kept in social groups. Additionally, wolves are now more likely to be given opportunities to express their natural curiosity and intelligence through enrichment activities created by zoo staff.

Research and write a paper about such an animal, including its range, food, breeding and reproductive cycles, and behavior. How has the animal fared in American zoos? Suggested species for research include the tiger, polar bear, lion, orca, and dolphin.



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mals' care? Did you observe any animals displaying abnormal behavior, such as pacing, begging, or licking their cage?

- Were you able to observe any animals participating in enrichment activities? If so, describe.
- Does the facility educate visitors about its animals (e.g., signs, staff presentations, computer-based learning experiences, classes for zoo members)? If so, describe.
- Does the facility offer entertainment acts involving animals, such as sea lion/dolphin presentations, parrot tricks, or monkey shows? Describe.

- Are social animals, such as killer whales and wolves, allowed to live in groups? Are solitary animals, such as tigers, allowed to live alone?



© Corbis Images

- Do animals have spaces that allow them privacy when they do not want to be observed?
- How do other zoo/aquarium visitors behave around the animals?

You may also wish to contact the zoo's director or education outreach coordinator and request an interview. (Be sure to explain that you are a student who is working on a school or club proj-

Take Action

Does your town, county, or state have a zoo or an aquarium? On your own or with your animal protection club, do an assessment of the facility. Answer these questions:

- What is the name and address of the zoo or aquarium?
- What are its hours of operation and admission fees?
- Is the facility accredited by the AZA?
- What animal species are exhibited?
- What is your overall impression of the animal enclosures? Are most of the exhibits naturalistic and spacious? Do they attempt to mimic the animals' natural habitats in terms of plant life, space, and temperature? Are the exhibits clean?
- What is your overall impression of the ani-

Going Nowhere

All legs, neck, and eyelashes, a baby giraffe named Michael was a popular attraction at Washington, DC's National Zoo. But when he was 11-months-old, the zoo no longer needed Michael—they already had enough giraffes. The National Zoo sold Michael to a licensed animal dealer who sells exotic animals to auctions and commercial hunting operations. The dealer sold Michael to the owner of a roadside zoo. Michael lived just 16 short months before his neck was broken by another giraffe at Sipp's Animal Kingdom Zoo in New Jersey.

How is it possible that an AZA-accredited facility could allow its animals to end up this way? In *Animal Underworld: Inside America's Black Market for Rare and Exotic Species* (New York: PublicAffairs, 1999), Alan Green and the Center for Public Integrity explore the disturbing ways in which wild animals are bought and sold—including endangered species from zoos. Intensively researched and well-documented, this 286-page book belongs on the shelf of every concerned animal advocate.



The American Zoo and Aquarium Association

Founded in 1924, the AZA is a nonprofit membership organization that has established standards for animal care at zoos and aquariums and a code of professional ethics. The AZA's website, www.aza.org, lists its accredited zoos and aquariums. It also includes the AZA's Code of Ethics, policies regarding the acquisition and disposition of animals, research into the role of zoos in conservation education, and information about its conservation and science projects and programs, including Suitcase for Survival—a joint project of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the World Wildlife Fund, and the AZA that teaches middle-school students about the illegal wildlife trade.

ect.) The following are some tough questions you may wish to ask, if the director is open to discussing them. During your conversation, remain polite and open-minded. Remember to thank the director for his or her time.

- Where are the animals in this facility acquired?
- Does this facility have a captive-breeding program? If so, what have been the results? Where do the baby animals go? Do they displace other zoo animals? If so, where do the older animals go?
- What happens to animals when they are too old or sick to be displayed?
- If the facility offers entertainment acts, what educational value does the director believe such acts have?

A Home to Roam

The largest land-dwelling carnivores on Earth, polar bears roam a natural range averaging about 31,000 square miles. Typical zoo enclosures for polar bears are about one-millionth the size of their normal home range. Not surprisingly, captive polar bears often exhibit abnormal behaviors, especially pacing. Clubb and Mason's study showed that captive polar bears have an average 65% infant death rate and spend approximately 25% of their time pacing, much more than animals who roam less widely. In the past ten years, some British zoos have stopped replacing polar bears when they die because of their erratic behavior in captivity and because breeding them is so difficult.

- What role does the zoo play in conservation of animals' natural habitats? For example, what percentage of its admission fee benefits conservation groups? Does the facility fund research into helping endangered animals survive in their natural habitats? Has the facility ever released animals into the wild?

Once you have determined the answers to these questions, write up an assessment of the zoo or aquarium, along with any concerns or recommendations you have for improvement. Send your assessment to HumaneTeen at humaneteen@nahee.org, your local newspaper, or your school newspaper for possible publication.

Swim-With-The-Dolphin Programs and Petting Pools

Playful, vocal, and highly intelligent, dolphins—with their built-in smile—have long held a fascination for humans. Capitalizing on this natural appeal, an increasing number of marine parks promise visitors an unforgettable experience: a chance to pet, feed, and swim with the dolphins.

The National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that more than 40,000 people swam with captive dolphins (almost always bottlenose dolphins) in the U.S. in 1990 alone. That number has risen dramatically in the last decade, and the U.S. now has more than a dozen swim-with-the-dolphins (SWTD) facilities. SWTD facilities allow visitors to interact with dolphins in environments ranging from sea pens in tropical waters (as with several facilities in the Caribbean) to concrete tanks. The average price for a half-hour session is about \$100, and



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many SWTD programs offer participants videotapes and photos of their experience.

SWTD proponents believe that these programs offer educational, recreational, and therapeutic benefits. They argue that the experience may inspire people to help dolphins in their natural homes, such as by supporting legislation for dolphin-safe tuna. Several facilities allow swimmers as young as ten years old to participate, and some offer “dolphin-assisted therapy” for people with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, cancer, head and spinal injuries, or autism. However, there is no evidence to suggest that interacting with dolphins has any greater therapeutic effect than interacting with domesticated animals such as cats, dogs, or farm animals.

Some marine parks, such as Sea World, also offer marine mammal feeding and petting pools. These exhibits allow people continuous access to a pool’s edge, where they can lean over the edge of a pool to touch and feed dolphins, sea lions, and belugas (white whales). Typically, people purchase fish from a nearby booth to feed to the animals. Proponents of SWTD and feeding and petting pools say that close contact with the animals provides a unique learning experience that may encourage people to care more about marine animal conservation. Critics charge that such programs unrealistically portray wild animals as friendly and docile. They say that SWTD programs and feeding and petting pools teach participants that feeding or touching wild animals is safe.

There have been serious problems with SWTD programs and feeding and petting pools. Captive dolphins can become submissive, agitated, or sexually aggressive under the stress of forced interaction with humans. SWTD programs have reported serious injuries to humans, including lacerations, tooth rakes, internal injuries, bro-

ken bones, bites, and shock. Marine mammals are also known to carry disease-causing pathogens that can be transmitted to people. In addition, dolphins may be exposed to human bacterial and viral infections. Dolphins used in such programs are also prone to stress-related health problems, including ulcers. Additionally, marine mammals used in interactive programs may suffer from a lack of refuge, inappropriate handling by visitors, swallowing foreign objects (such as watches or jewelry), obesity (from visitors feeding them too many fish), and exposure to injury from other animals who are aggressively competing for handouts from people.

Wild Animals in Entertainment and the Law

The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is a set of laws intended to govern the handling, treatment, and transportation of wild animals (mammals only) in entertainment and public displays. Under the AWA, anyone who publicly displays wild animals or conducts wild animal performances must be licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and must comply with AWA regulations. Businesses that are required to have such a license include circuses, marine mammal shows, amusement parks, carnivals, independent animal acts, television shows, movies, and educational exhibits.

The AWA is an important set of laws for animals; however, laws are useful only if they are enforced. Animal protectionists point out that enforcement of the AWA is minimal and that violations of the AWA are rarely, or lightly, punished. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the division of the USDA that is responsible for enforcing the AWA, is underfunded and understaffed. They simply do not have enough inspectors to cover thousands of animal exhibits.

You can read the Animal Welfare Act at www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/usda1.htm. This site includes PDFs of all the AWA’s standards, regulations, and definitions of terms as they apply to animals in entertainment.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) lost its regulatory authority over swim-with-the-dolphin programs in 1994; APHIS now has sole jurisdiction over them. The AWA sets forth standards for SWTD programs, outlining specific standards for housing, feeding, sanitation, water quality, and space requirements for marine mammals. It also calls for protection of these animals from abuse and harassment by the viewing public. Marine mammals in feeding and petting pools, however, are excluded from its protection. Animal protection groups are working to change this.

Think About It

- Do you think that SWTD programs and petting pools can foster kindness, respect, and positive action on behalf of animals? If so, do you believe the advantages of such programs outweigh the disadvantages or risks? Explain.
- Why, do you think, are so many people particularly interested in whales and dolphins?

Explore the Issues

- In 1972, Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to protect marine mammals. This law is the basis for policies pre-

She's on Their Side

Meet Naomi Rose, The HSUS's marine mammal expert. She's a marine biologist who has made helping marine mammals her number-one goal.

How did you become interested in a career in marine mammal protection? I watched Jacques Cousteau TV specials! I saw one about dolphins when I was 13 and was determined from then on to study marine mammals. I took extracurricular and summer school courses and read a lot to make sure I would be accepted at a good college.

While I was in graduate school, I became less interested in teaching and research and increasingly concerned about the state of the world's oceans. I decided in my last two years of school that I wanted to pursue a career in marine mammal protection advocacy.

Tell us about your career with The HSUS. I joined The HSUS in May 1993. I have a B.A. in biology and French from Mount Holyoke College and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz. My dissertation was on the social dynamics of wild killer whales (orcas) in British Columbia. I also studied northern elephant seals, Australian sea lions, and spinner dolphins.

What are some marine mammal issues that really concern you? One is the increase in swim-with-the-dolphin programs around the world, especially in the Caribbean and Asia. These programs worry me because they encourage the worst kind of "love" for animals there is—a selfish, invasive love that doesn't make the needs of animals a top priority. Such programs teach people all the wrong things. They also are often stocked with wild-caught animals, meaning captures of wild dolphins for the marine park industry are on the rise worldwide.

I'm also really concerned with the growing threat of human-caused noise in the oceans. Marine mammals and other marine life perceive their world through sound. Their hearing is far more important than their vision, as light is quickly absorbed in the ocean's depths but sound is conducted very well. Military sonars, especially mid- and low-frequency sonars, operate at frequencies used by many whales and other marine mammals for communication. These sonars may disrupt animals' communication, displace animals from preferred areas, and damage hearing and body organs. Other human-made sounds, such as airgun blasts from industries searching for oil and gas below the ocean bottom and the loud rumble of ships, may also negatively impact marine mammals. In short, the ocean is becoming increasingly noisy.

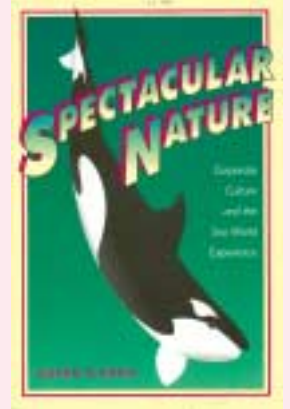
How can teens help marine mammals used in entertainment? Don't visit marine parks, and ask your friends and family not to either! Speak up. Write letters to marine parks such as Sea World and tell them you object to the use of wildlife in entertainment. Contact companies that sponsor or support marine parks and let them know about your concerns.



Courtesy of N. Rose

Inside Sea World

Kiddie rides, movies, fast-food restaurants, stories...and Shamu? Busch Entertainment Corporation owns the Sea World chain of marine theme parks, which combine marine mammal displays with ocean-themed entertainment. In her book *Spectacular Nature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), anthropologist Susan G. Davis takes an unbiased, behind-the-scenes look at San Diego's Sea World, how it presents and treats its animals, and how the theme parks help shape America's perceptions of marine wildlife. Fascinating and frequently surprising, this 313-page book is a must-read for those interested in marine theme parks and animal welfare. You may wish to compare the book's arguments with Sea World's contentions at www.seaworld.org.



venting the harassment, capture, injury, or killing of whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions, as well as walruses, manatees, dugongs, sea otters, and polar bears. The primary government agency responsible for enforcing the MMPA is the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Under the

MMPA, NMFS is responsible for the management and conservation of *cetaceans* (whales and dolphins) and *pinnipeds* (seals and sea lions) other than the walrus. (Walruses, manatees, dugongs, sea otters, and polar bears are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.) Read the MMPA in its entirety at www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

- The HSUS and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society have studied Sea World's dolphin petting pools since 1996. Based on more than 30 unannounced visits and 72 hours of video, the organizations have published an investigative report. *Biting the Hand that Feeds: The Case Against Dolphin Petting Pools* takes an in-depth look at dolphin petting pools, the hazards they present to both humans and dolphins, and what you can do to help. To read the

report, go to www.wdcs.org and click on "Captivity Campaigns."

- Many critics believe that dolphins are completely unsuited to SWTD programs. In the wild, dolphins may travel long distances each day, dive several hundred feet, and stay underwater for ten or twenty minutes at a time. They spend only 10-20% of their time at the water's surface. Dolphins naturally live in large groups, called pods, often in tight family units. Social bonds may last for years or span a lifetime. SWTD programs, critics say, violate all of these natural needs and behaviors.

Do you think that there are some animals who simply should not be kept in aquariums? For English, debate, science, or ethics class, write an opinion piece. Based on their natural history, decide if you think it is morally acceptable to keep dolphins, belugas, killer whales, or polar bears (choose one) in confinement.

Take Action

- Through admission fees, merchandise, and concessions purchases, visitors support *all* of an aquarium or marine park's efforts—even if they don't agree with all of them. If you are opposed to SWTD programs or marine mammal feeding or petting pools, do not patronize facilities that offer them. Urge your friends and families to avoid them as well and to spend their money and time on activities that do not exploit or harm animals.
- Planning a vacation in the Caribbean or the South Pacific? These tourist regions have seen

an explosion in the growth of SWTD programs. There are several programs in the Bahamas and other resort areas around the world.



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SWTD programs outside the U.S. are rarely regulated, and conditions for dolphins are usually poor. For example, the Dolphin Quest program in Tahiti originally held two wild-caught, rough-toothed dolphins (a deep-water species) in a shallow lagoon. Other noted problems have included the mistreatment of pregnant dolphins, small, inadequate tanks, feeding dolphins rotten fish, and dolphins suffering from disease and starvation.

Most foreign facilities capture their dolphins directly from the wild. The capture itself is highly traumatic for wild dolphins and can cause a potentially fatal condition known as capture stress or capture myopathy. In addition, the status of the populations from which dolphins are captured is often unknown; the removal of even a few individuals may have negative impacts on the pod members left behind.

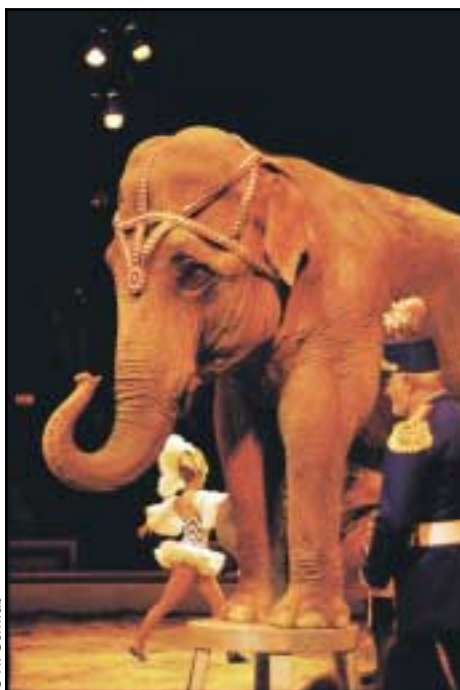
When you're on vacation, don't visit places with SWTD facilities. Choose to spend your tourism dollars at places and events that don't

exploit or harm animals.

Think About It

Do you think Americans would support an increase in their taxes to support stronger enforcement of the AWA? Why or why not?

Circuses



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Peanuts and popcorn, acrobats and elephants, clowns and crowds. Circuses have been around in various shapes and sizes since the time of the ancient Romans, whose Circus Maximus featured chari-

ot races, acrobatics, shows of horsemanship, and competitions between people and wild animals.

In the U.S., showmen and their caged wildlife

Roadside Attractions

The discussion of zoos and aquariums in this guide has mostly centered on large, AZA-accredited facilities. However, it's important to note that thousands of small-time acts (often called roadside zoos, menageries, and petting zoos) comprise the majority of captive wild animals. Chained dancing bears are used to lure people to shopping malls. Zebras, pythons, and penguins travel in small trailers to county fairs. Elephants and camels give rides to small children at carnivals and fundraisers. Roadside attractions have no educational or conservation goals and exist only for human entertainment and profit.

Although all wild animal exhibitors are required by law to be licensed by the USDA, many roadside attraction operators are not licensed. Their animals are usually worked without concern for their welfare. Evidence of dirty cages, inadequate food and veterinary care, and substandard travel conditions are well-documented. Additionally, roadside acts pose a threat to human safety, as wild animals behave unpredictably in captivity.



began traveling to rural communities in the late 1700s. Without television, movies, Internet, video games, radio, or other modern entertainment that we take for granted, circus shows were highly anticipated and extremely popular forms of entertainment.

The first official American circus is usually attributed to John Bill Rickets, who employed acrobats, clowns, and skilled horsemen in a ring in Philadelphia in 1793. In the 1800s, wild animals in “traveling menageries” drew crowds along railway lines as circus animals were transported from town to town in railcars.

By 1852, there were approximately 30 circuses traveling across the U.S. They featured the usual assortment of clowns, acrobats, and people with physical anomalies, billed as “freaks.” Elephants and lions were presented as dangerous, fierce, and cruel—spectacles to be gawked at, feared, and admired for their strangeness. P.T. Barnum’s “The Greatest Show on Earth” featured an elephant named Jumbo, a favorite attraction. In the early 1900s, the Ringling Brothers purchased the Barnum and Bailey Circus. The business became the country’s largest circus, with more than 1,000 employees and 335 horses. Their wild animal collection included 26 elephants and 16 camels, all of whom traveled in decorated railroad cars.

Without employees to work at circuses or families to visit them, the circus industry declined during World Wars I and II, when thousands of men were called to serve in the military and the nation’s attention took a more serious turn. The circus began making its transition from outdoor, tent-covered events to indoor arenas in the 1960s.

Though they have never quite recovered their former glory, circuses are still well-attended—especially among families with young children—and wildlife acts are still the biggest draw. Approximately 30 circuses continue to travel throughout the U.S. Some of the best known are Ringling Bros./Barnum and Bailey and the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus.

Animals in Circuses

Wild animals most commonly used in circuses



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are elephants, tigers, lions, chimpanzees, and bears. Some have

been captured from their wild homes. Others are surplus animals from zoos, other circuses, roadside attractions, or private breeders or collectors. Some animals, owned by dealers, are rented out from circus to circus. Circuses, including Ringling Bros., inform the public that all of their animals are bred in captivity, but many circus elephants have been taken from the wild.

Wild animals in circuses are required to perform in ways that are not natural to them, such as balancing on stools, interacting with other wild animals, jumping through hoops of fire, riding bicycles, or playing with balls. Trainers usually claim that they use only positive reinforcement, such as food rewards and verbal praise. They often profess a deep love and respect for their animals. However, animal protection groups—including The HSUS, which has monitored circuses for 20 years—have documented numerous examples of abusive training methods and poor living conditions for circus animals. To achieve a position of dominance over their animals, trainers often use physical punishment. This includes beating animals with clubs, baseball bats, and other objects (even during performances), depriving them of food to weaken them, whipping them, shocking them with electric prods, or poking them with bullhooks. Punishment causes circus animals to be in a constant state of fear and submission to their trainers, who must maintain as much control as possible. Despite this training, wild animals will always behave in instinctive and unpredictable ways and can never be made willing or safely manageable.

Between performances, circus animals are transported in small cages and shipped long

distances, often without heat or air conditioning. They are often deprived of food or water for extended periods. Elephants are usually chained to prevent them from injuring people; other animals may be muzzled. Circus animals are unable to engage in even the most basic natural behaviors. As a result, health problems, death, and psychological problems brought about by stressful living conditions are common. Because the primary goal of a circus is to make a profit, expenses are cut wherever possible. Proper veterinary care, food, adequate caging and transportation accommodations for animals, and skilled employees are often lacking because they would cut into a circus operator's profits. Animals who aren't obedient or who have grown too old to perform are sold or given to roadside attractions, research laboratories, or private individuals—options unlikely to improve their quality of life. Only a lucky few make it to a qualified, caring sanctuary (see "A Safe Place for Animals?" page 39).

Harmful to Humans?

Touted as safe fun for the whole family, circuses have a questionable safety record for people. It is not uncommon for people to be injured by circus animals. In Honolulu in 1995, an elephant named Tyke killed a circus employee, injured another, and charged through an audience before being shot to death on a city street. In 1990, a chimpanzee abandoned his motorcycle act, rushed into the stands, and bit a child. In 1994, a baby elephant named Mickey was beaten during a performance. A month later, during another performance, Mickey attacked a child. Experienced trainers are not immune to attacks by wild animals. In 2003, veteran trainer Roy Horn, of Siegfried & Roy fame, was critically mauled by a six-year-old tiger named Montecore. These are just a few incidents illustrating the danger associated with performing wildlife. Up-to-date listings of human injuries by captive wildlife, including animals used in circuses, are available at www.hsus.org and www.circuses.com.

circus's animals have been bred in captivity or taken from the wild? Why or why not?

- Do circuses have any educational value? Explain your answer.
- Elephants are considered one of the most intelligent animals. Is it acceptable to keep them captive and require them to perform tricks? Should an animal's intelligence play a role in how he or she is treated? Why or why not?

Explore the Issues

- With fewer than 35,000 remaining in the wild, Asian elephants are endangered. Their biggest threat?

Habitat loss. As people encroach on their land, elephants may not be able to

survive. Many circuses claim that they help endangered species. By endearing wild animals to the public, they say, they encourage people to care about and help conserve these species.

Feld Entertainment, the corporate parent of Ringling Bros./Barnum and Bailey Circus, has established a Center for Elephant Conservation (CEC). Located in Polk City, Florida, the 200-acre facility has dozens of Asian elephants. Ringling Bros. has the largest captive group of Asian elephants outside of their natural habitat. At this elephant breeding facility, at least 15 elephants have been born since 1992, more than anywhere else in North America. The CEC also provides financial support for injured captive elephants in Asia. Ringling Bros./Barnum and Bailey also helped found the International Elephant Foundation, which claims to improve care of captive elephants in Asia and Africa.

Animal protection advocates point out that breeding elephants who will always remain in captivity (many will go on to perform in Ringling Bros.' circuses) has no effect on helping wild elephants survive. They claim that the



Think About It

- Do you think it makes a difference whether a

CEC's main purpose is to give circuses a ready supply of performing elephants, since the Endangered Species Act forbids capture and importation of wild elephants for circuses. Further, they say by displaying bears as tricycle-riding buffoons and dressing elephants in tutus, circuses present animals as creatures whose purpose is to amuse us.

What is your opinion on this? Does Ringling's CEC truly help wild animals? Write a research paper exploring both sides of the issue (information is readily available on the Internet). You may wish to contact Ringling Bros./Barnum and Bailey at (703) 448-4000 or visit www.ringling.com. Consider interviewing someone from an animal protection organization for your paper.

- Despite claims that their animals receive top-notch care, numerous published reports and documented evidence prove that circuses are in frequent violation of the Animal Welfare Act. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) maintains an ongoing log of circus violations. To view each circus's record, go to www.circuses.com and click on "Factsheets."

- Thanks to their image as a safe, fun-filled, family event, circuses are a favorite theme in children's books and movies.

One classic example to study is Walt Disney's *Dumbo*. Many contemporary children's TV characters, such as Dora the Explorer, Barney, and Clifford the Big Red Dog, often include circus-themed books or movies in their collections. A simple Internet search or visit to your local children's library will reveal many circus-related children's media. What messages about animals do such books and films send to children? What are their objectives? How does the film or book portray wild animals? Does it pay tribute to circus history? If so, how?

Write a critical essay about the portrayal of circuses and wild animals in children's media.

Take Action

- Is the circus coming to your town? Contact the event's sponsor (for example, a shopping mall or recreation center) and explain the animal welfare and human safety issues involved with animal circuses. Suggest an animal-free

A Safe Place for Animals?

Some "retired" circus animals find their way to sanctuaries where they are treated well for the rest of their days. However, several operations that call themselves sanctuaries are anything but. These places are often run by dealers who sell or lease animals to the entertainment industry, private collectors, or roadside attractions. Animals are simply a vehicle for making money; their treatment is a distant second to turning a profit. How can you tell if a wildlife sanctuary is reputable? Here are some things to look for.

- Animals are never bred, sold, or used in any commercial activity, including entertainment.
- Animals are not on public display.
- The sanctuary maintains all required licenses and permits.
- The sanctuary maintains rigorous animal care standards.
- The sanctuary provides community education about how issues affect animals and discourages people from keeping wild animals as pets, since many sanctuary animals are those whose former "owners" could no longer handle them.

The Association of Sanctuaries lists its expectations and code of ethics at www.taosanctuaries.org. The site also includes an alphabetical listing of accredited sanctuaries. If an accredited facility is located near you, consider volunteering there or holding fundraisers to support its efforts.



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event instead. There are many entertaining, intelligent, and safe alternatives. As the public becomes more informed about the negative side of traditional animal circuses, more clubs, charities, and schools are choosing to sponsor cruelty-free entertainment for their events. For listings of animal-free circuses, visit

www.hsus.org or www.circuses.com.

- If a circus is planned in your community and you are unable to sway organizers to host an animal-free circus, mount a public awareness campaign about the problems associated with circuses. For ideas, tips, strategies, videos, and sample letters, visit www.hsus.org. (Enter “circus” in the search engine.)

Circuses and the Law

In order to provide explicit protection and prevent specific kinds of unsafe or cruel treatment, local governments have enacted ordinances regulating the treatment of wild animals in circuses. State laws can and should address this issue as well. Deliberately cruel treatment of circus animals should be considered a violation of a state’s anti-cruelty statute. Unfortunately, USDA-licensed operations in a handful of states are exempt from anti-cruelty statutes, despite the fact that the USDA itself states that its licensed facilities should be governed by state anti-cruelty laws. In at least two states, anti-cruelty statutes exempt circus animals from protection. In those states, deliberate mistreatment of circus animals is nearly impossible to prosecute.

As more people learn about how circus animals are treated, some communities are beginning to change their laws. For example, Hollywood, Florida, forbids the display of vertebrate animals for entertainment or amusement on public property and closely regulates their display on private property. Revere, Massachusetts, allows no display of wild animals for public amusement or entertainment on city property and prohibits

such animals from being either forced to live separated from their own species or publicly exploited. Quincy, Massachusetts, prohibits the use of wild animals in circuses, carnivals, and competitive races altogether. Fairfax County, Virginia, regulates all traveling animal exhibitions, whether or not the animals perform. The county also requires that captive wild animals be provided with adequate food, water, shelter, space, veterinary attention, and humane care.



After a circus elephant killed a trainer in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1994, the city introduced an

ordinance banning circuses and other traveling shows from bringing wild animals into Honolulu city or county. A New Hampshire bill introduced in 1995 would have banned the use of all wild animals in circuses. Neither of those bills was passed.

The HSUS recommends two different legislative approaches. In the first, the community bans acts that engage wild animals in unnatural behaviors (such as a lion jumping through a fiery hoop) or acts in which the animals are wrestled, fought, mentally or physically harassed, or displayed in a manner that causes them mental or physical stress. In the second approach, the community bans the use of all wild animals in circuses unless an ordinance is in place to ensure the health and safety of the citizens and the humane treatment of the animals. The HSUS recommends that legislation apply not only to wild animals in circuses but also to those in zoos, carnivals, roadside zoos, and other animal exhibits.

Animals in Media

In addition to circuses, gambling ventures, and public displays, animals are common figures in media, from television and movies to books and magazines. The media can have an enormous influence—good or bad—on the public's perception of animals. For example, the 1975 movie *Jaws*, directed by Steven Spielberg, featured a terrifying great white shark who preyed on swimmers. The film has been said to have done more damage to sharks' public image than anything before or since. (The author of *Jaws*, Peter Benchley, has since written a book and spoken about the positive attributes of sharks.) *Benji*, released in 1974, featured the antics of a lovable mutt. The film's creator, Joe Camp, adopted the film's star from an animal shelter, which led to an increased public awareness of animals up for adoption.

In recognition of the important role the media play in shaping the ways society views and treats animals, The HSUS Hollywood Office promotes and monitors coverage of animal issues. It seeks to motivate the major media to educate the public and stop cruelty to animals. The HSUS Hollywood Office offers the Genesis Awards to pay tribute to major news and entertainment media, such as newspaper features, magazine articles, movies, and television commercials for producing outstanding works that raise public awareness of animal issues. For a list of the most recent Genesis Award winners or to learn how you can nominate a work, visit the HSUS Hollywood Office at www.hsus.org.

Think About It

What were your favorite books or movies as a child? Did animals play a significant role in them?

Explore the Issues

Bambi, *Air Bud*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Free Willy*, *The Black Stallion*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *Curious George*, *Spirit*. In the "Think About It" above, we asked you to recall animal-themed children's

books or movies. Choose a total of five books and movies about animals that you enjoyed as a child. Write a paper for English class that analyzes the way animals are portrayed in those books or movies. Questions to explore in your paper include:

- Is the animal's portrayal realistic, or is it **anthropomorphic** (made to appear human, such as by making the animal talk or wear clothing)?
- Does the work portray animals in a positive or negative light?
- Did the work influence your perception of animals in any way? Does the work have any humane messages? If so, explain.

Take Action

In "Think About It" on page 1, we asked your opinions about animals in entertainment. Now that you have read this study and activity guide, have any of your opinions changed? Let us know. Write to humaneteen@nahee.org.

Conclusion

Thanks to animal activists and groups of concerned citizens, great progress has been made in helping improve the treatment of animals used in entertainment. Many zoos and aquariums now provide more comfortable, naturalistic



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homes and enrichment activities for their animals. Dedicated rescue groups have found homes for thousands of greyhounds and racehorses. As people have learned the facts behind rodeos and circuses, they've put laws in place to stop those events from coming to their

towns. Teens have been an important part of these efforts, whether by cancelling a donkey

basketball event, fostering greyhounds, speaking out against the Iditarod, or educating communities about the dangers of dogfighting.

Now that you've read *Animals in Entertainment*, you've taken an important step toward ensuring more humane treatment of animals in circuses, rodeos, zoos, and other forms of entertainment. By educating yourself about the issues surround-

ing animals in entertainment, you can make better choices for animals—choices that reflect compassion and respect. We encourage you to continue to learn more about animals and ways you can help them. A list of resources follows.

To learn more about teens who are working hard to help animals in their community and beyond, please visit www.humaneteen.org.

RESOURCES

As you seek to learn more about the use of animals in entertainment, we encourage you to examine both sides of the issues. To that end, following are animal entertainment businesses and organizations that support the industry as well as those who oppose it.

INTERNET

American Greyhound Track Owners Association, www.agtoa.com

American Humane, www.americanhumane.org

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, www.asPCA.org

American Zoo and Aquarium Association, www.aza.org

CircusWeb, www.circusweb.com

Grey2K, www.grey2k.org

Greyhound Protection League, www.greyhounds.org

Greyhound Racing Association of America, www.gra-america.org

The Humane Society of the United States, www.hsus.org

HumaneTeen, www.humaneteen.org

Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, www.iditarod.com

International Institute for Animal Law, www.AnimalLaw.com

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, www.mspca.org

National Greyhound Association, www.ngagreyhounds.com

National Professional Rodeo Association, www.npra.com

National Thoroughbred Racing Association, www.ntra.com

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, www.petaonline.com

Performing Animals Welfare Society, www.pawsweb.org

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, www.ringling.com

Sled Dog Action Coalition, www.helpsleddogs.org

Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine Surveys, www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/Surveys

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www.humaneteen.org

An Animal Protection Site for Students

What are the latest campaigns, trends, and resources in animal protection? How can you contribute your voice to the issues? What are other teens doing to help animals in their communities?

The answers to these and other questions are right at your fingertips, at www.humaneteen.org. Maintained by The HSUS Youth Education Affiliate, this site provides:

✓ contests, campaigns, crime-solving opportunities, and other quick ways you can get involved and make a difference for animals

✓ tips for starting your own animal protection club

✓ articles about student clubs and teen activists who are leaders in helping animals



✓ teens' thoughts and opinions

✓ our guide to the most current animal protection/ environmental websites

✓ information on everything from videos and books to petitions and summer camps

✓ resources to help you spread the word about respect and compassion for animals

✓ message boards where you can chat with other teens about animal issues

✓ a monthly survey of teens' opinions on animal protection issues—cast your vote and see how many people agree with you

✓ our annual award recognizes a teen who's made a significant contribution to animal protection

✓ study guides about important topics like animal cruelty, hunting, and factory farming—fact-packed and perfect for school reports

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I believe this study and activity guide was effective at teaching me about the humane treatment of animals in entertainment. ☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ disagree

After reading this study and activity guide, I am more likely to undertake an activity that will help animals used in entertainment. ☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ disagree

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