



NEWS & LEGISLATION BRIEFS August 2, 2011

Dear SAOVA Friends,

Through the end of this year we will be working to expand the Resource and News sections on the SAOVA website. Additional research tools, commentaries, studies, and data on animal rights groups will be linked for your use.

Animal rights activists never sleep. In the midst of the intense Congressional debates and negotiations to avert an economic crisis, two more House Representatives, Kathy Castor (D-FL) and Colleen (D-HI) found time on August 1st to sign on to the HSUS federal PUPS bill.

Last summer Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) attended the National Summit of State Legislators in Kentucky promoting animal protection laws. Emphasis at this summit was on animal abuser registries. Louisiana State Rep. Walker Hines (D-95), a 2010 registry bill sponsor, is pictured on ALDF's blog next to a campaign poster. ALDF blogs: ALDF has been proud to provide him with direct research assistance and support. As a result of the increased campaign efforts, forty-one registry bills were introduced 2010-2011 compared to two introduced in 2009.

The world not only belongs to those who show up, it's controlled by the best informed and most motivated. Thanks for reading.

As always, we encourage cross posting of these messages.

Susan Wolf

Sportsmen's & Animal Owners' Voting Alliance

Issue lobbying and working to identify and elect supportive legislators

HR 835 / S 707 PUPPY UNIFORM PROTECTION AND SAFETY ACT (PUPS) 2011

SAOVA continues to monitor the PUPS bill introduced by Rep Gerlach, Jim [PA-6]; analysis is posted on the website: <http://www.saova.org/PUPS2011.html> . At the end of the 111th Congress, the 2010 PUPS bill had 150 House cosponsors; the current version has 115 cosponsors. For the most part, the usual suspects have signed on: 86 cosponsors (74%) scored 80 or better on HSUS/HSLF scorecards. 35% of the cosponsors are from California and New York. What is troubling is that ten of the cosponsors are newly elected: Lou Barletta (R, PA-11); David Cicilline (D, RI-1) ; Hansen Clarke (D-MI-13); Michael Fitzpatrick (R, PA-8); Michael Grimm (R, NY-13); Colleen Hanabusa (D, HI-1); Bill Johnson (R, OH-6); William Keating (D, MA-10); Patrick Meehan (R, PA-7); Allen West (R, FL-22).

The decade-long history of HSUS bills preceding PUPS is chronicled on the SAOVA website beginning with the Puppy Protection Act of 2001 <http://saova.org/PPA2001.html>. PUPS is certainly not new, and is not a final product for dog breeder regulation that will satisfy HSUS in its efforts to cripple and eliminate purposeful breeding of purebred dogs. Write to your Congressman and oppose PUPS and its costly expansion of Federal government. There is no substantive evidence to prove that expansion of the existing AWA will improve animal welfare to a higher level than properly enforcing current regulations and licensing those kennels operating commercially without USDA licensure.

SCIENTIST WHO REPORTED POLAR BEARS DROWNING IS SUSPENDED

A U.S. government wildlife biologist whose work contributed to the listing of polar bears as a threatened species has been suspended, according to a group that supports government scientists.

Charles Monnett, a researcher in Anchorage with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, was placed on paid administrative leave July 18 while the Interior Department's inspector general investigates "integrity issues," according to a copy of the suspension order provided by Washington-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility or PEER. Monnett is overseeing several scientific studies that would affect decisions on permits for oil and gas development, according to PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch. The group filed a misconduct complaint today against government officials on Monnett's behalf.

"All of the scientific contracts previously managed by Mr. Monnett are being managed by the highly qualified scientists at BOEMRE," agency spokeswoman Melissa Schwartz said today in an e-mail. Monnett's suspension was reported earlier today by the Associated Press.

In 2006, Monnett and a colleague reported observations of polar bears drowning in open waters following a storm. The paper, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Polar Biology*, was cited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its 2008 decision to list the polar bear as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. President George W. Bush's administration cited the effect of global warming on the projected decline in sea ice that polar bears depend on for survival. Full story at Bloomberg: <http://tinyurl.com/4y9rjjm>

CLOSING OF U.S. HORSE SLAUGHTER PLANTS STILL REVERBERATES

According to the GAO report: All of the 17 state veterinarians who were surveyed said that horse welfare in their states had generally declined, as evidenced by a reported increase in cases of horse abandonment and neglect.

JAVMA News. August 15, 2011. By Melinda Larkin. After four years without domestic horse slaughter facilities in operation and a thorough study of the results,

one thing is clear: the same number of horses from the United States, if not more, are being killed for their meat every year.

According to a recently released report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the plant closures have shifted the slaughter horse market to Canada and Mexico and driven down the sale prices of lower-grade horses. They've also worsened an already bad welfare situation by forcing horses to travel long distances to slaughter, often in unregulated trips.

Since fiscal year 2006, Congress has annually prohibited the use of federal funds to inspect horses destined for food, effectively halting domestic slaughter. With the cessation of domestic slaughter in 2007, Congress directed the GAO to examine horse welfare.

The organization's 68-page report, "Horse Welfare: Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences from Cessation of Domestic Slaughter," came out June 22, more than a year after its scheduled release date (see *JAVMA*, Nov. 1, 2009, page 1026).

The GAO examined the effects, if any, of the plants' closures on the U.S. horse market; the impact of such market changes on horse welfare and on states, local governments, tribes, and animal welfare organizations; and the challenges, if any, to the Department of Agriculture's oversight of the transport and welfare of U.S. horses exported for slaughter.

From its analysis, the GAO recommended that Congress reconsider restrictions on the use of federal funds to inspect horses for slaughter or institute a permanent ban on horse slaughter in the U.S. Further, the agency recommended that the USDA issue a final rule to protect horses during more of the transportation chain to slaughter, and consider ways to better leverage resources for compliance activities.

Worsening horse welfare

According to the GAO, from 2006 through 2010, the number of horses exported from the U.S. to Canada for slaughter increased by 148 percent and the number exported to Mexico increased by 660 percent. As a result, nearly the same number of U.S. horses were transported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter in 2010—almost 138,000—as were slaughtered before domestic slaughter ceased in 2007. For reference, 104,899 horses were slaughtered in 2006, the last full year of domestic slaughtering operations, according to the report. Full article at *JAVMA*. <http://tinyurl.com/3omo5g7>

BANNING AGRICULTURAL ANTIBIOTIC USE IS A FALSE SOLUTION.

By Nevil Speer, PhD, MBA

There's a lot of misinformation out there among the general public about food and food production. And a lot of that can be shaken off and we move forward in a

constructive manner. But if there's one issue where agriculture really takes it on the chin it's about the use of antibiotics in livestock.

That's not surprising; when two critically-important, complex issues come together into the crucible there's potential for lots of misdirection. That's unfortunate, though, because the judicious use of antibiotics (or lack thereof) and potential for antibiotic resistance is a matter of public health – it touches us all in some form or fashion. That importance underscores the necessity of having genuine, science-based discussion around the issue. Smoke and mirrors won't suffice. Nonetheless, the issue has come to the forefront in recent months.

First, there was the lawsuit filed by a coalition of public interest groups. The suit asserts the Food & Drug Administration has violated federal law by failing to actively withdraw approval of penicillin and tetracycline usage in animal feed for non-therapeutic, growth-promotant purposes despite claims FDA previously concluded that such tactics facilitate development of antibiotic-resistant bacterial strains. Hence, the suit is predicated on the claim of, "...growing evidence that the spread of bacteria immune to antibiotics has clear links to the overuse of antibiotics in the food industry." Dovetailing that effort came proposed legislation in both the House and Senate aimed at reduced antibiotic use in animal agriculture. The bills are primarily designed to phase out non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock. The talking points are the same. For example, Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), upon reintroduction of the legislation: "The rampant overuse of antibiotics in agriculture that creates drug-resistant bacteria, an increasing threat to human beings....The effectiveness of antibiotics for humans is jeopardized when they are used to fatten healthy pigs or speed the growth of chickens."

So the logic is this: antibiotics are utilized in farm animals, resistant strains of bacteria fail to be contained and thus escape the farm, the public is subsequently exposed to such bacteria via various avenues (including consumption of meat), citizens eventually become ill, and ultimately the illness is unresponsive to treatment. Therefore, you see efforts to curtail ongoing use in food production settings and pre-empt approval for new antibiotics and/or uses of currently existing antimicrobials in livestock. That all sounds simple enough. And the average citizen hearing that type of rhetoric is going to immediately assume that such litigation and legislation is necessary.

However, the issue isn't that simple. As mentioned above, it's a public health issue and the matter of resistance can't end simply with removing subtherapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock production; the solution is only as good as the weakest link. There's no sense in limiting use on the farm if medical misuse is also not going to be curtailed. The issue must be addressed comprehensively, not to mention that there's never been a scientifically documented link between antibiotic use in livestock and increasing risk of bacterial resistance in humans. Full story at Feedstuffs FoodLink <http://tinyurl.com/4ylnnk9>