

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES®**

Statements of Policy

The following statements of policy have been prepared by the professional staff of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and were approved by its Board of Directors on October 22, 2005 (unless another date is indicated). These statements express the values and positions of The HSUS on a wide range of issues involving human activities affecting animals. These positions are not immutable, given that circumstances, technology, and societal values can and do change.

Table of Contents

Statement of Principles and Beliefs	2
Statement against Violence	2
Animals in Biomedical Research, Testing, and Education	2
a) Biomedical Research and Testing	2
b) Animal Use in Elementary, High School, and College Education	2
c) Cloning	3
Animals in Entertainment and Competition	3
a) Blood Sports	3
b) Greyhound Racing	3
c) Horse Racing	3
d) Rodeos	4
e) Wild Animals in Performing Acts	4
Companion Animals	4
a) Assistance Animals	4
b) Cosmetic Surgery on Animals	4
c) Homelessness	4
d) Pets in Housing	5
e) Pet Stores	5
f) Pound Seizure	5
Disasters	5
Euthanasia	6
Farm Animals and Eating with Conscience	6
a) Religious Slaughter	7
Wild Animals	7
a) Endangered Species	7
b) Hunting	7
c) Marine Mammals	7
d) Nonnative Wildlife	8
e) Predator Control	8
f) Trapping and Fur Ranching	8
g) Wild Animals as Pets	8
h) Wild Mustangs and Burros	9
i) Zoos and Aquariums	9

Statement of Principles and Beliefs

The mission of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is to create a humane and sustainable world for all animals—a world that will also benefit people. We seek to forge a lasting and comprehensive change in human consciousness of and behavior toward all animals in order to prevent animal cruelty, exploitation, and neglect and to protect wild habitats and the entire community of life.

The HSUS seeks to achieve our goals through education, advocacy, public policy reform, and the empowerment of our supporters and partners. We do not engage in or support actions that are illegal or violent or that run counter to the basic principles of compassion and respect for others (see “Statement against Violence” below).

The HSUS strives for integrity, fairness, and professionalism in pursuit of our mission. We will seek to be inclusive and to develop partnerships with a broad array of society’s institutions to further our goals.

Statement against Violence

The very foundation of The HSUS’s work is to protect animals from suffering and cruelty caused by human actions. Any tactic or strategy involving violence toward people undermines the core ethic we espouse. Such tactics are ethically wrong and do fundamental damage to the credibility of the humane movement. Since The HSUS was founded in 1954, we have never engaged in or supported any form of violence done in the name of protecting animals.

Research has now established that there are strong links between violent behaviors toward humans and violent behaviors toward animals. We actively encourage law enforcement agencies to take violence toward animals seriously and to set appropriately severe penalties for people who are responsible for causing animals to suffer. Furthermore, we are convinced that the corollary is also true; namely, that teaching humans to behave with kindness and respect toward animals will help build a more humane and better functioning civil society.

Animals in Biomedical Research, Testing, and Education

a) Biomedical Research and Testing

Along with most scientists, The HSUS advocates an end to the use of animals in research and testing that is harmful to the animals. Accordingly, we strive to decrease and eventually eliminate harm to animals used for these purposes. Our concern encompasses all aspects of laboratory animal use, including their housing and care.

We carry out our work on behalf of animals used and kept in laboratories primarily by promoting research methods that have the potential to replace or reduce animal use or refine animal use so that the animals experience less suffering or physical harm. (Replacement, reduction, and refinement are known as the *Three Rs* or *alternative methods*.) The Three Rs approach, rigorously applied, will benefit both animal welfare and biomedical progress.

Certain species, such as chimpanzees and other apes, cannot be kept humanely in laboratory caging and should not be used in harmful research given their highly evolved mental, emotional, and social features and their concomitant vulnerability to suffering from living in captivity in research settings. Consequently, we place high priority on these species being phased out of harmful research and being relocated to appropriate sanctuary facilities.

b) Animal Use in Elementary, High School, and College Education

Students should be provided an education that instills an interest in and respect for all living things. These are objectives best fulfilled by providing an education that emphasizes animals as living, sentient creatures who share the environment with humans.

The HSUS opposes the use of animals in elementary or high school lessons, experiments, science fair competitions, or other projects that directly or indirectly cause death, pain, or distress to animals. Dissection is unnecessary and unacceptable in precollege biology education, being inconsistent with the development of a respect for life and an appreciation of the sentience of living organisms. In postsecondary education, the use of dissection should be limited to the study of ethically sourced cadavers. In professional education (e.g., for veterinary, medical, and biological careers), any use of animals should be consistent with an active implementation of the Three Rs (reduction, refinement, or replacement of animal use).

c) Cloning

The HSUS opposes any cloning of animals for commercial purposes, whether for use as pets or in research or agriculture.

Animal cloning is a destructive, needless, and often frivolous enterprise. Cloning is a highly experimental procedure, with an enormous number of failures. Most cloned animals die in gestation or at birth. The relatively few survivors often suffer physical abnormalities, severe and chronic pain, and other serious conditions.

Cloning experiments reflect a spirit common to all systematic forms of cruelty to animals. Such experiments reveal a recklessness and hubris, rejecting the prior claims of nature and the inherent dignity of animal life. They treat animals as commodities alone, instead of as living individuals with needs and natures of their own. They are a betrayal of decent animal husbandry, sacrificing the interests and well-being of the animals in a quest for notoriety or profit.

The commercial cloning of animals is an abuse of humanity's power over the animal world. And, like all abuses of power, it should be prohibited by law.

Animals in Entertainment and Competition

a) Blood Sports

The HSUS opposes so-called blood sports such as dogfighting, cockfighting, hog-dog fighting, bullfighting, coon-on-a-log, coon-in-a-hole, and other similar spectacles involving the purposeful staging of fights between animals. All of these are unjustifiable animal contests that cause acute suffering for the animals forced to participate. These spectacles are largely condemned by the American public but continue to survive because of weak or nonexistent laws or inadequate enforcement of existing laws.

b) Greyhound Racing

The HSUS opposes greyhound racing. This practice leads to an unacceptable level of greyhound exploitation and suffering solely for profit. The industry promotes and tolerates an overproduction of dogs, resulting in an annual surplus numbering in the thousands, many of whom will end up being destroyed. The sheer waste of life is a scandal. We work to eliminate dog racing tracks where they currently exist, to prevent the legalization of racing in states where it is not permitted, and to prevent the establishment of racing tracks in communities where none now exist.

c) Horse Racing

The HSUS does not oppose all horse racing or all horse shows; however, we do oppose a variety of practices that cause unnecessary suffering or undue risks to horses. These include the use of drugs for nontherapeutic purposes to enable injured or disadvantaged animals to race, the racing of young animals whose bones and bodies have not matured sufficiently, the use of goads and whips, the soring of show horses, overbreeding, and other activities that cause unnecessary distress to horses. The HSUS also opposes the use of horses in fox hunting and other riding activities that involve the chasing or killing of wild animals.

d) Rodeos

The HSUS opposes rodeos as they are commonly organized, since they typically cause torment and stress to animals; expose them to pain, injury, or even death; and encourage an insensitivity to and acceptance of the inhumane treatment of animals in the name of sport. Accordingly, we oppose the use of devices such as electric prods, sharpened sticks, spurs, flank straps, and other rodeo equipment that cause animals to react violently, and we oppose bull riding, bronco riding, steer roping, calf roping, “wild horse racing,” chuck wagon racing, steer tailing, and horse tripping.

e) Wild Animals in Performing Acts

The HSUS opposes the use of captive wild animals as performers in circuses, film and television, and commercials. An ever-growing body of scientific literature supports the contention that wild animals such as elephants and great apes possess highly developed emotional complexity and that their psychological and social needs are difficult to satisfy in a captive setting. The risk of harm to people interacting with them in a performance setting poses undue risk for all concerned.

More broadly, few custodians of these long-lived animals provide cradle-to-grave care for wild animals once their careers are over. They are sometimes sold into the exotic animal trade and channeled to private owners, laboratories, canned hunts, or substandard “sanctuaries” where the animals would face obvious and unacceptable threats to their well-being. With the increasing number of circuses that entertain without the use of wild animals and the advent of animatronics, there is a less compelling need than ever for the use of wild animals in entertainment, and The HSUS supports a termination of their use for this purpose.

Companion Animals

a) Assistance Animals

Certain animals can help special-needs individuals who have physical, visual, or hearing limitations lead more independent lives by assisting them in the performance of everyday tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. Animals also can alert people to such potentially dangerous situations as fire or intruders. When animals are trained and used to assist humans in these ways, it is critical that the following criteria be met:

1. The animal must belong to a domesticated species
2. The human companion of the animal and/or another designated person must be trained in handling and accept responsibility for ensuring that the animal’s medical, physical, behavioral, and psychological needs are met

b) Cosmetic Surgery on Animals

The HSUS opposes cosmetic and other forms of surgery on animals when done solely for the convenience or pleasure of the owner and without appropriate benefit to the animal.

c) Homelessness

The number of companion animals in need of good homes is greater than the number of responsible homes available. This results in millions of companion animals either suffering on the streets or being euthanized by local shelters. The HSUS therefore urges people to spay or neuter their companion animals and to solve pet behavior and other problems that may lead to pet relinquishment.

The HSUS also urges humane organizations and animal care and control agencies to require that all animals be sterilized before release for adoption, unless medically inappropriate, and to encourage the spaying and neutering of companion animals within their communities. We support the enactment and enforcement of animal control ordinances designed to regulate, deter, and reduce companion animal breeding, and we encourage cooperation between animal

shelters and veterinarians in implementing sterilization programs and other solutions to the problem of companion animal homelessness.

d) Pets in Housing

Thousands of people across the nation face eviction or exclusion from rental or multifamily housing because they care for pets. Responsible pet caregivers, however, should not be denied the companionship of beloved pets; and housing should be open to pets except in those cases in which the pet's caregiver allows the animal to destroy property, behave aggressively, violate animal control laws, or otherwise act as a nuisance to other residents. Accordingly, The HSUS works to empower housing professionals to develop effective pets-welcome policies.

e) Pet Stores

The HSUS opposes the sale of dogs, cats, and other animals through pet stores and other commercial operations. In such situations, the desire for profit undermines proper care, seriously compromising the welfare of the animals. Furthermore, millions of animals are euthanized each year for lack of appropriate homes—a situation made worse by “puppy mills.” Our investigations of puppy mills and other kinds of mass-breeding operations that produce animals for wholesale to the pet industry also have exposed such unacceptable conditions as overcrowding; inadequate shelter, sanitation, food, water, and veterinary care; and lack of social or behavioral enrichment.

f) Pound Seizure

The relinquishment of impounded companion animals from public and private shelters to facilities that use animals for experimental, teaching, or testing purposes is a betrayal of public trust and the implicit contract established between humans and companion animals. The HSUS therefore opposes the release of impounded animals, whether living or dead, from public and private animal shelters to biomedical research laboratories or related animal-using facilities, and we oppose any administrative or legislative measure that would permit this practice.

Disasters

A wide range of natural and technological disasters, as well as war and terrorism, place animals in jeopardy around the world. The HSUS will strive to rescue and care for animals trapped in these circumstances whenever local and regional capacities have been overwhelmed. The nature and extent of HSUS efforts will vary, depending upon issues of timing, access, available resources, and security of human responders. The HSUS will attend to companion animals trapped in these settings as well as to farm animals and wildlife whenever possible. In the case of companion animals, captive wildlife, and farm animals, The HSUS will endeavor to reunite them with responsible caretakers.

We believe that attention to the protection of animals at risk in disasters and other crises is a responsibility of government, since animals play such a central role in the emotional and economic well-being of people throughout the world. Intervention to rescue and care for animals trapped in disasters or other crises requires coordinated advance planning and preparation among nonprofit and governmental agencies at all levels and must include organized efforts to urge and support people to include animals in their personal disaster contingency plans. When animal rescue does not impede human rescue and relief imperatives, government responders should directly assist animals in need, cooperating with animal welfare organizations in the process.

(Approved by the Board of Directors on January 6, 2006)

Euthanasia

The euthanasia of animals has been acknowledged by most animal protection organizations, including The HSUS, as an appropriate and humane means of ending the suffering of an animal in physical distress. It is also used widely to end the lives of animals who have severe behavioral problems, including aggression, and cannot be adopted into an appropriate new home because they pose a threat to the health and safety of people or other animals.

The use of euthanasia to end the lives of healthy, adoptable animals is more controversial. The practice is still conducted in many parts of the United States for dogs and cats because open-admission shelters and animal control agencies do not turn away animals and do not have sufficient space to house all of the animals who need shelter. These public and private facilities face the lose-lose choice of euthanizing healthy animals or turning them away. The HSUS advocates the use of a wide range of tools—including training and education of the pet-keeping public to reduce the frequency of animal relinquishment, public and private spay and neuter programs to slow the birth rate for animals, active promotion of adoptions of shelter animals, and aggressive policies to discourage excessive breeding of animals, especially from puppy mills—to create a social environment where the number of people seeking to adopt animals is roughly equivalent to the number of homeless animals.

The HSUS is committed to pursuing a continuing program of investigation, study, and training related to acceptable euthanasia methods. We recommend for use only those methods that cause a rapid loss of consciousness and that cause minimal pain, distress, and suffering in the animal. We oppose any euthanasia methods or techniques that do not meet these humane principles.

Farm Animals and Eating with Conscience

The HSUS is deeply concerned about the ways in which farm animals are treated in modern agricultural systems. The total sum of suffering of these animals greatly exceeds that of any other category of domestic animals. The vast majority of meat, eggs, and dairy products sold in American grocery chains and restaurants comes from animals raised in intensive-confinement systems (so-called *factory farms*) that do not provide for many of the animals' most basic behavioral needs and that impose significant stress on the animals in pursuit of efficiency. The result is that living creatures are being treated as biological “machines.”

The HSUS is also concerned about commercial fishing and fish production practices. The proliferation of massive fish farms raises basic questions about their welfare. And commercial fishing practices continue to deplete many fish populations in dramatic ways and result in the bycatch of extraordinary numbers of nontarget animals, including marine mammals, birds, and other fish.

Accordingly, The HSUS pursues the reduction of animal suffering in the raising, housing, care, transportation, and slaughter of animals raised or caught for food. Furthermore, we seek to ensure that animal production systems are humane, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive.

The HSUS supports those farmers and ranchers who give proper care to their animals, act in accordance with the basic ethic of compassion to sentient creatures under their control, and practice and promote humane and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

Furthermore, the use of plant crops to support the rearing of food animals and the use of fish meal in the intensive “farming” of carnivorous fish, and the subsequent inefficient conversion of plant protein to animal protein, are wasteful uses of limited resources. Research has also indicated that eating excessive quantities of meat, eggs, and dairy can be detrimental to human health.

Considering the foregoing abuses of animals, degradation of the environment, and detriment to human health, The HSUS promotes eating with conscience and embracing the Three Rs—*reducing* the consumption of meat and other animal-based foods; *refining* the diet by eating products only from animals who have been raised, transported, and slaughtered in a system of

humane, sustainable agriculture that does not abuse the animals; and *replacing* meat and other animal-based foods in the diet with plant-based foods.

a) Religious Slaughter

While religious practices and beliefs should be respected, this must not lead to disregard for the welfare of animals in our care. In situations where there is a perceived conflict between religious practices and modern public health standards, it has sometimes been the practice to shackle and hoist conscious animals for ritual slaughter. This procedure causes immense animal suffering, but it forms no part of the requirements of any religious faith. Rather, it is a high-speed packinghouse technique invented by packers to comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's sanitary requirements and to expedite production. The HSUS opposes preparation of animals for slaughter by means of this procedure. It is our position that animals can be prepared for slaughter consistent with ritual requirements by humane alternatives such as the use of humane restraining pens. Ritual *sacrifice* of animals performed outside of regulated slaughterhouses is invariably cruel and should be prosecuted as such.

Wild Animals

a) Endangered Species

The survival of wildlife species is increasingly threatened by a number of anthropogenic factors, including habitat loss and degradation, overhunting and overfishing, introduced diseases and parasites, attempts to eradicate "pest" species, and capture for the pet trade. The demise of any species is an irreparable loss that deprives the world of a unique creature and the role that creature plays in its ecosystem. The HSUS is committed to protecting threatened and endangered species and their habitats by pressing the U.S. Department of the Interior to aggressively implement and enforce the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended in every way possible. We also urge international, federal, and state wildlife agencies and officials to broaden their programs for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and we encourage private citizens to assist in preserving habitats where such species are known to reside.

b) Hunting

As a matter of principle, The HSUS opposes the hunting of any living creature for fun, trophy, or sport because of the animal trauma, suffering, and death that result. A humane society should not condone the killing of any sentient creature in the name of sport. As a practical matter, The HSUS actively seeks to eliminate the most inhumane and unfair sport-hunting practices, such as the use of body-gripping traps, baiting, use of dogs, pigeon shoots, stocking of animals for shooting, and fee-hunting on enclosed properties.

Unfortunately, the welfare of animals may, on occasion, necessitate the killing of wildlife. When such killing is permitted, it must be used as a last resort, be demonstrably necessary, and be conducted by responsible officials, and the methods utilized must result in an instantaneous and humane death.

The legitimate needs of human subsistence may also sometimes necessitate the killing of wildlife. In such cases, killing should be accomplished in a humane and nonwasteful manner. Individuals of endangered or threatened species must be protected from subsistence hunting.

c) Marine Mammals

The HSUS opposes the killing of marine mammals for commercial, sport, ceremonial, "nuisance management," and other nonsubsistence purposes—for example, the harpooning of whales, clubbing of seals, drowning of porpoises and other marine mammals in fishing nets and gear, and shooting of marine mammals from fishing and other commercial vessels with rifles. We also oppose the chase, capture, and confinement of wild marine mammals in marine parks and aquariums because such activities result in considerable animal suffering.

The HSUS therefore supports measures to protect all marine mammals by:

1. Supporting a total ban on all commercial whaling (as adopted by the International Whaling Commission) and the imposition of sanctions against those nations that refuse to comply with the ban
2. Supporting a total ban on all commercial seal hunts, including the harp and hooded seal hunt by Canada
3. Opposing the sport hunting of marine mammals
4. Supporting the moratorium on taking and importing marine mammals established by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and encouraging effective administration and enforcement of its provisions
5. Seeking the development of new fishing practices and gear that will prevent injury to and death by drowning of marine mammals incidentally entangled in fishing nets and line
6. Seeking an end to the capture of wild marine mammals for the purpose of public display in the United States and abroad

d) Nonnative Wildlife

The HSUS opposes the introduction of nonnative or exotic species into the environment as such introduction can be harmful to both native and nonnative animals as well as to ecological systems. In the cases where nonnative animals have been intentionally or unintentionally introduced by people and have established populations in the wild, The HSUS supports humane forms of population management and opposes methods that cause trauma and suffering.

e) Predator Control

All native animals play a vital function within their ecosystems, and this is especially true of predators. Many of the predator control programs implemented by counties, states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program result in the killing of both target and nontarget wildlife species without justification. The indiscriminate killing of predatory animals by poisoning, trapping, shooting from aircraft, killing young at their dens, and other inhumane methods is unacceptable. The HSUS accordingly opposes the cruel techniques used in the present program and encourages the use of nonlethal means of protecting livestock from predators, such as guard animals, aversive conditioning, frightening devices, sound livestock husbandry practices, and other methods as they become available. We support incentive programs and other means by which to encourage livestock owners to use nonlethal forms of livestock protection.

f) Trapping and Fur Ranching

The HSUS opposes the trapping, rearing on "fur ranches," and killing of animals for the production of fur apparel and accessories. Such exploitation causes needless and unjustifiable suffering and death and is, therefore, inconsistent with the aims of a humane society. There should be an immediate ban on the use of the steel-jaw leghold trap and neck snares in particular because they are inherently inhumane.

There is no justification for any form of trapping except live trapping in those rare cases in which such live trapping demonstrably benefits animals or provides necessary benefits to ecological systems. This kind of trapping may be accepted only after less intrusive alternatives have been attempted and exhausted, and it must be done responsibly, efficiently, and by a humane method that captures the animal alive without injury.

g) Wild Animals as Pets

Wild animals make unsuitable pets under virtually all circumstances, and very few people are equipped or have the expertise to properly maintain wild animals in household environments. We define as "wild" any animals, whether captive born or wild caught, who have not been domesticated (i.e., have not been genetically controlled over a very long period of time and specifically adapted to live in close proximity to humans).

The HSUS opposes the general traffic in wild animals. Wild animals suffer when captured and transported and placed in close proximity to humans. Furthermore, many wild animals carry pathogens that may cause significant human disease and some wild animals are dangerous in and of themselves.

The HSUS opposes the sale of wild animals (i.e., any nondomesticated native or exotic mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, or invertebrate, regardless of whether the animal is wild caught or captive bred) by any commercial establishment.

The HSUS opposes the sale of animals as novelty or decorative items and the sale of domesticated fish bred and housed in inhumane conditions.

h) Wild Mustangs and Burros

The HSUS works to protect the remaining herds of wild horses and burros from inhumane treatment, exploitation, and eradication, and we use our influence to ensure that protective legislation is improved and properly administered and enforced.

i) Zoos and Aquariums

Wild animals should ideally be permitted to exist undisturbed in their natural environments. Zoos and aquariums are, however, a currently established part of our society, and some of them provide benefits for animals such as financially supporting conservation programs and the preservation and restoration of threatened and endangered species and promoting the education of people to the needs of wild animals and their roles in the ecosystem.

Zoos and other facilities that house captive wildlife must not be set up solely for profit or for entertainment. Such facilities must be organized around a core mission that educates the public about the needs of wild animals and the threats to which they are exposed and that supports humane conservation programs. In addition, such zoos must maintain animals in conditions simulating their natural habitats as closely as possible and must treat them with the highest degree of humaneness, care, and professionalism. Achieving these requirements is an imperative not only for the welfare of the animals but also because inhumane or inappropriate conditions viewed by an impressionable public provide a negative learning experience by seeming to condone indifference or cruelty. The HSUS pledges to work with those zoological parks and other zoos and aquariums desiring to improve and having the capability to do so. At the same time, we are committed to the elimination of those institutions that will not or cannot improve and meet these standards. The HSUS urges zoos to act as sanctuaries for nondomesticated animals, providing facilities for animals in need rather than breeding them for exhibition purposes or acquiring them from the wild or from exotic animal dealers.

Promoting the protection of all animals

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