



AWI

Quarterly

Summer 2004 Volume 53 Number 3



ABOUT THE COVER

In the eye of this Grants Zebra (*Equus burchellii*) in Botswana, photographer Frans Lanting (courtesy of Minden Pictures) captured the reflection of the hunters who shot the animal. Wild African animals are not only killed by hunters seeking a trophy. The zebra is one of dozens of species in Africa and Asia slaughtered for their flesh to be consumed locally or, with increasing frequency, sold in markets around the world, including major city centers in industrialized nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Belgium. Buffaloes, gazelles, hippos, giraffes, elephants, foxes, fowl, pangolins, primates, pythons, and tortoises are but some of the species killed as “bushmeat.” An innovative new program launched in Kenya takes the message about the bushmeat crisis directly to the people who live with the wildlife. A new touring play, *Carcasses*, recently premiered in Nairobi; the actors delve into the conservation and human health risks of killing wild animals and consuming their meat (see story pages 10-11).



Animal Welfare Institute

QUARTERLY

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Pigs in the Pan-Pacific

The Pan-Pacific region of the globe holds more than half of the world’s domestic swine population. At the request of the trade association Australian Pork Limited, AWI’s Farm Animal Advisor, Diane Halverson, delivered the keynote speech at the Pan-Pacific Pork Expo in Brisbane, Australia in March, entitled “Responding to the Public Demand for the Humane Treatment of Pigs: On the Farm, in the Marketplace and in the Law.”



A temperate climate permits use of “eco-shelters” in much of Australia. Sows are given rice hull bedding which provides a substrate for rooting.

Young pigs in Australia are often found in shelters open to sunlight and fresh air and with floors bedded with rice hulls, in contrast to U.S. factories where pigs are subjected to concrete slatted floors and toxic gases emitted by liquefied manure. But a large percentage of Australia’s 300,000 pregnant sows languish in crates that prevent movement and socialization. Others are kept in groups with room to move; some don’t have bedding, while others do.

Researchers at QAF Meat Industries are looking at adapting Swedish sow group housing (*AWI Quarterly*, Winter 2004) to Australian conditions. In addition, this year the voluntary “Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—the Pig,” will be reviewed. Indications are that restrictions on crating pregnant sows will be adopted.

A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the U.S. and Australia signed in May will give U.S. agricultural exporters duty free access to the land down under. Tragically, FTA threatens to further entrench U.S. pig factories by providing an additional destination for their pork. Australian senators are concerned the import of pork will expose Australia’s pigs to diseases that do not yet plague the country’s swine population. FTA also threatens to undermine Australia’s welfare advances *unless* Australian consumers are able to identify and reject U.S. factory pork in the marketplace. 🐾



AWI’s Diane Halverson and Actor Rosemary Harris visit pig farms following AWI’s husbandry standards (see story page 6).



Jessie, rescued from Class B dealer C.C. Baird, is settling in to his new home with a woman, a beagle and three cats. He’s still deathly afraid of men and flashlights (see story pages 16-17).

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Oil Exploration Threatens Rarest Whale with Extinction

After decades of decimation by whaling, the Western Gray Whale is being pushed to the very edge of extinction by the extensive development of oil and gas resources in the Okhotsk Sea off northeastern Sakhalin Island, Russia. Recent studies suggest there are about 100 of these critically endangered whales left, with only 23 of these being reproductive females.

Sakhalin Island was once a lonely and inhospitable place with frigid seas and windswept coasts. This remote corner of the world is ice covered in winter months and has provided the Western Gray Whale with a perfect summer feeding ground for generations. Sakhalin Island in the 21st century is a very different place. Multinational companies have poured into the area, lured by the scent of oil, and are changing the landscape and the lives of these peaceful whales forever. Today, oil platforms, pipelines, processing facilities and the towns that they spawn dot the Sakhalin coast, and this is just the beginning.

Oil and gas extraction and production projects in various stages of development by some of the world's biggest oil companies, including Shell, BP and Exxon-Mobil, lie along the east coast of Sakhalin Island. The most recent project and possibly the deadliest for the whales, is named Sakhalin II and is operated by Sakhalin Energy Investment Company (SEIC), a Shell-led company. Other investors include Mitsui and Mitsubishi. The second phase of the Sakhalin II project is underway and will directly encroach upon the primary feeding grounds of the Western Gray Whale. This phase includes the

installation of an oil platform, less than eight miles offshore and adjacent to the whale feeding grounds. Four oil and gas pipelines will extend across the southern part of the feeding grounds to the shore and processing facilities. This phase of the project will involve an investment of at least \$10 billion which is being sought from funding sources that include the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The Western Gray Whale is a totally distinct population from their more numerous eastern counterparts that migrate yearly from Alaska to the calving lagoons in Mexico. The Western Gray Whale historically travels from the Okhotsk Sea off Far East Russia, along the Korean peninsula and down to the coastal waters of Japan. Their original "pre-exploitation" numbers are estimated to have ranged from 1,500 to 10,000 individuals. Modern commercial whaling from the 1890's to the 1960's took a grievous toll and by the 1930's many thought the whale to be extinct, although some were still being killed in Korean waters.

The Western Gray Whale is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act and as critically endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). In 2001, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) called upon range states and others to "actively pursue all practicable actions to eliminate anthropogenic mortality in this stock and to minimize anthropogenic disturbances in the migration corridor and on their breeding and feeding grounds." In 2002 and again in 2003,

the IWC reiterated these same concerns. The whales are again on the agenda for the July IWC meeting in Sorrento, Italy and AWI is urging the U.S. delegation and representatives to take a strong position to protect the whales.

The dangers to the Western Gray Whale posed by this latest phase of oil and gas development encompass almost every part of the exploration and extraction process. First come the repeated concussive bursts from seismic airguns fired down into the ocean floor to find likely areas to drill. Then come the drilling activities and the erection of platforms. Included in this phase of development is the construction of the world's largest liquid natural gas plant and the facilities to export this resource. Shell estimates that this will require the dumping of over one million cubic meters of dredging materials and then the discharge of over 500,000 metric tons of oil contaminated sewage each year. 800 miles of offshore pipelines would be dredged across 24 earthquake fault lines and 1,100 streams, rivers and waterways.

To make matters worse, the Sakhalin I project being developed by Exxon-Mobil also overlaps with the Western Gray Whale feeding ground and is likely to be an additional source of disturbance to the whales.

Gray Whales are bottom feeders, relying on the consumption of tiny benthic organisms that live in the mud. This makes them even more sensitive than fish eating whales to the impacts of noise and oil pollution. And every oil exploitation project has a likelihood of a spill which increases with time. An oil spill

in the Okhotsk Sea, which is frozen and inaccessible half the year, would probably have devastating impacts on the whales and their prey, and would also likely impact dozens of other marine mammal species, over 100 species of fish, the endangered Steller's sea eagle, and rich crab and Pollock spawning grounds. An oil spill the size of the Exxon Valdez catastrophe would easily reach Japan, ironically, the host country of two of the SEIC partners.

The whales may already be suffering. Scientific surveys conducted over the last few years and since the existing development of the area's natural oil and gas reserves, have shown a marked deterioration in the physical condition of some whales sighted, with many appearing malnourished from either lack of prey, stress, disease or habitat disruption.

There is a slim hope for the whales and proof that concerned individuals can make a difference. In a recent development, significant pressure from citizens and environmental groups in Europe may have motivated the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to threaten not to lend money for the Sakhalin II project based on environmental concerns. In response, this summer's planned construction of the pipeline through the whales' feeding grounds has been postponed, pending further environmental impact assessments. Here in the U.S., the U.S. Export-Import Bank has also required an environmental assessment and addendum, and has yet to make its final decision on whether to lend money for the project and the conditions of the loan. 🐾



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Will one of the hidden costs of our oil habit be the permanent loss of one population of whales from the earth? If you wish to object to the continued industrial assault on the Western Gray Whale, please write to the U.S. Export-Import Bank, Exxon-Mobil, Sakhalin Energy Investment Company, Shell (55% share in SEIC), Mitsui (25% share) and Mitsubishi (20% share). You may wish to request that all development in the Okhotsk Sea cease for the sake of the whales and demonstrate your objection by not buying the products of the key stakeholders.

• Mr. Phillip Merrill, Chair, U.S. Export-Import Bank, 800 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20571-0002

- Exxon Mobil Corporation, 5959 Las Colinas Boulevard, Irving, TX 75039-2298
- External Affairs Manager, Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd., 35, Dzherzinskogo Str, 693000, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russian Federation
- Shell Oil Company, Rijswijk Project Office, Visseringlaan 25, 2288 ER Riswijk, The Netherlands
- Mitsui and Co. (U.S.A.), Inc., Met Life Bldg., 200 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10166-0130
- Mitsubishi International Corporation, 520 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022

Above: One of the few remaining Western Gray Whales shares his feeding ground with the 37½ ton Molikpaq platform. According to SEIC, the platform is due to go into year-round oil production during Phase II of Sakhalin II. Photo: David Weller

“With Great Power, Comes Great Responsibility”

—Uncle Ben to Peter Parker in Spider-Man

With the June 30 release of *Spider-Man 2*, the Animal Welfare Institute proudly recognizes actor Rosemary Harris—Peter Parker’s “Aunt May”—for her deep commitment to relieving the suffering of animals confined on factory farms. Ms. Harris, a Broadway legend and winner of a Tony, an Emmy and a Golden Globe Award for her work on stage, television and in film, was a close friend of AWI’s founding President, Christine Stevens, and her husband, former AWI Treasurer, Roger Stevens. A Broadway producer and Kennedy Center Chairman, Roger produced a number of the plays in which Ms. Harris starred. Recently, Ms. Harris and her husband, North Carolina author John Ehle, accompanied AWI staff to several farms raising pigs according to AWI’s pig husbandry standards, which she strongly supports. She expressed her appreciation to the farmers for their willingness to raise pigs in ways that permit them to live more natural lives. Speaking in a video that AWI prepared for the Waterkeeper Summit on Sustainable Agriculture held in New Bern, North Carolina, Ms. Harris eloquently expressed her concerns for the welfare of one of the most severely and widely abused of all animals—breeding sows:

“What concerns me and moves me more than anything is the plight of the animals in these factory farms....Particularly, the predicament of the sows who are incarcerated in their crates for the duration of their pathetic lives. After all, *they are mothers* and not production units and machines. Please pause and think about the animals who are causing, through no fault of their own, the horrendous environmental problems that we are suffering now. Insist on products from animals raised on animal-friendly family farms. Not only for the sake of the animals but because all our troubles are rooted in the way that we raise the animals now—denied the light of day and the basic needs of movement and motherhood.”

AWI is delighted to acknowledge such a distinguished and compassionate actor. 🐾



Rosemary Harris, in her role as “Aunt May” in a scene from *Spider-Man 2*, with Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker, aka Spider-Man.



“I love this sweet sow on the Wright family farm. She is one of the fortunate few sows permitted to breathe fresh air and walk with the earth beneath her feet and the sun shining on her back.”

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As a consumer you have great power. Please heed Ms. Harris’ plea: be a conscientious buyer. If you purchase animal products, choose those of family farmers who raise animals with respect. For example, Niman Ranch (www.nimanranch.com) requires that farmers, from whom it buys pigs, adhere to AWI’s husbandry protocols from breeding to market.

Biogas from Manure: *How Green?*

On May 4, Secretary of Agriculture Veneman announced availability of \$22.8 million in grant funds to farmers and rural businesses for renewable energy projects, including biomass, wind, geothermal, and solar. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$21 million to 113 farm energy projects. Thirty involved anaerobic digesters to capture methane (biogas) from confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) that manage manure as a liquid. Increasingly, biogas production from liquid animal “wastes” is being touted to boost farm incomes, achieve independence from foreign oil, and solve massive environmental problems associated with CAFOs.

While AWI applauds efforts to develop renewable energy sources, we are concerned that subsidizing energy production from liquefied manure artificially creates a demand to continue an extractive and exploitive relationship with animals and nature and perpetuates a form of animal production that has proved detrimental to public health and rural communities (see www.iatp.org/hogreport/; www.apha.org/legislative/policy/2003/2003-007.pdf; and www.factoryfarm.org/press/docs/Methane_Digesters_2003final062703.doc).

In a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article a California Energy Commission spokesman estimated that, if all the dairies in California (which subsidizes methane digesters) were hooked into the state’s utility grid, they would produce only “100 megawatts or so” of energy. But CAFOs have public costs that exceed their energy potential. CAFOs flush manure from buildings with water, a scarce resource in some regions. Besides methane, anaerobic decomposition of liquefied manure emits other gasses, including hydrogen sulfide, a potent neurotoxin. Hydrogen sulfide from manure pits and inside CAFO buildings has killed animals and people, including three California dairy CAFO workers. Methane is highly explosive and has asphyxiated workers



Pigs in a confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) being raised to market weight. CAFO practices that are already unhealthy for farmed animals will be entrenched by the need to collect enough manure to make energy.

repairing equipment in manure pits. Local governments’ health care services and community food shelves too often are forced to “subsidize” CAFOs that hire unskilled workers at wages well below the cost of living.

Commercial biogas production requires skilled and attentive management and top of the line equipment. Most sources indicate that investments in manure digesters are not possible without subsidies. Some contend that manure digesters may never be profitable without them and that equipment life may be little longer than the payback period, necessitating further capital investments. The farmer soon finds himself on an even faster treadmill than the one on which he was running to keep up before. CAFOs’ continuous need to expand to pay capital costs has driven industry structure to fewer and larger CAFOs, displacing smaller operators. Additional capital costs of manure energy are likely to exacerbate the trend.

CAFOs house pigs and dairy cattle on solid concrete or slatted floors from which manure is scraped into gutters or flushed into under-floor collection pits. Laying hens live in wire cages through which manure drops onto conveyers and into pits. CAFOs do not provide

bedding that would interfere with liquid manure collection and anaerobic digestion. They submit farmed animals to lifetimes of breathing polluted air, without the possibility of performing healthful natural behaviors such as grazing or flapping of wings. Such inhumane practices will be entrenched by CAFOs’ need to collect enough manure to produce energy.

Government programs should support farming practices that are inherently sustainable rather than inherently demanding of remediation. A first positive step is to stop liquefying manure. Composting bedding-based manure is safer for people, animals, and the environment than anaerobic digestion. Sustainable farms raise animals in proportion to the land they have for spreading manure. Rather than a “waste,” composted manure is a valuable soil amendment needed by crops. Raising animals on pasture contributes to animal health, reduces veterinary expenses and antibiotic use, conserves energy, and helps prevent soil erosion. Requiring low capital investment, sustainable practices keep farmers off the high-tech treadmill and can provide comfortable livings for farm families and better lives for farmed animals. 🐾

Inertia at the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Japan and more than 50 other nations continue to ban American beef due to the unwillingness of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to test each animal slaughtered for mad cow disease. As one might expect, a growing number of proactive, independent, niche market cattle ranchers desperately want to maintain their Japanese customers and seek to test all of their animals. In fact, Creekstone Farms, which exports to Japan, spent \$500,000 on testing facilities only to have USDA prohibit the purchase of the chemical kits necessary to conduct the testing. Creekstone is appealing this decision, but USDA hypocritically prohibits this initiative on the grounds that allowing the tests would imply that the products from companies that don't test all of their animals are less safe. Not surprisingly, the staunchest ally the USDA has in its

opposition to universal testing is the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the beef industry's trade association.

USDA claims that by testing less than 1% of the cattle slaughtered each year it is doing the testing deemed appropriate by science and asserts it has enacted reforms to protect against mad cow disease. Yet on-going revelations demonstrate inconsistent implementation of regulations and breaches of protocol that jeopardize human safety. For instance, an agency veterinarian and an attorney representing federal veterinarians recently charged that USDA officials pressure their veterinarians to sign documents that falsely certify food items are safe for export. Separately, in May, the agency acknowledged policy was broken when a cow who exhibited signs of a central nervous system disorder was not tested for mad cow disease. It has also come to light that

USDA issued permits that led to the importation of banned Canadian beef products. Furthermore, the agency will not identify the companies that imported the banned items.

USDA, engaged in the conflicting tasks of promoting and regulating animal products, does more to appease industry than to ensure food safety and animal health. A May 23 *Denver Post* article noted the Bush Administration has appointed more than 100 top government officials who were once lobbyists, attorneys, or spokespeople for the industries they oversee, including more than a dozen high-ranking USDA officials who have ties to the meat industry. USDA should follow the lead of other countries and increase its diligence in protecting human health by reestablishing food safety as its highest priority and halt its preoccupation with protecting the image of the cattle industry. 🐾

Egg Industry Happily Markets Cruelty



Many brands use the "Animal Care Certified" logo which implies humaneness, but hens raised according to the applicable guidelines are tightly confined, mutilated, and starved, like those shown here.

Packaged food from agricultural animals is increasingly identified by appealing claims such as "natural" and "happy" as if to suggest that the animals from which the products come were treated humanely. With no regulation on such terms, producers can easily deceive customers. Such is the case with United Egg Producers' (UEP) "Animal Care Certified" label. UEP, the egg industry's trade association, labels its products as "Animal Care Certified" and describes the program as the customers "assurance that the eggs you are buying are from hens receiving the highest level of care... we care about the welfare of our hens... the guidelines place top priority on the comfort, health and safety of the chickens."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Over 225 million laying hens are subjected to abuse frighteningly codified by UEP's misnamed program. "Animal Care Certified" eggs come from hens who are: 1) intensively confined in barren, wire cages so small the

birds cannot spread their wings and which prohibit them from dustbathing, 2) beak trimmed, in which an unanesthetized bird's beak is cut off, and 3) force-molted or starved for up to two weeks to artificially induce the laying of additional, larger eggs.

Fortunately, Compassion Over Killing brought this disingenuous marketing to the attention of the Better Business Bureau (BBB), and in May, the BBB's highest authority on advertising issues determined that the UEP label is in fact misleading and should not be used considering most consumers would not consider the treatment of the hens, under the program, humane. Compliance with the ruling is voluntary, but groups that refuse are referred to federal agencies, such as the Federal Trade Commission, which could stop the advertising and levy fines. Evidently non-compliance is so infrequent that, if referred, the case would be highly scrutinized. We hope strong action is taken against this dishonest labeling. 🐾

Against the Grain How Agriculture Has Hijacked Civilization

By Richard Manning
North Point Press, 2004; ISBN 0865476225
Hardcover, 232 pages; \$24

The greatest challenge for a reader of Richard Manning's *Against the Grain* may be to endure the introduction. But, from the point in the first chapter when his prose coagulates and he begins to make his case, Manning conveys his reader on an extraordinary intellectual excursion. *Against the Grain* is not without flaws; it is a wide net that is sometimes carelessly flung and Manning waits until late in the book to explain the distinction he draws between *agriculture* and *farming* or, more precisely, between raising *commodities* and raising *food*. But his fundamental thesis, that non-subsistence agriculture has created a cascading social and environmental calamity—beginning long ago and becoming more malignant as industry and commodity agriculture fuse—is compellingly presented.

Ten thousand years ago, while Clovis hunters were consummating the extinction of the great Ice Age mammals, barley and wheat cultivation was underway in Mesopotamia. Within a few millennia it expanded throughout the Fertile Crescent, Asia Minor and southeastern Europe. By 6,000 years ago rice and millet cultivation spread across China, maize was raised in central Mexico, an assortment of grains and tubers were growing in the Andes. But with swelling, stationary populations that agriculture made possible, writes Manning, came the end of Eden. Agriculturalists were physically inferior to hunter gatherers subject to degenerative and infectious diseases from which the former were largely free. Worse, with agriculture came inequality, then tyranny, slavery; and organized warfare; controlled, class ridden societies and an end to free, egalitarian life.

But did not agricultural societies, in accepting oppression and physical decline, at least gain security from outright starvation? Not at all, writes Manning, "Famine was the mark of a maturing agricultural society, the very badge of civilization... Poverty, government and famine co-evolved." He devotes a chapter to famines from ancient China to the Irish potato famine of 1846-1850 to the present day persistence of famine and "commodity surpluses."

Manning turns to the "revolutions" by which surpluses

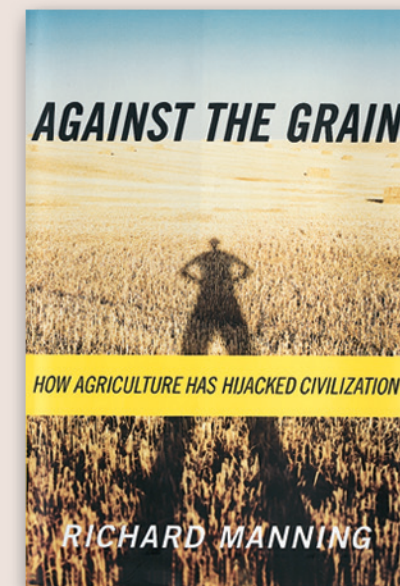
were obtained. The first came with hybrid corn, developed by crossing inbred varieties to achieve maximum "hybrid vigor." Hybrid corn planting in the U.S. exploded from 1% of the crop in 1933 to 50% in 1943; by the 1960's it was almost universal. The disadvantage of not retaining seed (hybrid vigor does not pass to progeny) was overwhelmed by prodigious three fold increases in production. The "green revolution" began in Mexico in 1954 when Norman Borlaug crossed dwarf wheat, with short, stiff stems to overcome the traditional

limitation on wheat yield; the tendency of stems to buckle under the weight of the kernels. Within a few years varieties were available that combined swollen kernels with stalks rigid enough to hold them. The technique was replicated with rice, and today dwarf varieties account for three fourths of rice and wheat.

The book concludes with an exposition of the almost apocalyptic costs of these achievements. One memorable passage recounts a journey across mid-America, now a monoculture of wheat, corn and soybeans from which a million farm families have vanished since 1970 to the HQ of Archer Daniels Midland, the premier processor of corn and producer of fructose. It is the domination of fructose, with which processed foods are liberally laced (read the labels!), says Manning that creates the epidemic obesity with

which America is assailed. Another describes his pilgrimage to Ciudad Obregon, Mexico where the green revolution began and farming is now thoroughly modern containing even American style hog factories. And just as modern agriculture has created an 8,000 square mile dead zone expanding into the Gulf of Mexico, a daily load of nitrates and agricultural poisons pour down the Yaqui River into the Sea of Cortez.

There is much in Manning's book with which one may not agree. His view that plants have, in effect, domesticated humans rather than the contrary, can be seen as insightful or absurd. His attacks on grain farming approach fanaticism. His prescription for pulling ourselves from disaster—farmers markets, locally grown produce—are unremarkable, the final chapter dispensable. But the book's powerful vision of commodity agriculture, industry and politics as a single, devouring colossus and the underlying governor of human and environmental events makes *Against the Grain* an important, even pioneering book. Few who read it will regard the world in quite the same way. 🐾 —by Tom Garrett



Bushmeat Takes Center Stage

“I am not interested in blood money,” says Philomena to her husband, Molkacha, a bushmeat trapper in Africa. “I will not be a party to a merciless and inhuman trade. I cannot believe that you would participate in the killing and maiming of animals for money. I don’t want anything to do with bushmeat.”

This is but one of the many insightful exchanges in a new play about the bushmeat trade, *Carcasses*. The play was the vision and a project of Born Free Foundation’s Global Friends Programme, an initiative to unite schools and communities around the globe to help wildlife, and was written, produced, and performed in association with Kenya’s Kenyatta University Travelling Theatre. In collaboration with many other organisations, *Carcasses* was premiered at the Louis Leakey Theatre in Nairobi’s National Museum on April 23. Kenya’s Honorable Minister for Land and Settlements, Amos Kimunya, was among the national dignitaries who attended the opening night performance. Mr. Kimunya said of the show, “We need people to feel they are benefiting from wildlife and I think that the challenge is for people to see that if we conserve we benefit; if we destroy we all

suffer—that’s clear. This is a wonderful production and I wish to see as much of this going out to the people so that we can sensitize as many people to the dangers of eating game meat, trading in game meat and the snares.”

While the Animal Welfare Institute and others have long campaigned against the global trade in bushmeat (the flesh of wild animals in Africa and Asia), our educational efforts have been focused on the developed world and global decision-makers. This traveling play, however, enables the message to reach the people on the ground who live with wildlife, may have previously consumed bushmeat, and who are under enormous pressure to catch and sell bushmeat to middlemen who make terrific profits selling the game meat in city centers and abroad.

Carcasses challenges people to consider their relationships and attitudes toward wildlife, and explores many of the complex relationships that exist in wildlife-rich areas. In the story, three subplots swirl: the relationship of Molkacha the trapper with his family, the relationship of bushmeat hunters and the middlemen they supply, and the relationship of wildlife rangers to the people in the village.

Molkacha is clearly dismayed at the small bounty caught in his snare—one skinny dik dik (a small antelope)—as the play begins. There once was a day when plenty of game meat was available in the forest. Historically, bushmeat has been consumed sustainably by the local people who live with wildlife. This was hunting based on sustenance, not commercial trade. But with the resurgence of foreign poachers and logging companies that destroy the forest, pressure is placed on the wildlife that it simply cannot withstand.

This leads to the conflict with the local villagers and the poachers who profit by commercialization of local wildlife. One villager in *Carcasses* cries out, “There is a threat in our world today. A threat to our society, a threat to our way of life, a threat to everything we have been doing since the days of our forefathers. What is this threat? Poachers! There are people who are making easy money by killing animals and selling their products: meat, skin, horns and so on.”

While this outside threat is indeed real, local consumers are not without complicity. The wildlife warden, Maarifa, who claims that “nobody has the moral obligation to kill animals

for money,” points out that as the local population expands, they are eating exorbitant amounts of bushmeat—eating faster than populations can recover with new animal births. Further, he alludes to the cruelty of snaring wildlife: “Unfortunately, the snare will trap any animal that comes along, even the unintended ones. If an animal manages to get away, and does not die of injuries it has sustained in the process, it has to live with an injured limb all its life.” This holds true as well, of course, for animals cruelly trapped for their fur in steel jaw leghold traps in America and other developed countries.

Maarifa accurately reveals the potential economic consequences of wildlife consumption—tourists will no longer be able to come see wildlife, and those villagers employed in the ecotourism industry will lose their jobs.

Perhaps most persuasively, he teaches that there is not only a risk to the very wildlife on which local communities depend, but there is a health risk from consumption of bushmeat. “Do you know that you can contract diseases like monkey fever and anthrax when you eat meat that has not been inspected by Public Health Officers” he asks. In fact, during the performance, Molkacha’s

family becomes violently ill after eating a recently killed and cooked antelope, stunning the family into awareness.

The performance clearly illustrates for its audience the issues surrounding the bushmeat trade, raises awareness on the implications of slaughtering and selling wild animals, and hopefully will lead to a shift in people’s attitudes and behavior toward wildlife.

Carcasses was commissioned by the Born Free Foundation (BFF), after receiving a joint grant from AWI and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM). Together, AWI and ZSM are part of a consortium called Up The Rivers Endeavors, which examines the root causes of human ills in an effort to discover innovative strategies for addressing these problems.

Delivering education to local people on the ground is clearly one way to share knowledge and experiences in developing countries. Using performance art is a sure way to reach vast numbers of people. In Malawi, for instance, small traveling theaters help educate local villagers about AIDS and other vital health matters. In Zimbabwe, the United States Agency for International Development reports that a new television show, *Stu-*

dio 263, which deals with HIV prevention, is the most popular tv show in the country. Performances such as these can simultaneously entertain and educate.

Carcasses will be performed in schools and communities of Nairobi initially, with a view to expanding nationally as funding allows. As part of a wider bushmeat campaign in Kenya, BFF has commissioned the local nongovernmental organization, Youth for Conservation, to undertake a survey of Nairobi butcheries to see what proportion of their meat for sale is from bushmeat. Initial results reveal an alarming 30% of samples coming from wild forest animals.

If we are to arrest the alarming decline of wild animal species slaughtered for their meat, we must engage in a coordinated strategy that includes local people. *Carcasses* could become an invaluable model and, with its expansion, just might be the final tool we need to save duikers, primates, elephants, impala, and other bushmeat species for future generations.

For more information on the bushmeat trade, request a copy of AWI’s “Bushmeat” leaflet or view it online at: www.awionline.org/othercampaigns/Bushmeat/bushmeat.pdf



Maarifa, the Senior Wildlife Warden, tries to talk to the villagers about bushmeat.



A trainee Wildlife Ranger receives his first lesson about the cruelty of snares from Maarifa.



Molkacha celebrates his snare catch of an antelope with his wife and family.



Molkacha prepares the antelope for their evening meal, not knowing that it is infected.

Chimps Safe in Uganda...for Now

Ngamba Island is a sanctuary for orphaned chimpanzees on Lake Victoria in Uganda. Many of its residents had been forcibly taken as infants from their forest home and their families to be sold into the exotic pet and bushmeat trades. The rescued chimpanzees thankfully now are protected in the sanctuary, enjoying a 100-acre rainforest, living together in large, closely-bonded social groups. They are free to roam around the large island.

In January of this year, Uganda's *New Vision* newspaper revealed that the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry planned to export three of the chimpanzees to Changsha Zoo in China. The Ugandan Wildlife Authority inexplicably endorsed this misguided plan and a committee was established to arrange the transfer.

Recent photographs of Changsha Zoo, taken by the Asian Animal Protection Network, reveal deplorable conditions for the animals currently there: black bears standing on broken concrete and brick; a solitary lion snarling from within his barren steel cage; rusting bars of a primate cage. The zoo has a dolphinarium and even a circus, which uses macaques riding bicycles and baby moon bears "boxing." Changsha Zoo already has two chimpanzees who are kept in separate 6' x 4' concrete enclosures—a stark contrast indeed from Ngamba Island.

Although as a condition of the transport the Ugandan Wildlife Authority has pledged not to allow the chimpanzees to be used for entertainment, there appears to be little in the deal to ensure the most basic environmental enrichment for these poor animals. They would suffer the trauma of being removed from their social group in Uganda, and be forced to



A sanctuary should be a haven from the cruelty of the world for the remainder of each resident's life.

integrate into a new, small, barren surrounding in the zoo.

However, the *New Vision* has since reported that the High Court of Uganda has temporarily suspended the export of the chimpanzees, pending a main court hearing later this year by environmental lawyers!

The potential shipment of these chimpanzees as "diplomatic gifts" would surely damage Uganda's growing reputation as a wildlife conservation leader in Africa. Further, it would threaten Uganda's growing status as a prime ecotourism destination; depriving local residents of income from foreign visitors, and preventing these tourists from soaking in the country's naturally resplendent environment. 🐾

Smuggled Gorillas Flown to South Africa

At 1 a.m. on April 1, 2004, Malaysian Airways Flight 201 departed from Kuala Lumpur Airport, Malaysia. Among the many passengers in the cabin were three Malaysian nationals associated with Taiping Zoo. Four young gorillas traveled in the cargo hold.

The gorillas, known as the "Taiping Four" had been smuggled from Nigeria to Malaysia on falsified documents claiming that the wild-caught animals were born in captivity at a Nigerian Zoo (see *AWI Quarterly*, Winter 2003). The reality was that the animals had been born in the wild in Cameroon and probably smuggled across the long road border between Cameroon and Nigeria. The Malaysian Government had issued import permits for these gorillas without checking into the dubious claims that they were captive-born.

In late 2002, the Malaysian Government announced that it would confiscate the gorillas and send them to Pretoria Zoo in South Africa, but Pretoria Zoo has had a poor record with gorillas, five of six having died, including two babies born there. Nevertheless, Pretoria Zoo's cause was

promoted by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. South African Airways, which officially bans primate shipments, was somehow persuaded to carry the baby gorillas.

Instead of sending the primates to South Africa, the gorillas should have been sent to Limbe Wildlife Centre in Cameroon, which has a good record of caring for confiscated gorillas, as requested officially by Cameroon's Minister of the Environment.

It is outrageous that nobody in Malaysia, in or out of government, has been prosecuted in connection with the "Taiping Four" affair. Please send a letter requesting that there be a thorough investigation of the "Taiping Four" gorilla smuggling case, with anyone found to have acted improperly prosecuted or removed from his or her job. Contact the Malaysian Ambassador to your country (or High Commissioner if you live in a Commonwealth nation): The U.S. address is: The Ambassador of Malaysia, Embassy of Malaysia, 2401 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008. 🐾

Committee Drowns Dolphins and Whales with Words

The failure of U.S. regulatory agencies in stopping the emission of ear-splitting noise into the oceans is written in dead whales and dolphins driven to the shores of the Bahamas, Azores, Canary Islands, Greece and Mexico.

But, in the face of this tragic evidence, a million-dollar effort to resolve the conflict between whales and the industries that emit these sounds appears to be sliding towards allowing even higher levels of this deadly sound pollution.

The Marine Mammal Commission, historically the most steadfast government agency in advocating for cetaceans, has convened an advisory committee at the request of Congress. In its second session this committee of "stakeholders" debated different models of calculating just how much damage could afflict marine life given different levels and duration of sound emitted. The committee, which comprises representatives from the shipping, military, oil and gas exploration, research and environmental communities, actually agreed on very little. But the pre-ordained conclusion the group is being directed towards was sadly apparent: that loud shipping and louder military sonar and seismic airguns are inevitable and that the best we can do is try to mitigate some of the harm they cause.

Ever since the Navy tested its Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar and decided the regulations in place to protect marine mammals were too restrictive, protections have been falling and whales have been dying. We really have no idea how many, because whales tend to sink when they die. Researcher Robin Baird estimates that only about 5% of Gray Whales who die while traveling the highly populated California coast are found.

But none of these niggling details daunted the select scientific panel that presented its preliminary conclusions to the advisory committee. Based on the torture of a couple of dolphins and belugas who were subjected to ever louder levels of sound, the panel declared that it took over 183 decibels of sound to cause temporary deafness. This condition was described as no big deal—that it happens to us all the time. But at about 10-20 decibels higher comes the onset of permanent deafness—which is where the panel would like to say *injury begins*.

The problem is, the real world doesn't corroborate these numbers. The cetaceans who stranded in the Bahamas in March 2000 after naval exercises, appear to have been driv-

en to their deaths at sound levels thousands of times lower.

As part of the public comment period allowed at the hearing, AWI weighed in, offering Section IV of the U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research and Training. This document states, "**Unless the contrary is established, investigators should consider that procedures that cause pain or distress in human beings may cause pain or distress in other animals.**" The Navy has set 145 decibels as the maximum safe level for human beings in water. We proposed that this level be the maximum level of ocean sound pollution permitted globally, with the caveat that this level may still be too high in many areas.

Our colleagues on the advisory committee will resist any attempt to expand the sonic assault on the oceans, but we are concerned their cautions may be ignored. We invite all interested to consider attending one of the next meetings of this committee for a rare—and scary—glimpse into the shady pseudo-science behind the rules governing marine mammals and noise. 🐾



A life wasted: intense sound drives some whales and dolphins to shore, while others just sink.

Upcoming meetings:

- July 27–29: Crown Plaza Union Square, San Francisco
- Sept. 28–30: London (venue to be determined)
- Nov. 29–Dec. 3: New Orleans (venue to be determined)

Meeting details can be found at www.mmc.gov/sound.

Bequests to AWI

If you would like to help assure the Animal Welfare Institute's future through a provision in your will, this general form of bequest is suggested:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Animal Welfare Institute, located in Washington, D.C., the sum of \$ _____ and/or (specifically described property).

Donations to AWI, a not-for-profit corporation exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), are tax deductible. We welcome any inquiries you may have. In cases where you have specific wishes about the disposition of your bequest, we suggest you discuss such provisions with your attorney.

Industry Wants You to Eat Downers

OPPOSE H.R. 4121

Less than three months after the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) banned “downed” cattle (animals suffering immobility due to injury and/or illness) from being consumed, the cattle industry has initiated a federal bill, H.R. 4121, misleadingly named the “Consumer and Producer Protection Act of 2004,” which seeks to allow downed cattle back into the human food chain. This ill-conceived bill, which blatantly undermines USDA’s commonsense and long overdue ban, would allow the consumption of cattle unable to stand or walk due to “fatigue, stress, obdurator nerve paralysis, obesity, or one or more broken or fractured appendages, severed tendons or ligaments, or dislocated joints.”

Citing extensive data from other countries, USDA states that downers are at significantly higher risk of having BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or “mad cow disease”) than other cattle. USDA also as-

serts “downer cattle infected with BSE often cannot be found by looking for the typical clinical signs associated with BSE, because the signs of BSE often cannot be differentiated from the signs of the many other diseases and conditions affecting downer cattle.” Case in point, the cows detected with BSE in Canada and the U.S. were identified as non-ambulatory due to calving injuries, pneumonia, and a broken leg.

H.R. 4121 recklessly suggests USDA inspectors can distinguish between diseased and injured downers, and by encouraging the consumption of downed animals, it poses a direct threat to human health. H.R. 4121 also exacerbates animal cruelty since downed animals are often in pain and cannot be moved gently. Rather than being brutally prodded, pulled, and pushed to the kill floor, these animals should be humanely euthanized for their sake and for our own health and morality. 🐾

Don't Experiment on My Beloved Companion Animal!

SUPPORT S. 2346

The Animal Welfare Act was passed in 1966 to prevent the sale of companion animals to laboratories for experimentation, yet dogs and cats obtained through illegal means continue to be sold for research purposes. On April 26th, the Pet Safety and Protection Act was reintroduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) in an effort to finally achieve this important objective. The legislation will prohibit the sale of dogs and cats to research facilities by random source animal dealers such as C.C. Baird (see pages 16 and 17).

USDA licensed Class B dealers are a “cottage industry,” aggressively collecting dogs and cats from “random sources” in order to sell them to laboratories for \$500 or more each, and they are notorious for their

failure to comply with the federal Animal Welfare Act. Some of the animals purchased by random source dealers have been stolen or obtained through deception by individuals responding to “free to a good home” advertisements. Most animals are obtained out of state, making it very difficult for anyone missing a companion animal to locate their dog or cat at the dealer’s facility. Thankfully, this is a dying business as there are only 17 Class B dealers still in operation in the U.S., and of these, seven are currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for violations of the Animal Welfare Act. It is time to reduce the number of these dealers to “0”. Please help by asking your Senators to co-sponsor S. 2346. 🐾

Senate Veterinarian Opposes Horse Slaughter

SUPPORT S. 2352

Senator and veterinarian John Ensign (R-NV) and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) have introduced S. 2352, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, a companion bill to H.R. 857. The legislation has bipartisan support, and we’re pleased to report that 225 Members of the House of Representatives (a majority of the House) have cosponsored H.R. 857.

As we reported in the last *AWI Quarterly*, Bo Derek

has joined the effort to ban horse slaughter. She returned to Washington, DC, along with film legend Tony Curtis and his wife, Jill, to lobby in support of the pending bills. The Curtis’ have a special understanding of the issue because they operate Shiloh Horse Rescue and Sanctuary near Las Vegas, NV, where horses rescued from killer-buyers are cared for, re-trained, and adopted to good homes. 🐾

Just Passing Through? The Assault on Migratory Birds

OPPOSE H.R. 4114

The Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Steve Williams, recently offered the following thought about the May 8, 2004 celebration of International Migratory Bird Day in the United States: “Perhaps more than anything, International Migratory Bird Day is a reminder that wildlife does not recognize political or geographic boundaries. Migratory birds offer a compelling reminder that conservation transcends the borders of human society.” Why then, one might ask, is the U.S. Congress rushing through legislation to facilitate the slaughter of 94 species of migratory birds in America?

Currently, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits the capturing, killing, transporting, or selling of certain migratory birds that have been listed in Conventions signed between the U.S. and Mexico, Japan, (former) Soviet Union, and Canada.

H.R. 4114, the “Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004,” would exclude from protection birds that are not “native” to the United States—birds that are here solely because of human-assisted reintroduction. If the species was not here prior to 1918, it could lose federal protection. This is a completely arbitrary and unscientific distinction that could doom scores of birds.

Among the birds species that would lose protection are the yellow-billed cardinal and nicobar pigeon, both protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); the great white pelican and sarus crane, both protected under the Convention on Migratory Species; and the red-breasted goose and blue-headed quail-dove, both listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

These birds and many others appear to be paying the steep price for one Maryland Congressman’s distaste for mute swans. Congressman Wayne Gilchrest, author of this misdirected legislation, decries the alleged impact that these swans have had on the environment in the Chesapeake Bay. But according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, it is just as likely that waste run off from intensive chicken factories and sewage treatment plants in the area do greater damage to the surrounding habitat.

Interestingly, a recent 2001 court case specifically declared mute swans protected under the MBTA. Legislators in Washington, DC, often decry judges who



Patrick Hornberger, Save Maryland Swans

The elegant mute swan has become a scapegoat for environmental damage in the Chesapeake Bay.

seem to “legislate from the bench.” With H.R. 4114, a handful of Members of Congress appear determined to don black robes and overturn a court case through legislation.

In the end, H.R. 4114 undermines the essential spirit of the original Act and the Migratory Bird Treaties it implemented: that the U.S. should do its part to ensure that birds are protected along the entirety of their migratory routes, including throughout America. It would be shameful if other nations were going to great lengths to protect a bird, while here at home we allowed them to be killed indiscriminately. The legislation does not endeavor to understand which, if any, migratory bird species affect their environment negatively, nor does it assess what impact removal of certain species will have on their ecosystem. Under the bill as it stands birds that have been settled here for more than 80 years could lose their protection.

Members of the House of Representatives and Senate must not rush to judgment on the fate of 94 species of birds to appease one Congressman who wants mute swans out of Maryland. On May 5, 2004, the bill was approved by the House Resources Committee. We hope it goes no further. 🐾

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Urge your United States Representative to oppose H.R. 4121 and H.R. 4114. Address Representatives as: The Honorable (full name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.
- Urge both of your United States Senators to cosponsor S. 2346 and S. 2352. Address Senators as: The

- Honorable (full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.
- Visit www.saplonline.org for the name of your Representative and for updates and action you can take on animal related legislation.

A Glimpse Behind the Kennel Door

A complaint alleging hundreds of violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act by licensed Class B dealer C.C. Baird and his wife, operators of Martin Creek Kennels, provides a horrifying look inside a random source dealer's operation. Following are a summary of and quotations* from the 108-page document filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 11.

"Respondents have made a great deal of money from their large-scale sales of dogs and cats to research facilities. They have derived their substantial income through illegal means. Their violations alleged herein strike at the

*emphasis theirs



very heart of the Animal Welfare Act and are directly contrary to the three congressional purposes that prompted its enactment nearly forty years ago" to insure that animals intended for use in research are provided humane care and treatment, to assure the humane treatment of animals during transportation, and to prevent the sale or use of animals who have been stolen.

Baird and his wife *"treated hundreds of animals cruelly and inhumanely, in myriad ways, including failing to provide them with the most basic needs: sufficient and nutritive food, potable water, safe shelter and adequate veterinary care."* The Bairds *"continued to acquire large numbers of random-source animals, and to keep scant or no records, while paying lip service to their adherence to the law."*

Baird made a formal arrangement with his part-time veterinarian *"that specifically excluded a written program of veterinary care and regularly scheduled visits to respondents' premises"* and the veterinarian *"merely performed 'walk-through observations' and performed no regularly-scheduled examinations*

of animals, and provided no regularly scheduled care to animals." Dogs were suffering malnutrition, dehydration, lameness, conjunctivitis, infections, and lacerations; many fresh puncture wounds and cuts appeared to be the result of fights with other animals and one dog lost part of her ear to an aggressive dog in her pen. One beagle had 3 lacerations, a puncture wound, and *"an area of painful swelling...that ruptured upon moderate palpation, emitting a pale yellow-green purulent exudate."* A hound suffered from a host of ills including *"a possible femoral head fracture."*

The Bairds paid a veterinarian \$5 apiece to sign blank copies of official health certificates for dogs and cats. The Bairds completed hundreds of these documents using false information before transporting animals to research laboratories.

During the summer, Baird subjected dogs inside his kennel to intense heat and humidity. In late August 2003, the temperature inside the dog building was recorded at 97.2 degrees Fahrenheit, and that night the temperature dropped to a mere 84 degrees. Even dogs in out-

door runs during extreme heat exhibited *"signs of stress and discomfort."*

Baird's employees *"failed to conduct even minimal cleaning of respondents' facility and animals, failed to comprehend basic animal husbandry requirements, and failed to provide food and water to animals."* Failure to clean pens often enough resulted in dogs being prevented *"from walking without stepping in urine, feces and food debris."* During the cleaning of their enclosures, dogs in the main compound were sprayed with a combination of water, urine, feces and food refuse by employees.

There was an infestation of rats, mice, and roaches. *"USDA personnel observed, upon turning on the lights in the main kennel room during night rounds at 1:30 a.m., among the dozens of live rats and mice in all areas of the room, one rat that had become stuck in the wall, and was killed and eaten on the spot"* by a dog in the pen, and *"USDA personnel observed no fewer than twenty rat burrows in the main dog compound."* There were *"swarms of flies in the animal enclosures...and food infested with insect larvae."*

Dog and cat enclosures were in poor condition with protruding wires, chipping paint, and excessively rusted surfaces. Urine was soaking into wood floors and algae and moss were growing on wooden posts. Some areas were rusted through leaving holes in the floor. Poor cage design led a number of animals to catch a paw and become lame.

A hole between adjoining dog pens was large enough for a small dog to enter the adjoining enclosure where he was injured by a larger aggressive dog. There was a strong ammonia smell from a lack of sufficient ventilation in two of the cat rooms. The *"... 'puppy barn' facility had extremely poor lighting insufficient to permit inspections, leaving all of the enclosures dark to the extent that thirty animals could not be seen without opening the cages and shining a flashlight into the enclosures."*

Water for the animals *"was murky and contained dead flies and heavy green algae"* and most water and food receptacles for cats were contaminated by kitty litter. The food receptacles in the dog runs had an accumulation of brown, crusty debris and contained *"varying amounts of wet and caked food remains, which attracted numerous flies."* Five-gallon buckets were used to feed dogs, and the small dogs couldn't reach their food; not surprisingly, they were *"in very thin condition,"* and a male terrier *"could not reach any of the food contained in a bucket hanging from a chain at the rear of the pen, and consequently the dog was very thin, and ate voraciously when provided with accessible food."*

In January 2001, Baird *"failed to handle 16 dogs in transportation as carefully as possible in a manner that did not cause trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm and unnecessary discomfort, resulting in the death of at least one dog."* Baird was also cited for overcrowding dogs during transport and failing to offer food and water to animals transported for longer than 12 hours.

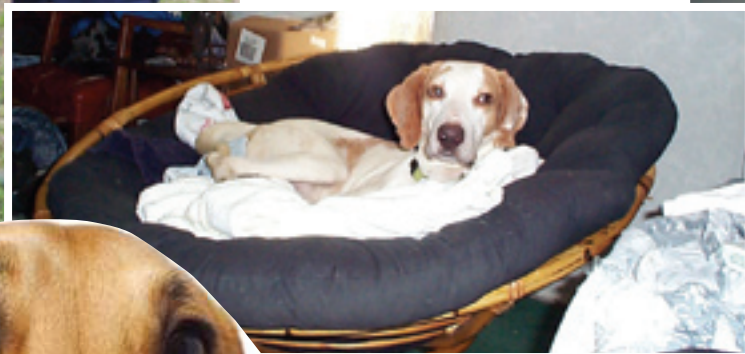
Baird had myriad sources for dogs and cats. The complaint alleges that at least 18 dogs and cats were obtained *"by use of false pretenses, misrepresentation, or deception."* He collected some animals at "trade days" in Ripley, MS, Joplin, MO, and Poplar Bluff, MO. While many people sold him one or two animals, others provided as many as five, eight and even 15 animals at one time. We will never know where many of Baird's animals came from since he has a long-standing problem maintaining comprehensive and

accurate records. The complaint specifically cites 156 dogs and 168 cats who Baird acquired without obtaining complete information identifying the people who sold him animals. In addition, at least 137 dogs and cats were acquired illegally from people who had not bred and raised the animals as mandated by the Animal Welfare Act; Baird's illegal purchases included "stray" animals.

C.C. Baird and his wife have denied all of the charges. USDA has requested "an expedited oral hearing" and is seeking the maximum civil penalties and revocation of all licenses. In the meantime, Baird is still in business, and apparently about a dozen experimental laboratories shamelessly continue to buy animals from him. No doubt there will be more news to come. 🐾



Sadly we report the death of Buck, the sweet-faced coonhound from the cover of the AWI Quarterly, Fall 2003. Buck had been undergoing veterinary treatment since his rescue from Baird's premises in August. He died from a massive bleed, the result of damage caused by thousands of heartworms. We send condolences to the veterinarian, Dr. Jones, and his family, and to Marcia Cowen and the Doberman Rescue Group, who had done so much for dear Buck.



One hundred and twenty five dogs and 1 cat were seized from C.C. Baird and placed with rescue groups in seven states. Some have rebounded from their ordeal very quickly, while others are still terrified of men, being touched, loud noises, sudden movements and even flashlights. Pictured above are Max, Paulie, and Maggie; at left, Gromit (photo by Reid Ashton); and at right Chase with his cat companion—all enjoying their new homes and lots of love. Maggie who is sitting with her "dad," was adopted by a USDA inspector who stated, "I found this [to be] one of the more rewarding things I have done in the 14 years I have been with Animal Care, and Maggie serves as a daily reminder to me that 'we' can make a difference for some!"

Do Laboratory Rats Benefit from More Cage Space?

BY ALYSSA FOULKES

Central Animal Facility, Building #12, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1, CANADA

Introduction

In the United States, rodents used in research are commonly kept in minimum sized, barren cages. In Canada, trends toward environmental enrichment have been implemented in many research facilities. However, biomedical researchers do occasionally require animals to be housed in small, wire bottom cages for the purpose of urine and fecal collection. Investigators often argue that the animals do not find such living quarters to be stressful, and that they would not make use of additional space. The present study examines if this assumption is really correct.

Methods

The subjects of this project were 24 male Wistar Han rats who were all 31 days old at the beginning of the study. The animals were kept either in small wire bottom cages that had a floor area of 432 cm² or in large test cages that had a floor area of 1088 cm². All cages were 18 cm high and of the same design (Figure 1). The cages were either barren or enriched with a PVC tube of 6 cm length and 3 cm diameter plus a Nylabone™ (Figure 2). The animals had ad libitum access to pelleted food and water.

Six rats each were assigned to the following four housing conditions:

- small barren cage (Group 1)
- small enriched cage (Group 2)
- large barren cage (Group 3)
- large enriched cage (Group 4)

The amount of time spent moving around, resting on the cage floor, contacting the PVC tube [resting in or on it] and contacting the Nylabone™ [gnawing, pushing around] was recorded for each individual rat four times a week from 10-11 am over a period of six weeks. The amount of food consumed was recorded weekly for each animal. The animals' body weights were taken once a week. Their stress levels were estimated also once a week by scoring the porphyrin staining around the nose and back of the neck of each of the 24 rats. Porphyrin is a red pigment that is secreted by the Harderian glands when a rat is stressed. The weights of the rats, their feed, and their porphyrin scores were recorded weekly on Mondays. The study ended on Monday of week seven. No behavioural observations were recorded in week seven.



Figure 1 (left): One of the two cage racks housing the 24 rats of this study. Note the same design but different sizes and equipment of the cages.

Figure 2 (above): One of the rats of Group 4. Note that the large cages have twice the enrichment as the small cage—two Nylabones and two PVC tubes.

Results and Discussion

Regardless of the housing condition, the rats of all four groups spent about the same percentage of observation-time moving around (~30%) and the same amount of time resting (~54%). This implies that neither the provision of more space nor the provision of enrichment encouraged the animals to engage in more exercise.

Those rats who lived in enriched cages spent approximately 3% of the test session time contacting the Nylabone™ versus more than 40% of the time contacting the PVC tube which, apparently, was much more attractive and/or useful for the animals. Both, in the small and in the large cages, the animals spent more time resting in/on the PVC tube (~30%) than on the bare floor (~23%). This suggests that rats feel more comfortable and perhaps more secure with a PVC tube offering an elevated vantage point plus seclusion than with the bare floor. The porphyrin scores substantiate this assumption: The scores were significantly higher in rats housed in small or large cages that were barren than in rats housed in small or large cages that were furnished with a PVC tube. The lowest porphyrin scores were found in rats living in the large PVC tube-furnished cages (Figure 3). This housing environment was the least stressful one of the four test situations.

The animals' stress status was reflected in their food consumption with rats living in barren cages eating much more

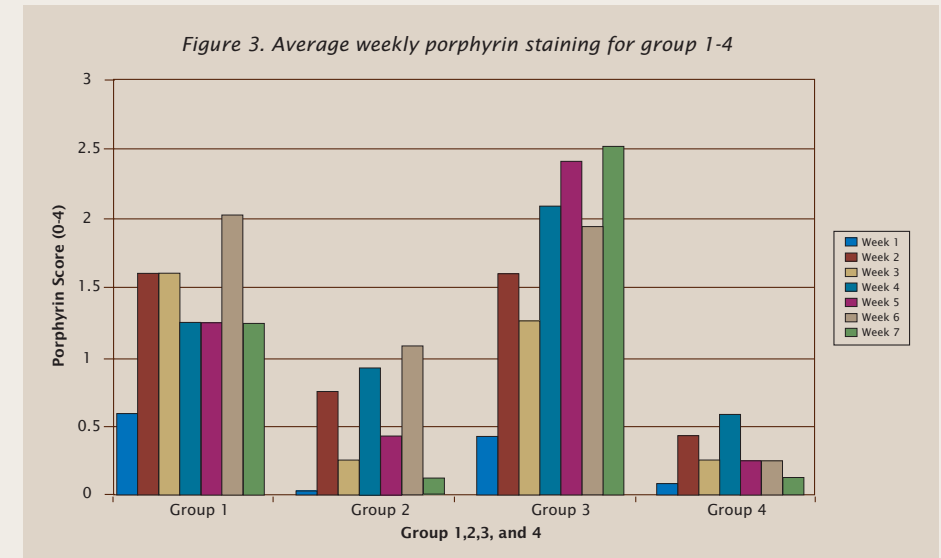


Figure 3: Average weekly porphyrin scores reflecting the stress levels of the four groups of rats.

food and gaining significantly more weight than rats living in the enriched cages (Figure 4). Rats kept in the typical, barren standard cages very often become obese. The present findings indicate that this problem is related to stressful living conditions, similar to obesity in modern people living in stressful environments.

Conclusions

Laboratory rats do not benefit from more cage space, unless the space is provisioned with proper enrichment such as a PVC tube. Being confined in a small standard cage is a much more stressful experience for rats than being confined in a larger cage furnished with a PVC tube. Access to a PVC tube reduces a rat's stress level in a small cage, but the stress is still much higher than in a large cage with a PVC tube.

Stress is a sign of poor welfare. Housing laboratory rats in larger cages that are furnished with PVC tubes rather than in small standard cages would, therefore, contribute to the animals' welfare. It would also improve scientific research methodology by reducing the variable stress resulting from inappropriate living quarters.

Acknowledgments

Thank you Animal Welfare Institute for providing the 2003 Refinement Award to fund this study. Thank you to the 24 rats, of which 10 have already been adopted and placed into good homes. Thank you to Dr. Atkinson, Dr. Duncan, Dr. Widowski, and Margaret Quinton for all your guidance and assistance. Finally, thank you to the staff at Animal Care Services for your dedication to the animals in your charge. 🐾

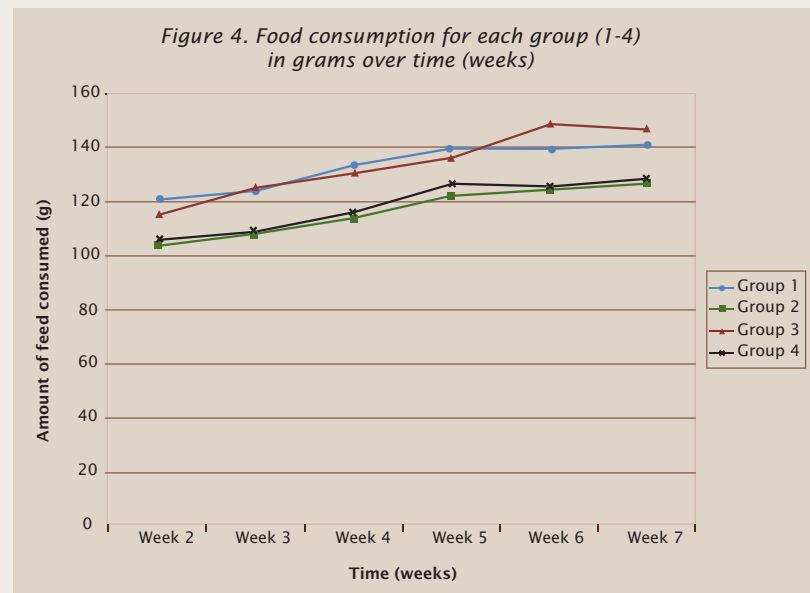


Figure 4: Average food consumption per week for each group of rats.

Cats Seized from a Pet Trade Cattery

Acting on a tip, authorities discovered and seized sixty Maine Coon cats kept under appalling conditions in a house in Harrison, New York. The animals were being bred so their kittens could be sold for as much as \$1,100 each for the pet trade. Most of the cats had been confined several to a cage. Many were thin and suffered from upper respiratory infections, urinary tract infections, ear infections, diarrhea, parasites and ring worm. An additional sign of neglect was massive mats down to the skin in the cats' fur. The building reeked, and there were urine stains and feces all over the carpet.

The business, in existence for several years, was operated by Ruth Sonnevill under the name Charlemaine Maine Coon Cattery, and the offspring were being advertised for sale over the internet. The company's web site described how Sonnevill had previously bred German shepherds and Great Danes, but had switched to Maine Coon cats after moving to



These young cats suffering from upper respiratory infection were slated to be breeders. The place was filthy; even the wall behind them is urine-stained.

a smaller building; shortly after the bust, the web site was removed from the internet. Apparently internet sales of both cats and dogs are increasing dramatically.

In this case, a potential buyer called authorities after seeing overcrowding and smelling an overwhelming stench. Frequently, commercial breeders don't want customers to see the squalid conditions or the tragic state of the breeding animals so they either conduct business with potential buyers at locations that are separate from the breeding facility—or they

sell their animals based on internet photographs and ship them directly to their new homes.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not require commercial breeders such as this who are selling animals retail to be licensed and regulated under the federal Animal Welfare Act. The local District Attorney's Office has decided not to prosecute Ms. Sonnevill though she will likely face fines from the Health and

Building Departments.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) of Westchester, the group that conducted the seizure, has provided veterinary care for the cats and is seeking financial support for their care and adoptive homes for the animals. Mimi Einstein, SPCA President noted, "Obviously, Ms. Sonnevill was not equipped to handle this number of animals. Every single cat there wound up suffering in some regard because of neglect. The conditions on the premises were completely out of hand." 🐾



Animal Welfare Institute

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