

Legislating an End

DOGFIGHTING IS A felony in the majority of states, but cockfighting is a felony in far fewer states. In fact, it is still legal in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Louisiana.

In those states in which dogfighting and cockfighting are not felonies, animal fighters consider misdemeanor fines as merely a business expense.

Also, promoters and trainers simply migrate from states where animal fighting is a felony to states where the penalties are less severe or the law is not aggressively enforced.

If you would like more information on what you can do to help end animal fighting, including our activist packet, write or call us at the address and phone number on the back of this brochure or visit our website, www.AnimalFighting.org.



HSUS/MICRO/GEORFFREY SIMMONS

A puppy who has been rescued during a raid conducted at an illegal dogfighting operation.



HSUS/ERIC SWACH

HSUS investigations have led to raids of major cock-fighting rings. Yet, despite laws barring it, cockfighting remains a gruesome activity that must be ended. Where animal fighting is allowed, other illegal activities flourish.

BORN TO LOSE: Animals Forced to Fight

THEY CALL IT A SPORT, BUT WHERE IS THE SPORT IN watching two animals attack each other, often with lethal consequences? In recent years, there has been an unprecedented increase in dogfighting and cockfighting, both in urban settings and rural areas of the country. For some unknown reason, human spectators look upon the suffering and pain of the animals as entertainment.



HSUS/GREHAVENS

Where is the sport in watching a dog receive wounds like these?

Even though animal fighting has no place in a civilized society, it remains rampant in the United States, with tens of thousands of enthusiasts. That is why The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is engaged in a national campaign to expose this gruesome practice, train law enforcement agencies to investigate and arrest participants, strengthen laws against it, and impose bans on the activity where it is now permitted.

The HSUS is fighting activities that treat animals as if they are trash.



HSUS/R.WEIRAUCH

THE HSUS ON ANIMAL FIGHTING

THE FINAL ROUND



HSUS/FAVERAUCH



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Promoting the protection of all animals

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

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THE HSUS ON ANIMAL FIGHTING

THE FINAL ROUND



CAPE COD TIMES/STEVE HESLIP

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Anatomy of a Dogfight

THE AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIER IS THE MOST popular breed of dog used in dogfighting. Although the dogs average only 40–50 pounds, their jaws are extraordinarily muscular and capable of breaking an opponent's leg. On top of that, generations of selective breeding for maximum aggressiveness, combined with often cruel training methods and conditioning regimes that can involve the use of drugs and steroids, has resulted in dogs who are capable of inflicting terrible wounds or killing an opponent.



Unfortunately, the cruelties of dogfighting begin early in a dog's life and are not limited to the animals who are forced to fight.

Dogs who are forced to fight can inflict deadly injuries on each other. Those who survive a loss may be killed by their owners, and even winning dogs may die from their wounds.

In a dogfight, two dogs are placed in a pit enclosed by plywood walls, where they must fight before a crowd of cheering spectators until one dog is too injured or exhausted to continue. The dogs, both the winner and the loser, usually suffer from multiple puncture wounds and deep lacerations.

After the match, if a dog had an embarrassing loss, it is not unheard of for the dog to be shot or have his throat cut so the breeder won't get a reputation for selling puppies of poor-quality fighting dogs. Even winning dogs sometimes die as a result of their injuries. This isn't surprising, considering that dogfighters can't run to the vet with battered animals for fear of being turned over to authorities. Instead, using tape or suture kits to close up gaping wounds, owners do the job themselves.

Anatomy of a Cockfight

WITH RAZOR-SHARP, STEEL BLADES CALLED GAFFS—three-inch-long, ice-pick-like weapons—attached to their legs, specially bred roosters, called gamecocks, are pitted against each other in small arenas. There, trained to fight and often drugged with stimulants and steroids, they plunge and slash each other in a deadly duel. The gaffs inflict deep puncture wounds, wings and legs are broken, and eyes are gouged out. Within minutes, the contestants may be staggering from their injuries, but they are allowed no respite from combat. Handlers pick up the birds and blow on their heads to revive them. If a bird has suffered a puncture wound to his lungs and is drowning in



Gamecocks are fitted with gaffs in order to inflict the most damage possible on another bird.



To ensure that they will fight, birds are drugged with stimulants and steroids. In a cockfight, birds' wings may be broken, their eyes gouged out, and their lungs punctured, but quitting is not allowed.

his own blood, his handler may suck the blood from the bird's lungs through his beak so that the bird can continue fighting. Matches typically end only when one of the birds is incapable of attacking his opponent.

Cockfighters often argue that the birds are naturally aggressive. But in nature, roosters seldom

fight to the death. Fighting cocks are purposely bred and trained to fight. They are often drugged and are armed and fitted with artificial spurs for fighting. Finally, they are forced to continue fighting because quitting is not permitted.



Gaffs ensure deep puncture wounds, but puncture wounds are no guarantee that a cockfight will stop—matches end only when one bird is left standing.

Cycle of Violence

THERE ARE OTHER NEGATIVE ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED with animal fighting. Law enforcement officials nationwide have documented a strong connection between organized animal fighting and other crimes and violence. For example, illegal gambling is the norm during animal fights since spectators wager on the outcome. With the thousands of dollars that are bet, the owner of a winning animal can collect anywhere from several hundred to tens of thousands of dollars in undeclared income.



While a dog's pain is obvious, everyone suffers where animal fighting is tolerated.

With so much money present, it is not uncommon for firearms to be present as well. In fact, during raids of dogfighting and cockfighting events, it is not unusual to find firearms and illegal drugs.

The exposure of young children to this world of cruelty, gambling, guns, drugs, and other violence is another shocking aspect of animal fighting. Witnessing such brutality can promote insensitivity towards animal suffering and enthusiasm for violence. Even children who do not attend the fights may be at risk. The presence of dangerously aggressive animals in a community increases the risk of attacks on children who, because of their small size, may be perceived as another animal.