

PETA Protests at County Fairs

PETA has been showing up at county fairs protesting diving mules and talking to 4-H Club members about alternatives to raising prize livestock. It also has stopped turtle racing as a part of a rock concert promotion and a guess-the-weight-of-the-cow contest.

PETA's efforts to stop a county fair exhibition of mule diving was thwarted, however, when a veterinarian hired by the Prince William County, VA animal control and county attorney offices said that the mule diving was not cruel and could proceed if the position of the access ramp was changed. The mules climb unassisted up a metal stairwell to the top of a 30-foot tower and then dive into a six-foot-deep, 20-foot-wide tank of water.

As for the 4-H Club members, PETA members said they will encourage the Club's members to turn to alternative projects because it is wrong to teach a child to raise an animal only to sell it for slaughter.

A radio station, promoting a concert by the Turtles, announced that it would conduct a turtle race at the bar of a local hotel. The race was to be between two dime-store turtles. After a protest by PETA, which claimed that the noise and atmosphere at the bar could cause damage (mostly psychological) to the turtles, mechanical turtles were substituted.

Another promotion, guess-the-weight-of-the-cow, also was called off when PETA protested the exploitation of the animal.

President's Cancer Panel, Advisory Board Voice Concerns About Animal Use Restrictions

The National Cancer Advisory Board and the President's Cancer Panel both have issued statements expressing concern about national, state, and local legislation that would restrict the use of animals for purposes of research and urged President Reagan to veto any legislation passed by the Congress that would restrict the use of animals in cancer research.

The statements were sent to President Reagan by the panel's chairman, Armand Hammer.

The panel's statement said, "The panel hereby reports to the President its growing concern that cancer research is being increasingly jeopardized by current and proposed local, state, and national legislation, by illegal activities of elements of the animal rights movement, and by public mis-

conceptions regarding the need to use animals in biomedical research.

"The panel finds a continuing and absolute scientific need to use animals in cancer research, including research on anti-cancer and anti-AIDS drugs, vaccines, diagnostic methods, and studies of biology of cancer, its causation, and prevention. Blocking this research impedes the progress of the National Cancer Program and severely reduces its benefits for the health of the American people."

The panel requested the President "not to sign any legislation which may be presented to you by the Congress that would curtail the necessary use of animals in cancer research." The panel also urged that persons "who act illegally to disrupt such research be vigorously prosecuted."

In its resolution the cancer board noted that "progress in cancer research depends upon the humane and scientifically appropriate use of animals for research; and . . . major advances in cancer research have depended on the use of animals . . . and . . . there are major areas of cancer research, including studies of causation, prevention, and treatment, in which the continued use of animals is essential."

The resolution "calls upon national, state, and local legislators, health professionals, scientists, and others to support the humane use of animals in research to ensure continued progress against cancer. Furthermore, the Board affirms that further proscription or curtailment of the use of animals in research threatens to paralyze future progress against cancer."

Massachusetts First to Prohibit Theft of Lab Property, Animals

Massachusetts has become the nation's first state to enact legislation recognizing the removal of property from research institution as a felony offense.

The Massachusetts legislature unanimously approved a bill that prohibits the unauthorized removal of property from any premises in which animals are housed or used for research by a research institution. The law also prohibits the interference with or the release of any animals that may constitute a threat to public health or citizen safety.

Penalties for crimes proven to be malicious and willful range from a maximum of 10 years in prison and a fine up to \$25,000; for crimes proven to be willful but not malicious, the maximum penalties are 5 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000.

Senate Passes Pet Theft Act; House Action is Uncertain

In the waning hours before the start of its summer recess the Senate approved the Pet Theft Act (S. 2353). The bill had been cleared earlier in the day when there was no objection by any senator after each senate office was notified that the bill was to be placed on the consent calendar for passage without a recorded vote.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "We worked with concerned parties and altered the bill so that it is acceptable to everyone." The immediate action on the bill was requested by its sponsor Sen. Wendell Ford (D-KY) because there will be very little time for its consideration after the summer recess before the 100th Congress adjourns in October.

The Pet Theft Act was introduced last April by Ford as a replacement for the Pet Protection Act, which he had introduced almost a year earlier. The latter bill was opposed by the scientific community, including APS, whose members conducted a vigorous letter writing campaign last winter because the legislation, if enacted, would not protect pets inasmuch as it did not apply to pounds and dealers, but rather, it would make researchers ineligible for federal funds if unclaimed pound animals were used, regardless of source.

The Pet Theft Act is aimed at the pounds and dealers by requiring pounds and shelters to hold all animals for at least seven days and by prohibiting dealers to sell any unclaimed cat or dog without a certificate identifying the animal and the place and time of sale.

Although APS applauded Ford for his substitution of the pet theft bill for the pet protection bill, the Society voiced its concern that the bill would raise the purchase costs of unclaimed dogs and cats and that it only covered pounds and shelters operated by state, county, or local government and not private shelters and pounds subsidized by county or local governments. The latter provision was incorporated in the Senate-approved bill.

What action the House will take is uncertain. There is no companion bill in the House, and there has been virtually no interest in pet theft legislation. The House has had for the last three Congresses a pet protection bill identical to the Senate version that was set aside by Ford last April.

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