

REGULAR EVENTS

Greyhound Stadium protests

Hove 1st Sunday of month at 11am, Nevill Rd Coventry Sat 6.30-7.30pm Stadium between Binley Woods & Brandon, on A428 Rugby Rd. Also Fri 12th/19th Dec in run up to Xmas.

Sittingbourne Demos every Sat 5.30-7.30pm at Church Rd, Eurolink Industrial Est., Murston, Sittingbourne ME10 3SB contact: rob_gg_1@yahoo.co.uk or 07809 426112

Wimbledon S. W. London. Leafleting Sat 6pm

Manchester Kirkmanshulme Lane, Gorton, Sats 6-7.30pm. greyhoundactionmanchester@hotmail.com

Ladbroke National phone blockade 1st Mon of month Freephone: 0800 524524

Fur protests 11am every Sat & Sun outside Harrods, Brompton Rd, Knightsbridge. Also some weekdays. Contact Fur Free London Campaign. 0845 458 4775 or 07796 774200

Edinburgh - Info Stalls every Sat at east end of Princes St 10am-1pm. Every Sat. 12-1pm outside Registry House, then to Multrees Walk & Princes St. Leafleting evenings, weather permitting outside Pride of Scotland, Princes St 4.45pm. info@bunnyhuggers.org.uk

SPEAK Demo Thurs 1pm S. Parks Rd, Oxford + many others - see website

SHAC Demo at the gates of HLS every Wed 4-6pm + others - see website

NIMR Wednesdays 6:30pm at The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7. Nearest tube, Mill Hill E. The 240 bus stops right outside NIMR

Sat 4th April Boycott Oxford demo in London. Meet at Eros in Piccadilly Circus at 1pm

Sun 5th April Benefit gig for Portslade Rabbit Rescue by Robb Johnson & the Incredibles. 1pm Duke of Wellington Pub Shoreham by Sea, Sussex. Entry by donation.

11th -13th April Zoo Awareness Weekend More info from www.captiveanimals.org

Sun 12th April Open Day at Sussex Horse Rescue, Hempstead Farm, Hempstead Lane, Uckfield. 11am-4pm. Stalls, food, lots of different animals. Open every Sunday throughout the summer.

Sat 18th April The Incredible Veggie Show. The Royal Horticultural Halls, Lawrence Hall & Conference Centre, Greycoat St, 10am - 6pm. Over 100 stalls, cookery demos, talks by Heather Mills, Juliet Gellatley, Prof Jane Plant, Keith Mann, food samples, nutritional advice, kids' play area & café Tickets £4, (£3 in advance) under 18s free. contact angie@viva.org.uk

AND WRAS spring fair 9.30am - 12noon at the Clinton Centre, opp. Barclays Bank, Seaford Town Centre. www.wildlifeambulance.org

Wed 22nd April Anti Vivisection short films. 7-10pm, Autonomous Centre Edinburgh. Followed by discussion. Contact info@bunnyhuggers.org.uk if you're going.

Sat 25th April National March and Rally in London to mark World Day for Laboratory Animals. Meet 12 noon, Hyde Park, Reformers' Tree, nr Speakers' Corner (Tube: Marble Arch). March from Hyde Park through the centre of London, to take the anti-vivisection message to large numbers of shoppers, tourists & residents. Then rally at Parliament to protest against the government's pro-vivisection policies. This could be the largest anti-vivisection protest for many years, so please make every effort to attend

Sat 2nd May Greyhound Action benefit at The Varsity, Wolverhampton. 6pm til midnight. £5 This event has been organised to tie in with the Remembering Rusty weekend.

Sat 9th May Degree Ceremony. Oxford. Meet from 10.30The Sheldonian Theatre corner of Broad St & Cattle St Oxford City Centre

Sat 16th May Veggie Pride, Birmingham City Centre. Outdoor festival with food, stalls, live stage entertainment. A vibrant carnival procession through the streets, with local steel band, samba band, colourful costumes, banners, flags etc. www.veggiepride.org.uk
AND Global boycott Proctor & Gamble Day. To order your pack and register your action, send an email to dan@uncaged.co.uk entitled 'PG Day 2009' and let us know: Your name;

Your group's name (if applicable); address (incl. postcode); phone number; Your email address; Details of your proposed event for the Day of Action (what, where and when); Any comments or specific requests.

Wed 20th May Showing of Earthlings. 7-10pm, Autonomous Centre Edinburgh. Contact info@bunnyhuggers.org.uk if you're going.

Sat 23rd May Open day at Huggletts Wood Farm Animal Sanctuary, Grovelye Lane, Churches Green, Dallington, E. Sussex. 11am - 5.30pm.
AND Degree ceremony, Oxford. Meet from 10.30 The Sheldonian Theatre corner of Broad St & Cattle St Oxford City Centre

Sat 6th June 11am-4pm: Peas vs Pills, St George's Church, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. 1-day workshop on healing through a better understanding of anatomy, physiology & nature's laws. £10 - vegan lunch included. Only 50 places available bookings@bunnyhuggers.org.uk
Workshop conducted by Dr Nandita Shah, a homeopath for the last 25 years, presently on tour in Europe, spreading awareness on how people can take responsibility for their own health through simple lifestyle changes.

Wed 24th June Showing of Behind the Mask at 7-10pm, Autonomous Centre Edinburgh

Wed 22nd July Meat the Truth 7-10pm, Autonomous Centre Edinburgh

Sat 1st - Sat 16th Aug Vegan Camp Monkey Tree Holiday Park, Rejerrah, Newquay, TR8 5QR, Cornwall. Campers will be welcome for any period within the fortnight. There are some caravans to let weekly on site but early enquiries are essential. They sell out quickly and the site will be full in August. Everyone *must* be vegan on site but all are welcome whether vegan or not. Activities and events organised throughout the fortnight. Please e-mail Gordon Forrest - gforrest@tiscali.co.uk - for booking forms, costs & info. Please e-mail Daniel Strettle for all caravan, campsite and booking inquiries. danielsherwoodjohnstrettle@yahoo.co.uk

Brighton Animal Action Meet 3rd Wed of the month at 7.15pm Cowley Club, London Rd Brighton e-mail: info@brightonanimalaction.org Tel:07974 201999 Address: Brighton Animal Action, c/o BARC PO Box307 Brighton BN2 1HW

JFA Info line 01323 831818 Fax 01323 833519 JFA, PO Box 191, Hailsham, BN27 9BD justiceforanimals@btinternet.com

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty c/o Friends, 89 Bush Rd, East Peckham, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 5LJ Tel: 0845 458 0630 info@shac.net

SPEAK PO Box 6712, Northampton, NN2 6XR. info@speackcampaigns.org.uk www.speackcampaigns.org Tel: +44 (0)845 330 7985

Loughborough Animal Concern PO Box 5515 Loughborough, Leics LE11 1ZQ Tel: 01509 415024 / 07981 789481

Covance Campaign Pickets at Otley Road, Harrogate. Tel: 07960 992824/07949 349630 www.covancecampaign.com

Bantin & Kingman Campaign PO Box 29, Hull, HU12 8YA. Tel: 07977 637293

Fur Free London Campaign. Call 0845 458 4775 or 07796 774200 to confirm time and venue of pickets.

Hunt Saboteurs Association To get involved this season: BM HSA London WC1N 3XX Tel: 0845 450 0727 or e-mail: info@huntsabs.org.uk

Cambridge Animal Rights Meet 4th Mon of month at The Bath House, Gwydir St. Cambridge. Contact: 01223 311828

Cambridge Vegan Society Meet 2nd Sat month 10.30am - 12 Rainbow Café Kings Parade & 4th Mon 7 pm India Centre café. Contact Adam, 01223 520311 adam@gimp.org, www.vegancambridge.org.uk

Wickham Labs 1st & 3rd Fridays - see the workers out. www.SwatOnline.co.uk StopWickhamAnimalTesting@msn.com Tel: 0845 458 4673

Nat. Inst. of Med. Research Pickets Weds from 6.30pm The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London. Tel: Chrissie 0208 203 2325

CIWF 2nd Floor, river Court, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1EZ Tel: 01483 521950 Fax: 01483 861639 E-mail: compassion@ciwf.co.uk

SEAR 7.30pm 1st Tues of month Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Rd, Croydon info@sear.org.uk PO Box 1072 Coulsdon CR5 2ZT www.se-ar.org.uk

KALE, info line: 01304 204688. e-mail kale@globalnet.co.uk PO Box 363 Folkestone, Kent CT20 3GJ

Seriously Ill Against Vivisection S.I.A.V. PO Box 116, High Wycombe, HP14 3WX Tel: 0845 458 1720 e-mail: info@siav.org

Vegan Prisoners Support Group NEW ADDRESS: BM Box 2107, London WC1N 3XX Tel/Fax: 020 8292 8325 E-mail: hvpc@vpsg.freemove.co.uk

Uncaged Campaigns 9 Bailey Lane, Sheffield S1 4EG Tel: 0114 272 2220 info@uncaged.co.uk

London Animal Rights www.londonanimalrights.org Tel: 07899 775493

Uncaged Campaigns 9 Bailey Lane, Sheffield S1 4EG Tel: 0114 272 2220 E-mail: info@uncaged.co.uk

Viva 8 York Court, Wilder Street, Bristol BS2 8QH Tel: 0117 970 5190 Fax: 0117 924 4646 or e-mail info@vegetarian.org.uk

Animal Aid The Old Chapel, Bradford St, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1AW. Tel: 01732 364546 e-mail: info@animalaid.org.uk

Manchester Animal Protection 7.30pm 1st Wed of month. The Basement, Lever St. Tel: 0845 456 2492 info@mapsoc.org.uk www.mapsoc.org.uk

S. Devon A.R 7.45pm 3rd Thurs at Crown & Sceptre, Petitor Rd, Torquay. 07760 284599 bigtrouble@eurobell.co.uk www.sdar.ukhome.net

Animal Protection Agency Brighton Media Centre 68 Middle St Brighton BN1 1AL Tel: 01273 674253 Fax: 01273 674927 Web: www.apa.org.uk

Southern Animal Rights Coalition PO Box 5668, Poole, Dorset. Tel: 0845 458 4673 www.sarconline.co.uk e-mail: info@sarconline.co.uk

Safer Medicines Trust (Previously EMP) PO Box 62720 London SW2 9FQ Tel: 020 8265 2880 info@safermedicines.org www.safermedicines.org

BunnyHuggers 7pm Drinks & meeting - 1st Fri month, Autonomous Centre Edinburgh, 17 W. Montgomery Pl. EH7 5HA. info@bunnyhuggers.org.uk

The European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE), a coalition of 18 animal protection organisations from across Europe - the continent's leading alliance campaigning on behalf of animals used in experiments - has reacted with dismay after Members of the Agriculture Parliamentary Committee voted out measures that would have afforded greater protection to animals in laboratories. Members of the European Parliament, heavily lobbied by the animal research industry, has not only gone against public opinion but has undermined proposals originally put forward by the EC to make major long over-due improvements in animal welfare during the revision of the 20 year old EU legislation governing animal experiments. Claims made by Neil Parish MEP, the parliament's draftsman of the proposals, that the directive will result in improved animal welfare and set the framework to allow the EU to move towards the goal of ending animal experimentation will mislead the public into believing that this is a great day for animals in laboratories. The opposite is the case as the outcome of today's vote will result in: the continued use of wild-caught monkeys and the weakening of a proposed ban on the use of great apes; severe and prolonged suffering; repeated re-use of the same animal; animals such as primates, cats and dogs to be used in experiments, even for trivial purposes; no requirement for official approval for experiments, and the suffering they cause; a secretive system with little information for the public. An opinion poll, recently carried out by Yougov, which took place in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden & the Czech Republic shows that public opinion disagrees: Results show: 81% said the new law should prohibit all experiments causing pain or suffering to primates; 79% of people said the new law should

prohibit all experiments on animals which do not relate to serious or life-threatening human conditions. 84% said the new law should prohibit all experiments causing severe pain or suffering to any animal. 80% agree or strongly agree all information about animal experiments should be publicly available, except information which is confidential and which would identify researchers or where they work. 73% said the new law shouldn't permit experiments causing pain or suffering to cats. 77% said that the new law shouldn't permit experiments causing pain or suffering to dogs. ECEAE Chief Executive, Michelle Thew states: "The opportunity to afford greater protection to animals in laboratories has been lost. It is outrageous that even a ban on the use of wild-caught monkeys, a trade universally recognised as inflicting great cruelty, has been weakened. Members of the Agricultural Committee have gone against public opinion and given in to the multi-billion pound animal research industry, giving researchers a green light to do what they want to animals. This is a very bleak day for animals in laboratories." Scientists had claimed that work on conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's could be abandoned if the EU brought in tighter regulations, including restricting the use of monkeys. Emily McIvor, policy director at the Dr Hadwen Trust for Humane Research, which funds studies on alternatives to animal research, said ahead of the vote: "The animal research industry is lobbying aggressively to destroy virtually every reasonable animal welfare improvement, including a ban on using offspring born to wild-caught primates. The arguments they are using are often little short of scaremongering, exaggerating the validity of animal tests and seeking to convince MEPs that new welfare measures are prohibitively costly."

Monkey breeding slum that has Home Office backing

Crammed into a rusty wire cage with barely enough room to stand, a bewildered monkey looks out on row after row of similar cages. This is the grim scene in a Vietnamese breeding centre which supplies animals to British laboratories - with official backing of the UK Government. In one bleak concrete and wire-fenced building run by a company called Nafovanny, monkeys live inside small rusting cages barely a metre tall, only just larger than the animals standing upright. Some cages are in a state of collapse and lean at different angles in the pictures shot last autumn by campaign group Animal Defenders International. Now ADI is calling for the Home Office - which is responsible for setting standards for laboratory primates in Britain and overseas - to withdraw Nafovanny's licence. ADI campaigns director Tim Phillips said: "These are some of the most appalling conditions I have ever seen inside a laboratory animal dealer's. Despite claims to the contrary our Home Office and UK labs appear powerless when it comes to establishing welfare standards for suppliers. "Or worse, they are turning a blind eye to the suffering of these animals." 3 years ago the Home Office threatened to withdraw Nafovanny's licence but was assured improvements had been made. ADI claims this decision was based on edited video footage, photos and reports. Nafovanny supplied nearly 500 monkeys to controversial testing firm Huntingdon Life Sciences in Cambridgeshire last year. HLS managing director Brian Cass said: "We try to ensure the best conditions for our primates where they are bred." A Home office spokesman said: "Our inspectors last visited Nafovanny in 2007. We require all places that breed and supply animals for research in the UK to work to high welfare standards." **The People 29 March**

Crustaceans suffer pain

Crabs not only suffer pain but can remember being hurt, scientists believe. Scientists, who made the discovery by submitting hermit crabs to small electric shocks, said it has important implications for crustacean welfare in the food industry, where many chefs still boil lobsters alive, believing the creatures to be impervious to pain. Hermit crabs lack a hard carapace of their own and so make their homes in empty mollusc shells. The researchers delivered electric shocks to wires attached to the shells of hermit crabs. Only crabs that received shocks vacated their shells during the experiment, indicating that what they had experienced was unpleasant. With less powerful shocks, below the threshold that forced them out, crabs remained in their shells but appeared to be waiting for an opportunity to move. When a new shell was offered to them, they were more likely to switch homes than crabs that had not received a shock. This suggested that the crabs retained a memory of the pain they had felt earlier, said the study, published in the journal Animal Behaviour.

Hunting Act routinely broken

The Hunting Act has been routinely broken since it came onto the Statute Book. Hunters have only to claim an "accident" when their hounds chase or kill a fox, and the case is dismissed by the CPS. So, hounds are taken into a copse, run through it, noses down, for long periods, and yet when a fox bolts and the hounds chase it, hunts say this was an "accident". The same practice as that always used by fox hunts to find a fox to hunt. Cub hunting still takes place, with a bird of prey taken along as a convenient, if farcical, prop to support a "falconry" excuse. Terrier men still accompany every fox hunt as before. So the wishes of the people, and their elected representatives, are being arrogantly ridden over. Hunters' champion David Cameron, despite his claims to be keen on law and order, has given them a "cast iron commitment" to reward their lawless behaviour with a repeal of the Act they so detest. Please now write another letter, to Gordon Brown, asking the Government to urgently amend the Hunting Act, so our wild animals can be protected as intended.

Primates go mad in labs

SAEN – a watchdog group based in Ohio – said it has internal government documents to prove it that the majority of primates experience traumatic pathologies, and they are hurt or killed by their own hands or other primates. Of 400 primates that died recently, 247 (61%) experienced a traumatic pathology of some kind resulting either from self-injury or violent attacks by cage mates. Documents show 83 (20%) of the primates had an appendage amputated, 117 (29%) had bite wounds, 105 (26%) had major lacerations and 27 of the primates 10 or more traumatic pathologies. "The UC Davis primates illustrate the problem of insanity in U.S. lab primates," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director, SAEN. "Most of these animals are literally self-destructing, and the same can be said of monkeys in other labs." Internal documents from labs across the U.S. reveal that insanity is rampant. Primates at the Medical College of Virginia are so strung out by drug addiction experimentation that they lay on the floors of their cages and clutch their tails. Veterinary records from the University of Minnesota disclose that the primates rip fur out of their armpits while screaming. Health records from the University of Michigan show they are self-mutilating and losing weight due to deranged behaviour. University of Wisconsin primates escaped from their cages and attacked each other. "The abusive situations for primates across the U.S. are endless," added Budkie. "And the USDA, as the video at New Iberia and our documents show, does virtually nothing."

The EU is to radically restrict laboratory testing on animals - by insisting human embryos are used by scientists for research instead. Toxicology tests on animals will be permitted only after similar research on tissue taken from human embryos has proved fruitless, according to a proposed new directive from the European Commission.

Micro-tissues instead of animals

Bioengineers are striving to replace mice, rabbits, beagles, and other warm-blooded animals with insentient but biologically sophisticated substitutes. At Brown University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other research centres, new efforts to build complex living "microtissues" from cultured cells represent some of the most promising progress toward reducing the need for laboratory creatures. Numbers have been reduced in recent decades, but hundreds of thousands of mice, rats, chickens, and other creatures are still employed for medical experiments. More controversially, but also in greater numbers and with less oversight, millions of animals worldwide are killed for testing of products whose only aim is to impart a sexier sheen on lips or more sparkle in toilet bowls. Many researchers have come to concede that using creatures as human stand-ins is unnecessary for many procedures. Indeed, it often isn't even the best science: New drugs that show great promise in mice, for example, often confer zero benefit to humans, or even prove harmful. "There's a serious effort afoot to find ways to phase out animal testing in research," said Jeffrey R. Morgan, professor of medical science and engineering at Brown University. Morgan leads a team that is building 3-dimensional assemblages of living cells as a step toward fashioning functional simulations of human organs. For Morgan and other bioengineers, the big dream is that their labs might someday yield crops of transplant-ready livers, kidneys, and other vital parts. In the shorter term, however, the ambitious experiments ongoing at scores of major universities worldwide could produce complex tissues better suited for testing new medicines and procedures. The Brown work is partly funded by the International Foundation for Ethical Research, an animal rights group that believes supporting scientific effort is the most effective way to reduce scientific and commercial dependence on lab animals. Other scientists are making different assaults on the same Everest. Linda G. Griffith, professor of

NIRAH's financial advisors, MacArthur and Co, have gone into administration, raising more questions about the future of the project. For more details and links to articles visit the website www.bedfordanimalaction.org

biological engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation's famous "genius" grant, is developing a "liver chip," a computer chip embedded in lab-cultured liver tissue. The cells should behave like normal human liver tissue, reacting to medicines or potential toxins as in a real liver - but with the chip conveying to scientists with high precision how, physiologically, the cells react to new drugs or other experiments. Griffith's eventual aim is to build a "body on the bench," a full set of chip-containing human organs - from bladder to lungs - that could be used to study body functions by simply plugging the appropriate part into a computer. The MIT research is meant to advance human medicine. "But my work is also squarely in the realm of finding alternatives to animals," Griffith said. "Beyond any moral issues with the use of animals in research and development, alternatives made with human cells might be scientifically better choices - and more economically feasible."

When protesters become 'terrorists'

When does passionate protest become a terrorist threat? Is it when activists choose to target someone's house, or when the subject of the protest feels scared? Why single out animal rights activists for special treatment? And if the definition of terrorism is expanded for them, what group is next in these turbulent times? These are the questions being raised by the federal prosecution of 4 local animal rights activists. Joseph Buddenberg, Maryam Khajavi, Nathan Pope, and Adriana Stumpo pleaded not guilty March 19 to charges of using threats and violence to interfere with University of California animal researchers, in violation of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA). A coalition of civil liberties defence groups have come to their defence, arguing that the law is unconstitutional and that the activists were merely exercising their freedoms of speech and assembly. AETA specifically protects research institutions, pharmaceutical companies, and other businesses that use animals from individuals who "interfere with" their operations. Anyone using threats, vandalism, property damage, trespassing, harassment, or intimidation to cause someone connected with an animal enterprise to have "reasonable fear of death or bodily injury" can be tried under the law. But critics say the statute is over-broad, arguing that legal activity like boycotts can be construed as a form of interfering with a business' operations. "In its abstract form, and now with these arrests, the AETA is a full frontal assault by the U.S. government on the First Amendment," says San Francisco-based attorney Ben Rosenfeld, a member of the National Lawyers Guild. "Everybody, whether they identify with animal rights causes or not, ought to be very alarmed." According to an FBI affidavit filed by special agent Lisa Shaffer, the activists took part in actions targeting UC researchers who conduct experiments on animals. They didn't free caged animals, torch laboratories, or slash tires. Instead the defendants were caught picketing, chanting, and creating flyers. And while the complaint cites an alleged assault, it never states that any of the 4 defendants was responsible. Yet they each face up to 5 years in prison.

San Francisco Bay Guardian, 25 March

Activism in the Netherlands

Wageningen University says animal rights activists have attacked its campus 3 times over the past few months. They plastered buildings, vandalised cars and smashed windows. The Animal Liberation Front has claimed the actions on the internet. The life sciences university, which conducts animal experiments, says its staff feel threatened. Activists released some 2,500 mink from a farm in the S.W. province of Zeeland. Responsibility was also claimed by the ALF. The release came a day after a British undercover officer told Dutch media that the Netherlands has become an international centre for radical animal rights activists. The officer says animal rights campaigns are coordinated in the Netherlands and carried out across Europe. Frequent targets include laboratories that carry out animal testing and the companies which do business with them.

Cosmetic testing - UK govt allows loopholes

After a decades-long fight, 2 key Europe-wide measures to tackle animal testing are due to come into force as part of the EU's 'Cosmetics Directive': a ban on animal testing of cosmetics ingredients (including toiletries); a ban on the sale of cosmetic products and ingredients tested on animals anywhere in the world for all but 3 test areas, regardless of the availability of alternative non-animal tests. The complete sales ban is due during 2013. It is widely believed that the bans, supposed to be enforced irrespective of the availability of validated 'alternatives', has provided a serious incentive for companies to invest in non-animal, advanced testing methods. The latest annual EU figures suggest that over 5,500 animals could be saved from poisoning tests for cosmetics in the EU alone, as well as the global impact as companies stop animal testing in order to continue access to European markets. However, the European Commission acknowledges more animals could have been used if tests are already being commissioned 'for other purposes'. This admission flags up one of the major loopholes that companies like Procter & Gamble are likely to try to exploit. Companies could continue to use ingredients tested on animals in cosmetics by pretending the test was for another purpose such as 'household products' or 'pharmaceutical'. This would be easy for companies who produce different types of products in addition to cosmetics. Indeed, in a leaked internal memo, P&G discuss how they can get round the EU law. But it's not just companies that are sticking 2 fingers up to the rule of law - meet the UK Government. An ongoing Uncaged investigation reveals that there are potentially serious weaknesses in the way the UK Government is implementing the EU law: They are deceiving MPs and the public, and blocking the release of animal testing information relating to products on sale in the UK. They require local councils' Trading Standards Departments (TSDs) to implement the law. But TSDs can't enforce this as they don't have sufficient resources and expertise. So we have a catch 22 situation where TSDs will investigate if there is evidence of wrongdoing, but it is impossible to obtain evidence as it is deemed confidential. Under the Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2008 - the UK law which implements the EU law - cosmetics products manufacturers are obliged to collate information on animal testing in Product Information Packs (PIPs). These are to be made available to the Dept for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR), and local TSDs. Initially, the Government gave the impression that animal testing information could be obtained by the public. On 25 May 2008, Gareth Thomas MP, Minister for State at BERR told Linda Gilroy MP: 'Anybody who is concerned that a product or its ingredients have been tested illegally on animals should speak to their local Trading Standards Department.' Again, in October, minister Claire Ward told MPs that the PIPs: '... will contain information on any animal testing that has been carried out in the past. If Members are contacted by constituents with concerns about such matters, they can refer them to their local TSD.' After we'd pointed out to MPs that TSDs couldn't give that information, BERR Minister Gareth Thomas MP admitted: 'Although this information may form part of the PIP which all cosmetic suppliers must maintain and provide to Trading Standards Officers when requested to do so, the information provided is commercially sensitive and is not to be passed on to anyone outside the enforcement service. Anyone who wishes to find out the animal testing policies of a particular company should contact the company direct.' Information about animal testing can easily be edited to remove any genuine commercial secrets, so the Government's decision to keep that information secret is perverse and contrary to the public interest. And we're all aware that Thomas' suggestion that people write to the companies is ludicrous as there is no obligation for companies to give truthful information about their animal testing, in fact companies who test on animals go out of their way to mislead consumers. Meanwhile, our survey of TSDs reveals their confusion and inability to enforce animal testing regulations.

Chimp abuse in US lab may lead to ban

Allegations that chimps were abused at a New Iberia lab may aid an effort in Congress to ban experimentation on great apes and require retirement of hundreds of chimps at federal research labs. The Great Ape Protection Act, sponsored by Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., would immediately ban the breeding of chimps for federal research and send hundreds of chimpanzees to sanctuaries. The bill has 22 co-sponsors, none from Louisiana. Supporters are looking for a sponsor in the Senate. If the bill is approved, dozens of retired chimps are likely to be sent to Chimp Haven in Keithville, a sanctuary for chimps used in federal research. The legislation failed to move in the last congress, but accusations of animal cruelty at the New Iberia lab may give it new life. This week, the U.S. Dept of Agriculture said it would investigate allegations of abuse and neglect of chimps at the 100-acre New Iberia Research Centre, where 325 chimps are kept. The research centre also houses 6,000 monkeys. Besides breeding primates for research purposes, the research centre also experiments on the animals. After a 9-month undercover investigation, the Humane Society reported to the USDA that chimps at the facility lived in isolation and exhibited self-mutilating behaviour, psychosis and other emotional and physical problems. It said it had documented 338 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act, a 1966 law that regulates animal research, transportation, exhibition and breeding. The New Iberia Research Centre, part of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, denies the allegations. The Humane Society also asked Gov. Bobby Jindal to immediately transfer 26 elderly chimps - the oldest is 51 - from the New Iberia centre to a sanctuary, most likely Chimp Haven. Humane Society President Wayne Pacelle wrote Jindal this week that "some of the saddest stories to come out of our investigation were those of the 26, wild-caught elderly chimpanzees" housed at the New Iberia lab. Jindal's office did not respond to a request for comment. Chimp Haven is nearly at capacity, housing 132 chimps, but Brent said the facility could easily expand to hold 300 to 350 chimps with the help of federal or private funds. The US is the largest remaining user of chimpanzees for biomedical research. Austria, Belgium, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and the UK have banned or limited their use. The Humane Society estimates chimpanzee research and maintenance costs taxpayers \$20m to \$25m per year, money the society says could be allocated to more effective research.

Clay County Animal Control violated federal animal welfare regulations when it conducted a heat-related experiment last year on a stray dog, according to a U.S. Dept of Agriculture report. Robert Brandes, a U.S. Dept of Agriculture vet, found the county's animal control did not follow the federal Animal Welfare Act concerning experimentation on animals. However, because the dog did not suffer any ill effects from the experiment he recommended only a written reprimand for the county. In a written memorandum presented to Clay County officials in January, he cited county for the following violations: Failure to register as an animal research facility; Failure to establish and receive clearance from an animal experiment oversight committee; Subjecting a dog to sustained temperatures in excess of 85°F; Failure to consider alternatives to using the dog, and failure to consult a vet; Failure to obtain a written protocol for the experiment; Failure to document whether the dog was held in the pound for the required number of days before being used for research. Neither Clay County Animal Control Director Connie Goon nor William Bodenweber, director of county enforcement services, could be reached for comment. The purpose of the experiment was to prove CCAC workers were not responsible for the death of another dog, a Rottweiler, in a county transport vehicle 2 weeks earlier, Bodenweber said. The dog used in the experiment was euthanised a few days later. The Dept of Agriculture probe was requested by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which began following the case at the request of the dead dog's owner. "We've long known that leaving a dog in a car on a 70° day with the windows slightly open can be deadly," PETA Director of Laboratory Investigations Kathy Guillermo said in a prepared release. "We certainly didn't need Clay County Animal Control to endanger an animal to prove what we already knew."

Animal experiments end at Irish college

The Alliance for Animal Rights is glad to hear of the development in Ormond College, Kilkenny. We hope the use of audio-visual approaches as opposed to animal experiments will spread within the research community. The Kilkenny facility has come up with a novel and ethical way of providing students with all they need to know about the physical make up of animals, without hurting them. Biology experiments, including the dissection of frogs and other creatures have ceased, thanks to the use of computer-based simulations and 3-dimensional models, pioneered by Patrizia Setola, co-ordinator of the Animal Care course at the College. "Too often our use of animals, particularly for dissection in scientific research, reinforces a simplistic view that any manipulation of animals constitutes science," she said.

The Protester - e-mail: shoreham.protester@ntlworld.com

Copy for 'Protester'

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Please forward written reports of events as soon as possible, as we often combine several accounts of the same event for a more complete picture. Outdated reports will not be published. We also need news cuttings from local and national newspapers. News of demonstrations will always take priority over any other type of contribution received so please send them in.

Gateway to Hell campaign

As many of you will already be aware, the Nepalese Parliament recently decided to outlaw the export of monkeys for vivisection. Since then we have been working hard to judge the political situation in Nepal and we have come to the conclusion that, at this stage, a combination of Nepalese Parliamentary democracy and the forthcoming Supreme Court action should be sufficient to ensure the monkeys are released and monkey farming is permanently ended in Nepal. Thanks to your efforts, no monkey has been exported from Nepal and it seems less and less likely that any animals will now be exported in the future. Therefore, as a show of faith, today we are calling for an end to direct protests against the Nepalese government at their embassies and consulates. We will continue to monitor the political situation closely and we will keep you informed of the latest developments, and if there is even the slightest hint that the monkey farming will be allowed to continue then we will call for immediate protests! We would like to stress that the campaign against Nepal is not over yet, nor will it be until every monkey has been freed and the monkey farms have been closed permanently. In the next few days we will also be launching the 'Free Them' campaign, which will be a new and innovative initiative to keep the pressure on Nepal's government in a non-confrontational manner. We are still calling for a tourism boycott, and we ask all those who have the opportunity to keep up the pressure on their tourism industry. We will also be announcing some new targets over the next few weeks, so we hope that we can rely on your continued support in confronting the global primate trade...both in Nepal and elsewhere!!! G2H

SHAC Campaign

Special Diet Services has been caught out supplying HLS during 2008. They have been caught out before using the name Dietex international. They have been supplying specialist feeds for laboratory animals. SHAC contacted SDS to let them know about HLS and the campaign, but they weren't very talkative, and were not happy in the slightest to be caught out, so please contact them and ask them to stop dealing with the puppy punchers at HLS with immediate effect. Remember, without customers and suppliers HLS cannot operate and will have to close down. Remember to mention the exposés including the recent Animal Defenders International one. HLS hasn't changed - they're as bad as they ever were. E-Mail: info@sdsdiets.com Special Diet Services Unit 1 Stepfield Industrial Estate East Witham Essex CM8 3TH Tel: 01376 511260 Fax: 01376 511 247

HLS & Vanguard - Vanguard (an investment management company) is the 2nd largest shareholder in Huntingdon Life Sciences. Last time we did an alert to the Chairman and Board of the company, but for this alert we are focusing on the management team within the company. These people run the company and have the power to drop their investment in HLS. HLS has just been exposed for the 7th time after Animal Defenders International went undercover in Huntingdon's primate unit. So there is yet more proof of animal suffering and HLS is caught bang to rights as a criminal company. It's time to let their shareholders know that it's time for them to go! Refer to the video shot inside HLS by visiting:

<http://shac.net/HLS/exposed/2008/HLS%20Exposed%202008.pdf>

All e-mails in this alert for bulk sending:

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New Shac prisoner - Nicole Vosper made a guilty plea at Winchester Crown Court relating to charges connected to Huntingdon Life Sciences. She is one of the people involved in the second run of SHAC trials. Nicole has been remanded in custody. Her details are: Nicole Vosper VM9385 HMP Bronzefield Woodthorpe Road Ashford Middx TW15 3JZ

Uncaged street stalls - These will be happening throughout the summer around the country. If you can coordinate or participate in any of these, please contact Angela at ang@uncaged.co.uk or 0114 2722220.

Bolivian army exercises on animals ends

After nearly a month of public campaigning against horrific combat-training exercises conducted by the Bolivian military - in which live dogs were shown in a video being tied down and stabbed repeatedly and screaming in agonizing pain - PETA is now applauding the Bolivian Ministry of Defence for issuing the country's first animal protection regulation, which ends the torture and killing of animals in military exercises. Thousands of people wrote to the Bolivian government through our online action alert, asking officials to end all use of animals in military combat trainings. On Monday, the Bolivian minister of defence, Walker San Miguel, appeared on Bolivian TV to issue the regulation, declaring that "we are issuing a Resolution 217, by which we prohibit all acts of violence, exploitation, mistreatment that provokes the death of animals." As this is Bolivia's very first animal protection regulation, it's an historic decision that we're sure will positively impact how other countries in the region treat animals.

Hunt follower killed

A fox hunt follower's recklessness had fatal consequences on Mon 9th March after he followed a gyrocopter monitoring the Warwickshire fox hunt, ran onto the runway (illegal) and was killed. Trevor Morse inexplicably walked onto the runway as the copter was taxiing - and into its rear propeller. The pilot, Bryan Griffiths, and passenger were immediately arrested, with the pilot being remanded and charged with murder. The passenger was released on bail on suspicion of murder. In contrast to this, no one has ever been charged with the murder of animal rights activists like Jill Phipps, killed by a live export lorry, or Mike Hill & Tom Worby, killed by hunt vehicles and Steve Christmas who was seriously injured after being driven at by a hunt supporter in a 4x4. The double standards which deemed these murders 'accidents' sees 2 hunt monitors arrested for murder when a hunt supporter wanders into their path on a runway. Even a member of the hunt, Sam Butler, said it was a "tragic fatal accident".

Bryan Griffiths would like to receive letters. For the time being please don't add Brian to any prisoner lists, but give his details to people who want to support him as individuals. Also please be *sensitive*, however you feel personally about the incident - don't write letters implying the hunter deserved it or similar sentiments. Bryan is a vegetarian and member of a local group monitoring several hunts around the Midlands, collecting evidence of breaches of the ban. Bryan Griffiths XW8892, HMP Hewell, Hewell Lane, Redditch B97 6QS

Devon huntsman jailed

Christopher Marles had earlier admitted using his horse to knock Helen Weeks to the ground as she filmed the East Devon Hunt. He was serving a suspended sentence for attacking another hunt monitor when the second assault happened in March 2008. Sentencing Marles at Exeter Crown Court to 6 months in jail for the offences, the judge said he had acted like an "arrogant, cowardly, drunken lout". "I hope you are thoroughly ashamed of yourself," Recorder Ros Collins told Marles. In Oct 2006, Marles was sentenced to 9 months, suspended for 2 years, for causing actual bodily harm to Kevin Hill, who was left with 2 black eyes and needed 6 stitches after being punched while filming the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. In the attack in March, Ms Weeks was filming as Marles repeatedly rode his horse into her. The footage was shown in court. She accepted he had not tried to physically hurt her but that his idea was to put fear into her. Speaking after the hearing, Ms Weeks said: "I expected him to ride on by and he just turned his horse in one movement towards me. He didn't stop, he just carried on. He took the horse by surprise and the horse just went into my shoulder and pushed me into the ditch." *So why didn't the judge take the 9 month suspended sentence into consideration too? The always do for protesters.*

Fox hunting charges dropped - Charges against a huntsman relating to illegally pursuing a fox have been dropped. The CPS dropped charges against 44-year-old Julian Barnfield, who hunts with the Heythrop Hunt in Oxfordshire. He had been accused of 4 offences of hunting a fox between Nov 2008 and Feb 2009 and was to have appeared before Cheltenham Magistrates this Friday. But today the CPS announced it had discontinued the case in the light of a High Court ruling last month that "searching" for a mammal was not hunting and that hunting could only be an "intentional" activity

Charges dropped against 3 hunt masters

Hunt supporters have hailed a decision to drop charges of illegal hunting against 3 members of the Devon & Somerset Staghounds as evidence that the ban has failed and leads to "confusion, cost and conflict". The case against joint-master Maurice Scott, huntsman Donald Summersgill, and whipper-in Peter Heard was dropped at the end of March. The CPS said that, in the light of a High Court ruling in Feb, it was for the prosecution to prove a hunt was not carrying out exempt hunting. The Hunting Act always was unworkable. The case was the second under the Hunting Act to be dropped by the CPS this month. The 3 men were charged with illegal hunting in 2006, and pleaded not guilty on the basis that their hunting was "exempt" and therefore legal. Mr Scott said: "This is a huge relief, not just for myself, and others facing the charges but for hunting as a whole." Simon Hart, the Countryside Alliance chief executive, said: "There have only been 3 successful prosecutions of hunts, involving 5 people, since the Act came into force in Feb 2005. "The decision to drop this case suggests that prosecutions under the Hunting Act will now be even rarer. It could not now be more obvious that this Act has failed and all it now promotes is confusion, cost and conflict." The CPS dropped 4 charges of illegal hunting against a huntsman, Julian Barnfield, of the Heythrop Hunt, in Oxfordshire, earlier in March. That decision followed a High Court ruling that the use of dogs to search for a wild mammal in order to stalk it or flush it out was not in breach of the Act. **Daily Telegraph. 21 March**

Judge furious as Ferry's 'witness-nobbling' charges are dropped

Otis Ferry was told that witness-nobbling charges, for which he had already spent 4 months in jail, were likely to be dropped. He had been remanded in custody to stand trial on charges of robbing a hunt monitor, assault and perverting the course of justice by interfering with a witness. But yesterday, the joint master of the South Shropshire hunt learnt at Gloucester Crown Court that the latter charge was likely to be abandoned over "inconsistencies". Martin Picton, the judge, described the situation as "nonsensical and farcical". He had abandoned the original robbery and assault trial in Sept and remanded Mr Ferry in custody - upon pressure from the CPS - after hearing the perverting the course of justice allegation. The judge called for Kerry Barker, the prosecution lawyer, who was not in court, to appear before him to give a full explanation. Mr Ferry and John Deutsch were charged jointly with robbing Helen Ghalmi, a hunt monitor, of a camera and assaulting her during a meeting of the Heythrop Hunt near Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, in Nov 2007. They also face alternative charges of affray. Mr Ferry had also been accused of perverting the course of justice by telling his former groom, David Hodgkiss, not to give evidence against him when Mr Ferry was due to stand trial at Cirencester Crown Court. That trial was aborted when the witness-nobbling allegations were made. Police investigating this allegation then arrested 3 other people, including Mr Ferry's girlfriend, Francesca Nimmo, and Adrian Simpson, the Welsh director of the Countryside Alliance, on suspicion of perverting the course of justice. They remain on police bail. At yesterday's hearing Stephen Dent, prosecuting, said: "There has been a lot of painstaking police work carried out as far as the perverting the course of justice charges are concerned and it has been looked at very carefully. Those inquiries reveal a number of inconsistencies which mean that the Crown at the moment offers no evidence on that count." But Judge Picton said: "At some point I shall want rather more than this by way of explanation because I remanded Mr Ferry in custody for over 4 months on the basis that there was a perverting the course of justice charge being pursued. There were vigorous objections to bail raised on the grounds of that." The prosecution still intends to call Mr Hodgkiss to give evidence in the robbery trial, despite the apparent inconsistencies in his account of the alleged witness-nobbling, though Judge Picton questioned how the defence could understand which parts of Mr Hodgkiss's evidence were considered true and which not. Annie Johnston, for Mr Ferry, said she had understood that the Crown would formally offer no evidence against him on the perverting the course of justice charge. In fact, she said, Mr Ferry had even been asked by the prosecution if he would be prepared to give evidence against Mr Hodgkiss should he instead be charged with perverting justice. Judge Picton said he found it breathtaking that the prosecution had reached its present situation after the case had been "vegetating a long time". Bailing Mr Ferry and Mr Deutsch, he told them: "I am adjourning your case. I can't tell you until when." **The Times. 10 March**

Lyn Taylor was left traumatised after hunt hounds charged into her garden. She has been deeply affected by the episode, which erupted while she was alone at home. "I am so traumatised by it," she said. "Before the law changed, the hunt would send a card round beforehand saying they were going to be in the area. But since then we don't get one any more. "All of a sudden I heard the hounds yelping. There were at least half a dozen in my garden going berserk." Mrs Taylor said the dogs broke branches from a prize rhododendron, and frightened off a stray cat which she looks after. The cat didn't return for 2 days. She said her pet dog and 5 other cats were also left unnerved by the experience. "I shouted at the huntsmen to go away but they did nothing. In the end I was screaming and shouting so much they called the hounds off. 2 of them even laughed as they left. "I felt humiliated and I am so angry there were hounds in my garden when they shouldn't even be around here. What right have they got to come round and interfere with our property and disturb our peace?" The incident was reported to Maldon Police who are investigating. Mervyn Clarke, a master of the Essex Farmers and Union Hunt said no complaint had been received about the incident. "We are sorry if someone has been inconvenienced, we would never knowingly upset anybody," he said. "If she writes to us, we will investigate. "I find it bizarre that somebody can make these sort of comments," he added. "Animals run through back gardens, it happens." (????!)

Astronomer Patrick Moore clashed with MPs Liam Byrne and Theresa May on TV, as he claimed those opposed to fox hunting have been let down by politicians and church leaders. He rightly called hunting barbaric

Church should reject "blood money"

The Irish Bishops Conference has been asked to intervene after a Wexford parish accepted a donation from a hunting group. In a letter of appeal, ICABS highlighted that hunting is contrary to the Catechism and that clergy should never accept money from those involved in terrorising and killing God's creatures. Brought to the bishops' attention was an Irish Field report from Feb 28th which tells of how the hunt set off from Mayglass Church on a "great day's hunting" which brought them across a road, stream, dyke and river in their pursuit of foxes. Alongside the article was a photograph of the parish priest standing next to the pack of killer hounds before the hunt began and shaking hands with one of the mounted hunters. In a report outlining our objections, the Wexford People quoted the priest as saying that he was happy to accept the hunt's donation. The hunt in question - the Killinick Harriers - is responsible not only for the killing of wildlife but also for the violent savaging of a cat (a favourite animal of Pope Benedict XVI). A report from the Wexford People outlined how the family pet was "torn to pieces by the hounds" while they were on the trail of a fox. The traumatised homeowner told how the dogs "came up the driveway and pinned the cat against the garage door and massacred it". The side of her house was left splattered with blood. Please write politely to: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Columba Centre, Maynooth, County Kildare, Ireland columbacentre@iecon.ie, info@catholicbishops.ie Fax: +353 (0)1 601 6401

700 acres sold - Banking dynasty scion and hunt supporter, Roddie Fleming plans to sell 2 farms that neighbour Sarsgrove, his Oxfordshire estate in Churchill, near Chipping Norton. Like most investors, Mr Fleming, who also has a residence in Liechtenstein, has seen the value of his investments suffer as the global economic crisis worsens. Mr Fleming, a vocal opponent to the foxhunting ban, set up Fleming Family & Partners in 2000 to provide wealth management services for the Fleming clan as well as other wealthy individuals.

Sick hunters are smuggling muntjac deer into Ireland for shooting. The muntjac are not native to Ireland and cannot be imported legally. Because of their small size, they pose an additional risk to trees as they may be able to slip through fencing designed to keep out native deer species. If the non-native species of deer start breeding in Ireland they could wreak havoc - damaging forests by overgrazing and out-competing native animals. They could also spread diseases from Britain to Ireland. Usually, animals transported from one country to another must be quarantined. It is illegal to introduce an alien species into the wild in the Republic and in the North.

Canadian seal slaughter

Last year's hunt left more than 200,000 seals dead - clubbed, shot and skinned in the largest commercial hunt of marine mammals in the world. Many were babies as young as 12 days old. This year, Canada's government is allowing 280,000 of these beautiful creatures to be slaughtered! It began at 6:48am on 24th March. The sealers stormed into the once-peaceful seal nursery with their hakapiks raised. Within a matter of seconds, defenceless baby seals were clubbed and their blood spilled onto the ice. The EU will consider banning its trade in seal products soon, but the fishing industry and the Canadian government are lobbying furiously to fight the ban. Just recently, Russia announced it would halt the killing of baby seals. It's clear the world community is condemning this killing - increasingly Canada stands alone in defending the slaughter.

Canadian sealers testimony - The following is direct testimony from sealers, taken by Dept of Fisheries & Oceans staff. It was obtained through Access to Information laws, and contains graphic descriptions of animal cruelty. To date, 7 charges have been laid as a result of the investigation, but only one had resulted in a court hearing. "Prior to March most females were killed with the pup inside them. I seen 7 pups threw over the side after the female was pelted. I took 2 out myself. Me and another sealer even agreed this was shocking and there should be another way to hunt seals. We were in the whelping on March 10/98 because I observed that 8 of 10 pans of ice had young pups with the after birth on the ice. There was once I can remember the young seal watching his parents being hoist aboard. He watched the boat as we steamed away. The pups were not killed but left by themselves on the ice." - Sealer's statement, taken by Fergus Foley, Dept of Fisheries & Oceans. "I did see some mother seals killed and the pup fall out on deck still alive. Was told to throw it overboard and I did. It crawled up on a pan of ice. The mother was full of milk; the milk ran out on deck when the pup fell out." - Sealer's statement, taken by Cyril Furlong, Dept of Fisheries & Oceans. "I was present when female seals were pelted and did see pups fall out of the female on deck. I seen this happen twice and know that it happened 8 to 10 times during the first trip. The 2 pups that I saw on deck were alive. The pups were threw over board and on one occasion I did see one of these pups swimming in the water. I don't know what happened to the pups." - Sealer's statement, taken by Cyril Furlong, Dept of Fisheries & Oceans. "I seen a female being pelted and the pup came out of her when they cut her open, the pup was dead. This seal was killed for a while. This was on the day we got 170. Someone said, 'If Greenpeace were only here to see this.'" - Sealer's statement, taken by Fergus Foley, Dept of Fisheries & Oceans.

The WWF doesn't condemn the seal hunt. In their statement they said: "Most importantly, from the perspective of a conservation organisation such as ours, the harp seal population is at a record high with more than 5 million individuals and current harvest practices pose no apparent threat to the long-term health of the species." Now, considering the human population on this planet is over 6 billion I wonder what their policy would be on this?

ARAN's campaign to stop Canada killing seals is gaining momentum! This week, Irish celebrities such as Eurovision winner and television presenter Linda Martin, The Corrs band member Jim Corr, Fair City's Gerard Byrne along with top Irish model and ARAN member Suzanne McCabe came out in force to launch a new campaign for Animal Rights Action Network that aims to draw serious attention to Canada's seal hunt in the run up to and during the Olympics been held in Vancouver in 2010. The 4 led an exciting, lively photocall and protest with 30 ARAN members outside the Canadian Embassy to bring much needed attention to the Irish campaign. Major media outlets covered the story including the Irish Mirror and Herald along with radio stations. Other newspapers also attended the photocall such as The Irish Daily Mail, The Sun, The Star and Irish Independent!

Bagging a polar bear

For wealthy modern-day trophy hunters, bagging a polar bear is the ultimate kill. 14 days in harsh conditions, requiring dog-sleds, Inuit guides and a heated tent camp, does not come cheap: the minimum bill comes to \$35,000 (£24,000). There are few animals more symbolic of the perils of climate change than the polar bear, which faces destruction as the Arctic sea ice melts away - the bears starve or drown because the distances they have to swim to find prey become too vast. Yet every year scores of wealthy hunters from around the world pay to travel into the frozen Arctic and bag themselves a coveted polar bear hide. Canada, home to about 60% of the world's 22,000 polar bears, is the only one of the 5 polar bear "range states" which allows outsiders to hunt them as a trophy sport. America, Greenland and Russia only allow their native Arctic populations to kill a quota each year whilst Norway has outlawed stalking altogether. When the animal is killed, usually with a shot to the heart just behind the bear's fore leg, the Inuits use everything apart from the liver, which contains toxic levels of vitamin A and has to be buried. Most hunters are then allowed to take their polar bear hides back to their own country, so long as they have the completed paperwork. Last year the US banned the importation of polar bear hides but most countries, including Britain, place no restrictions on the skins. The latest US-led scientific surveys suggest that up to two-thirds of all polar bears could be lost by 2050 - bringing the sustainability of hunting into question.

Man who clubbed seal pups jailed

A fisherman who clubbed 21 grey seal pups to death with a wooden fence post on a remote Scottish island has been jailed for 80 days at Lerwick Sheriff Court. Jimmy Stewart admitted mutilating, beating and crushing the animals on the Shetland island of East Linga. The discovery was made on a beach on the island by staff from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), who were carrying out a survey last Nov. Charges against a 2nd man were earlier dropped. Sheriff Graeme Napier told Stewart: "As you are aware you have pled guilty to a very serious offence. "It is an unusual offence for the courts to deal with which perhaps, if nothing else does, makes clear the general acceptance by law abiding members of the community of how unacceptable this behaviour is. He said Stewart was of previous good character and, according to references, had contributed to his local community in Whalsay. But he said: "I must balance that against the seriousness of the offending and a need to make clear that society in general and the courts will not tolerate the infliction of such unnecessary suffering not just on 1 but on 21 seals. "I consider that there is no alternative but a custodial sentence." SNH and Northern Constabulary welcomed the conviction. John Uttley, SNH's area manager, said: "....."The brutality described in today's case towards wildlife besmirches Shetland's reputation as a place which treasures its nature and wildlife and we are pleased to see the court respond accordingly." BBC NEWS

Badgers to be vaccinated against TB

The first vaccine against bovine tuberculosis in badgers will be used in the field in England next year, Environment Secretary Hilary Benn announced. The vaccine will be used in 6 areas of up to 100km² where there is a high incidence of bovine TB in cattle. Vaccination will start in 2010 and continue for at least 5 years. It will be the first practical use of a vaccine for TB in badgers outside research trials. The project will focus on developing practical approaches for use rather than developing further evidence of the effectiveness of the vaccine, although Defra will be monitoring any changes in cattle disease trends.

Welsh to cull badgers - The Welsh Assembly has taken a cynical decision to allow a pilot 'cull' of badgers to go ahead in Pembrokeshire later this year. Announced by Elin Jones, Welsh Minister for Rural Affairs, on March 24, this decision will see Welsh wildlife decimated because of political cowardice. Killing badgers will not halt the spread of bovine TB, but it will pacify farmers who refuse to admit to their own failings.

Animal protesters outside Jamie's restaurant

Members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) stood outside the restaurant holding placards with the words: "Be Pukka to Pigs: Go Vegetarian". PETA said pigs were confined to metal crates while they're pregnant. Mr Oliver's spokesman said he had long "championed the welfare of pigs" and would not be taking meat off his menus. Heavily pregnant activist Lynzi Waddington, who was stooped on her hands and knees, said she wanted to highlight the "cruelty that goes on behind closed doors" within the pig farming industry. "Pigs are very sensitive animals, they feel pain, and they deserve to be treated right," said the 24-year-old. Poorva Joshipura, director of special projects for PETA said that pigs were kept inside the crates after they had given birth. She added that the process would continue until the pigs were killed at about 5-years-old. "If Jamie truly loved pigs then he would be joining us in asking people to go vegetarian." However, the celebrity chef's spokesman said: "The meat Jamie is serving up is very high quality. "They should go make a protest somewhere that imports its meat." He added the branch of Mr Oliver's newest restaurant, expected to open in Black Lion St, offered a number of vegetarian dishes for non-meat eaters. In his Channel 4 programme, Jamie Saves Our Bacon, he highlighted pig farming conditions across Europe and showed sow stalls, where pregnant pigs were being kept in cages for up to 4 months at a time. The stalls are banned in Britain.

Health risks of meat proven - There is no more denying it. Meat contains highly toxic substances that are responsible for many deaths and diseases. Heavy meat consumption increases your risk of dying from all causes, including heart disease and cancer, according to a federal study conducted by the National Cancer Institute and featured in Archives of Internal Medicine.

Soy Decreases Cancer Risk for Men & Women

Soy intake reduces the risk of prostate cancer and breast cancer in men and women, respectively, according to 2 new studies that will be released tomorrow in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. An analysis of 14 studies showed that increased intake of soy resulted in a 26% reduction in prostate cancer risk. Researchers found a 30% risk reduction with non-fermented soy products such as soy milk and tofu. The second study looked at the dietary patterns of almost 2,400 Asian-American women and found that those with the highest intakes of soy and vegetables had a decreased risk of breast cancer. Those with the highest intakes of meat and starch had a 2-fold increased risk. Researchers concluded that lower intakes of meat & starches and higher intakes of legumes & vegetables protect against breast cancer in Asian Americans.

Eating red meat increases the chances of dying prematurely, according to the first large study to examine whether regularly eating beef or pork increases mortality. The study of more than 500,000 middle-aged & elderly Americans found that those who consumed about 4ozs of red meat a day (the equivalent of a small hamburger) were more than 30% more likely to die during the 10 years they were followed, mostly from heart disease and cancer. Sausage, cold cuts and other processed meats also increased the risk. Previous research had found a link between red meat and an increased risk of heart disease and cancer, particularly colorectal cancer, but the new study is the first large examination of the relationship between eating meat and overall risk of death, and is by far the most detailed.

No-meat Day - On 24th March in Madrid, to mark World No-Meat Day, protesters lay naked in individual cardboard trays, were splattered in red paint and then covered with cling film, to mimic how animal parts are displayed in shops. The event attracted a large crowd, bringing home the veggie message.

White veal out of Dutch supermarkets

Within 6 months of an animal welfare group launching a peaceful, company-targeted campaign against 'pale veal' - produced by keeping male calves penned up, fed on low-iron milk diets - nearly all the Dutch supermarkets have stopped selling it. Animal-rights group Wakker Dier in The Netherlands - Europe's largest veal-producers with 1.5m veal calves a year - says they launched the campaign urging consumers not to buy this veal 'because pale veal is raised by keeping the calves deliberately ill, fed on a low-iron milk diet and kept stabled in small cages. They never see the light of day'... Dutch supermarkets Jumbo, Plus, Aldi, Lidl, Boon, Coop, Dekamarkt, Hoogvliet, Netorama, Poiesz, Sanders, Emté, Spar en Vomar have all undertaken to stop selling the pale veal within the next few months - also because the Wakker Dier publicity campaign created a high level of consumer awareness, and people stopped buying it. Supermarket chain managers who were convinced almost immediately after viewing the publicity material from Wakker Dier, Dirk, C1000, Super de Boer, AH, Bas, Digros and Deen, stopped selling the pale veal within weeks from the start of the campaign in Sept 2008.

Animal welfare group PETA was at Selfridge's

100th anniversary celebrations with a campaign against the sale of foie gras. They illuminated the department-chain's flagship Oxford Street store with a giant projection of a bird being held by the throat to be force-fed along with the message "Selfridges: Stop Selling Foie Gras

Protesters' café to go vegan

Heather Mills has bought the café at Hove Lagoon on the seafront and will turn it vegan. The place was used by Shoreham Protesters during the live export protests and continued to be used for several years as a meeting place for AR meetings. A fitting testimony, as a Protester wrote in a published letter to the Argus.

Heather Mills has signed a £3m deal to promote vegetarian food at Burger King, according to a report. She has apparently agreed to back the launch of a new meat-free burger at the chain's 11,350 outlets worldwide. News of Mills' deal comes just 3 months after Paul McCartney announced plans to revamp his late wife Linda's vegetarian food range.

Factory farms are a health risk

It has plagued hospital wards for years, picking off the elderly and infirm, but now another strain of MRSA is emerging from the factory farms of N. Europe, and it is linked to the insatiable demand for cheap meat on our plates. The Ecologist Film Unit travelled to the Netherlands to investigate. Behind the silent facades, every building contains thousands of farm animals. It could be veal calves, turkeys or chickens, but in this region of the Netherlands, close to Eindhoven, it is predominantly pigs. The Netherlands has a higher concentration of farm animals per sq.km than any country on the planet, and these farms are now at the frontline of a new battle against MRSA. 'Community-acquired' or 'farm animal' MRSA has a grim track record. Commonly causing skin infections, this strain of bacteria can also cause pneumonia, bone infections and endocarditis. In the Netherlands it is spreading. 'What we have seen here in our region is a rise of MRSA-positive patients, from an average of 40 or 50 MRSA-positive patients in this entire region in a year to last year 224, and about 60% of those are animal-related MRSA,' says Mireille Wulf, a microbiologist based in Eindhoven. Recent studies have shown that between 30 and 50% of all pig farmers in the Netherlands carry the bacteria. This growing trend has so worried the health authorities that they have brought in legislation to stem it: all pig farmers entering a Dutch hospital must now go into quarantine upon admission. The common factor in all this is antibiotics, says Dik Mevius, a professor of microbial resistance. Vets who work on pig farms will also be quarantined.

Morrissey banned any food that "used to have a face" from his concert in New York this week. The ardent vegetarian - whose second album with his former group The Smiths was titled 'Meat Is Murder' - demanded the Webster Hall venue be a meat-free zone before, during and immediately after his performance on March 25th.

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'Humane' meat impossible

Home Box Office recently aired a documentary, *Death on a Factory Farm*. The documentary concerns an undercover investigation of the Wiles Hog Farm in Ohio. The investigator, who worked for the Humane Farming Association, secretly filmed the hideous treatment of the animals and brought his evidence to the local prosecutor, who filed 10 criminal charges against Wiles, his son, and an employee. The outcome of the prosecution? Only one charge resulted in conviction. The punishment? A \$250 fine and required training in pig handling and transportation. The defendants and other farmers who supported the defendants argued that the practices depicted in the documentary were not criminal and represented "the commonplace reality of producing livestock for consumption." And they were right. What is depicted in the documentary is, indeed, nothing short of torture. But what happened at the Wiles Farm was no different from what transpires on every large factory farm. If you ate pork last night, that animal was subjected to more or less the same sort of treatment. That is why animal advocates should not support the efforts of animal welfare organisations to make animal exploitation more "humane." Animal exploitation on the scale needed to feed even a small portion of the world's human population cannot be made more "humane" in any significant way. The economics of production and the property status of animals make it impossible – not just difficult. There is really just one morally sound and practical response to animal exploitation: go vegan and devote whatever time and resources you have to creative, nonviolent vegan education. **Gary Francione Rutgers University School of Law on Why Animal Rights Groups Don't Go Far Enough**

Floss the cow escaped from a field and went on the run in the countryside for 9 months before being found by animal lovers and saved from the abattoir. She would emerge at night to feed under the cover of darkness and craftily slip away before sunrise. The 4-year-old is believed to have escaped to go looking for her calf, from whom she was separated after being sold at market. Her escapades came to an end when she was finally caught last month. But her obvious lust for life - which would normally have ended abruptly at an abattoir - will continue because her captors were animal lovers who have now bought her. Floss's incredible journey concluded when she was transported 150 miles to Hillside Animal Sanctuary in Norfolk, where she will be able to spend the rest of her natural life.

Baboon liberated

On New Year's Eve 2008, 5 mins before midnight, while the workers from Circus Roma Dola - then installed in San Sebastian de Los Reyes in Spain - were in a marquee celebrating the New Year, 3 animal activists went into the trailer where a caged baboon was being held in slavery and rescued her. The end of 2008 would also be the end of many years of deprivation of freedom, suffering and desolation for this baboon, while 2009 would be a new year of hope and freedom for her. After opening the bolts of the cage and placing a collar to ease and speed up her rescue, the baboon herself left her cage and ran to freedom, with each step leaving behind her prison over the years, and voluntarily got into the vehicle which sped her away from that place for ever. Human slaves of the 19th century were subject to racism in a period of time in which the colour of their skin was used against them. In the present day, this baboon has been the victim of the speciesism which allowed her to be used against her will as part of a show, and later, when she could no longer complete this task, as a 'pet' and as advertising. The baboon, now named Moses after an ancient freed human slave, has been taken a long way from her exploiters, far enough that she will never be found nor returned to slavery. She will no longer need to be afraid of punishment nor be forced to perform the absurd behaviour she was made to learn to entertain humans. She is currently living in a environment suitable for her needs, being respected and protected by responsible humans who will ensure she now has the fullest and happiest life possible. The media has presented the baboon as aggressive and dangerous. Despite the statements of the exploiter, it was not necessary to administer any type of sedative to Moses, simply opening her cage - closed only with bolts - and placing a collar and leash on her to lead her out. You can watch the before & after video at www.animalequality.net/news/a-baboon-is-rescued-from-a-circus

Chimps plan ahead

A male chimpanzee, Santino, in Furuvik Zoo, north of Stockholm, planned hundreds of stone-throwing attacks on zoo visitors, according to researchers. Keepers at the zoo found that the chimp collected and stored stones that he would later use as missiles. He also learned to recognise how and when parts of his concrete enclosure could be pulled apart to fashion further projectiles. The findings are reported in the journal *Current Biology*. There has been scant evidence in previous research that animals can plan for future events. Crucial to the current study is the fact that Santino collected the stones in a calm state, prior to the zoo opening in the morning. The launching of the stones occurred hours later - during dominance displays to zoo visitors - with Santino in an "agitated" state. This suggests that Santino was anticipating a future mental state - an ability that has been difficult to definitively prove in animals, according to Mathias Osvath, a cognitive scientist from Lund University in Sweden and author of the new research. Dr Osvath embarked on the study after zoo staff discovered caches of stones in the section of the enclosure facing the public viewing area. Since the initial discovery in 1997, hundreds of the caches have been removed to protect visitors, to whom the caching and the aggressive displays seem strictly related. In the off season, Santino neither hoards the projectiles nor hurls them. Most interestingly, Santino seems to have learned how to spot weak parts of the concrete "boulders" in the centre of the enclosure. When water seeps into cracks in the concrete and freezes, portions become detached that make a hollow sound when tapped. Santino was observed gently knocking on the "boulders", hitting harder to detach bits that were loosened and adding those to his stashes of ammunition.

An Orang-utan mother, stranded with her baby up a tree in floods on Borneo, grabbed a rope thrown to her by rescuers, got into the water and swam to safety, keeping the baby's head above water. Orang-utans are known to have a dislike or fear of water and very rarely venture in.

News from Croatia

The theme of this year's big anti-fur protest which we organised on Feb 28 in Zagreb was a ban on the import of dog and cat fur in Croatia. About 200 participants from Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany & Austria gathered on the protest. Luka Nizetic, Croatian singer, joined the protesters on the main Zagreb square where we held a performance of liberating 'animals' from cages. In order to express our thanks to the protesters, we invited them to our office where we treated them with beans and vegan cookies. On Mar 14 we held a protest and performance against the seal slaughter in Canada in front of the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb. The protest was aimed at the Olympics in Vancouver 2010 and its boycott unless Canada stops killing seals. This spring our group marked Meatout, organising a Health Food Fair on Mar 21 on the main Zagreb square. 10 Croatian producers of health food presented their vegan products to the numerous visitors of the fair. Health Food Fair was announced by billboards and City Lights posters 'Smart People Do Not Eat Carcinogens.' This event was supported by FARM. This year too Fur Free Alliance and Animal Friends Croatia are organising an international student design competition Design Against Fur. Besides posters, students are also invited to design a creative and impressive animation for the International Animation Contest, which sends the important and compassionate message that wearing fur is cruel and unnecessary. The entry deadline is Apr 17 and the winners will get valuable prizes. On Apr 5 we are organizing a gathering of vegetarian and vegan children and their parents in our office. www.animal-friends-croatia.org

Possible new website being set up in the UK where people can write of their own experiences with their vets, both good and bad, are any supporters interested in this please? Email John at john1dogs@dogmail.com if you want this group to go ahead.

Great British Circus

Animal rights protesters are campaigning against the first use of elephants in circuses in 10 years, by The Great British Circus, due to visit Skegness next week. The circus is scheduled to perform between Wed April 1 and Sun April 5, but Animal Defenders International and Captive Animals' Protection Society (CAPS) want people to protest at the circus' use of animals. The circus features 3 elephants, a group of tigers, lions, camels and zebras, and has caused a media storm, with several people protesting at the Newark event. Craig Redmond, campaign director for CAPS, said: "3 years ago the government signalled it would ban the use of some animals in circuses but has failed to act yet. "The Great British Circus shows just why we need to end this practice. As if it is not bad enough to subject lions, tigers, zebras, reindeer and other animals to the confinement and restrictions of a travelling circus, we now see elephants being imported from Germany just to perform in the circus tent." Jeff Link, communications officer for The Great British Circus, said the animals were not taken from the wild and are bred by circus director Martin Lacey. He added: "We don't ask the animals to do unnatural tasks, just natural movements and athletic skills on cue. Tigers will leap and elephants will reach up for branches and we are only emulating these skills." Mr Link explained the Animal Welfare Act 2006/07 means anyone who mistreats animals is liable to prosecution and suggested anyone with concerns should contact the police. He added: "We have state of the art transport and we do not travel long distances at a time. The animals are princes and princesses of the circus and we are not going to harm them and people don't have to have any concerns." **BBC News. 23 March**

Belle Vue greyhound track have recently announced that they are stopping Tues night racing from the beginning of April and they are also making 6 senior managers redundant. The main manager's getting obnoxious with leafleters too coming out personally even though they already have security there (they're usually ok with us). Hopefully that means we are having some effect.

Dog Racing in decline - tracks in trouble

Throughout Feb the dog racing industry bombarded the public with promotional gimmicks such as the '1p Meal Deal' and the '£5 Credit Cruncher' - televised nationally during peak viewing times at great expense to the industry. However, because of snow and icy conditions in early Feb many tracks were forced to close with a loss of 1000's of attendances. In a desperate attempt to claw back the punters the racing industry then launched a national campaign and 'Free Entry' vouchers were printed in *The Sun*. Despite this heavy media campaign to superficially boost attendances - Manchester's Belle Vue stadium have announced they are to drop their midweek meeting and make at least 6 senior positions redundant. This will be a huge psychological blow to the industry, as Belle Vue is seen as the Jewel in the Crown of the 5 GRA owned stadiums. Coral bookmakers, who own Romford and Hove stadiums have admitted that both stadiums are struggling and Kevin Wilde - head of stadia - who is attempting to address the situation has said 'Were not talking tinkering with them either, they both need major surgery'.

The Jamaican Prime Minister has said NO to greyhound racing in Jamaica.

A teenage greyhound trainer who kept more than 30 dogs in "concentration camp" conditions with no food, water or light has been locked up for causing unnecessary suffering. Robert Freeman, 19, had been entrusted with looking after the animals when his father John, 52, fell ill at the kennels in Tiptree. Colchester Magistrates' Court heard the teenager from Swansea left the dogs in cages covered in urine and excrement without food or water for days causing some of them to go "kennel crazy", biting at the bars and walking round in circles constantly. District Judge David Cooper described the 15 minute RSPCA film showing the conditions as "heartbreaking". He said: "Looking at the place where you kept the dogs it wasn't so much a kennels as a concentration camp. "Seeing the dog turn and turn in that way was heartbreaking. It was heedless neglect and cruelty." Robert Freeman, who runs his own company training railway workers, was ordered to serve 90 days in a young offenders' institute after he pleaded guilty to 9 charges of causing unnecessary suffering. The court heard the

National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) visited the kennels in Tiptree in Feb last year after a tip-off from a concerned member of the public. The RSPCA and police were called onto the property in March when conditions had not improved and seized 30 dogs and 3 puppies, many of which were underweight, flea-ridden, had eye problems, a broken tail and untreated injuries. A statement from Irene Haslewood of the NGRC said: "The conditions were appalling. I've never seen a situation so upsetting and unnecessary. It was heartbreaking to see dogs living like that." All of the dogs seized have since recovered, are now at a healthy weight and most have been re-homed. Rebecca Wastall, defending, said John Freeman had a very successful greyhound racing business and his son became involved with a partnership. "When he fell ill Robert Freeman decided to try and cope and run the kennels as best he could," she said. John Freeman, a retired railways worker from Saron Ammanford, Wales, pleaded guilty to one charge of failing to prevent suffering to animals. He was given a 90-day sentence, which was suspended due to his ill health. He was also fined £500, ordered to pay £2,000 towards the £20,000 RSPCA bill and will be electronically tagged so he cannot leave his house between 9pm and 6am. Both men were banned from keeping animals for 10 years.

Sheffield Animal Friends (SAF) has launched a campaign to close the greyhound track at the city's Owlerton Stadium Penistone Rd, Sheffield, S6 2DE. The group has already held several demos outside the stadium, as well as street stalls in the city centre, to educate members of the public to boycott greyhound racing. Contact Sheffield Animal Friends at sheffieldanimalfriends@googlemail.com or on 07757 278824 or 07806 641912.

PETA Europe has a variety of stickers in stock which are excellent for spreading the message of animal rights. There are a variety of different designs. Whether you're holding a stall, decorating your laptop or handing them out to your friends, there are stickers for every purpose available on request **free from the PETA website** - www.PETAEurope.org

UK Horse Sanctuary Facing Closure

The Horse Refuge needs urgent financial help to avoid closure. Where possible horses have been re-homed, but our remaining 40 permanent residents have suffered the most terrible abuse and will bear the scars for life. They are happy now, but have been too traumatised to remove them from their safe environment here and would become incredibly stressed and dangerous if this was to happen. Their fate would be terrible. We never give up on a horse and provide the 24 hour care that many of them need. Our future plans are good, but we just need to get through the next 2 months. Please help us to keep going and give these wonderful animals a chance and a secure future. Come and visit, or telephone for more information. Donations please, however small, to the address below. With very many thanks, Sara Ross. Online donations via paypal or card can be made on The Horse Refuge website www.thehorserefuge.org The Horse Refuge, Dobell Farm, Moons Green, Wittersham, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7PR. 01797 270555 or 07956 229683

Whale sharks to be captured for resort - Singapore's proposed casino resort, Resorts World at Sentosa, wants to capture whale sharks from the wild for its aquarium attraction. Whale sharks are vulnerable to extinction and often die in captivity. They can grow up to 15 metres in length, dive up to 980 metres in depth, and migrate thousands of kms in the wild. No man-made environment can adequately cater to their needs. Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and PETA have joined forces with local Singaporean organisations to launch a public awareness campaign against the importation of whale sharks into Singapore.

Animals in transit - The Times women's section highlighted the misery that can be endured by animals in air transit. Suzanne Edwards, Animal Health Officer at Heathrow, spoke of 2 lurchers and a cross-terrier, who whined softly in their sealed crates. They had arrived to fly to New Zealand and were awaiting handlers to take them to the aircraft. It was before lunch; their flight was leaving at 4.30pm. They had water but no food. "They will be in here now till 4.30pm tomorrow," said Suzanne. "It's hideous. We all hate it, but it's just one of those things." The centre handles 11,000 cats and dogs, 331,000 hatchling poultry and 37 million fish a year... **The Times. 30 March**

Ontario strengthens animal protection laws

The Provincial Animal Welfare Act (PAW) marks the first comprehensive changes to Ontario's animal protection legislation since 1919. The new legislation makes Ontario's animal protection law the strongest in Canada. One of the key amendments to the Act makes causing distress to all animals a provincial offence. Under the old standard, there was significant opportunity for violators to escape legal action. Under the new PAW Act, anyone who causes distress to an animal or fails to provide what is necessary for life will face fines of up to \$60,000, possible jail, and a lifetime ban on animal ownership. Key changes in the proposed Provincial Animal Welfare Act include new rules on the province's dozens of roadside zoos, circuses, petting farms and any other property where animals are kept for entertainment, boarding, hire or sale, giving the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals the right to inspect them. Just as doctors are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or domestic violence, vets are now required to report suspected cases of animal abuse or neglect. And a new section of the act makes it illegal to cause an animal distress, train an animal to fight, or have structures or equipment used in animal fights.

N. American ALF Website Upgrade

Please visit the site now: www.animalliberationpressoffice.org, and come back often for the almost daily updates on animal liberation activities in N. America. From posted anonymous communiqués, video and photographs of direct action, to media articles resulting from activists in the news. We also have some terrific merchandise, as well as a listing of animal liberation prisoners that need your support (and a list of snitches that don't!). You can also post suggestions for additional materials or changes you'd like to see.

Police criticised over handling of protests

A committee of MPs has accused police of abusing their powers and being heavy-handed in dealing with demonstrators. Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Human Rights said police were misusing counter-terrorism laws, anti-social behaviour legislation and the Protection from Harassment Act to deal with protesters. "The right to protest is a fundamental democratic right and one that the state and police have a duty to protect and facilitate," said the committee's chairman Andrew Dismore. "Of course, there is a balance to be struck between the rights of protesters, the police and the public (including protest targets) but the state must not impose restrictions unless it is necessary, and proportionate, to do so." The committee said police were using stop and search powers to intimidate and conducting wide-ranging seizures of property. At a Climate Camp protest in Kent last year, police had even seized tent pegs and a clown costume, it said. The Chief Constable of Kent has now referred the policing of that demonstration to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Police were monitoring journalists, refusing them access to protests, not recognising press cards and even assaulting them, the National Union of Journalists told the committee. The MPs said it was unacceptable that journalists had to resort to taking court action against officers "unlawfully" interfering with their work. The Metropolitan Police Service said human rights and the right to protest were at the heart of its policing philosophy. "However, the Met also has a duty to ensure that the rights of others are protected," it said. "We will always facilitate lawful protest and are committed to doing so but do have to minimise the disruption caused to others going about their lawful business."

The Independent, 23 March

A teenage thug who smashed a tortoise to death with a baseball bat was banned from keeping animals for 10 years. Daniel Winspear was ordered to carry out 250 hrs of unpaid work following his drunken attack at a party. He was alone when he repeatedly smashed the creature's shell, but was later found smiling in his seat with the 18inch bat still in his hand. The RSPCA became involved and a vet determined the tortoise's head was still intact, and it had therefore suffered pain throughout the beating. He must pay the court £1,652, which includes legal, vets bill & investigation costs.

A dog was tied to a barbed wire fence and left to starve to death for up to 2 weeks. The dead female mastiff cross was discovered on the Kinnaird Park Estate on the outskirts of Brechin. An examination of the animal's stomach contents found only grains of soil and fragments of wood as she tried to eat anything within her limited reach. Scottish SPCA staff described it as one of the worst cases of animal cruelty. The penalty for abandoning an animal is a fine of up to £5,000 and 6 months in prison. The Scottish SPCA said it would also seek a lifetime ban on keeping animals for anyone found guilty of this crime.

A Staffordshire Bull Terrier was thrown 70ft from a balcony to its death by a group of youths in the Peckham area of London. It is suspected that the dog had previously been involved in a dogfight as it had sustained facial injuries prior to its death. A witness to the act said that the group of youths, which included a teenage girl, had carried the dog through the flats and the visibly injured animal was whimpering with pain. The teenage gang then headed to the 5th floor and walked along the communal balcony, where they threw the dog over the edge. The dog fell approximately 70ft to the concrete below, where the gang then picked up the dead animal and threw it into a communal bin. RSPCA inspector Rebecca London said: "This is horrible cruelty. I am absolutely disgusted that this poor dog was whimpering and in distress and yet this group thought it was fine to just throw it over the balcony to get rid of it". If you have any information on the youths the RSPCA urge you to contact them in confidence on 03001234 999.

Iditarod

The Iditarod is more than a 1,100-mile trek through Alaska and is cruel to the dogs who lead competitors' sleds. One competitor who lost 2 dogs in a blizzard said: "I can't believe it happened." "Dog deaths are something you hear about and you go, 'Well, that's not ever going to happen to me.' And then I had 2." While Packer tried hard to save his animals, the whole idea of racing sleds through sometimes brutal conditions is offensive to animal rights activists. At least 146 dogs have died in the Iditarod since it began in 1973. Iditarod spokesman Chas St. George said he could not find statistics of the total number of dog deaths, though there have been occasional spikes, such as 1985 when a dozen dogs perished in a blizzard. 5 dogs died in this year's race, with about a dozen teams still on the trail. At least one Iditarod dog typically perishes in the race, often from gastric ulcers that develop on the trail. 3 dogs died last year. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has escalated its annual letter-writing campaign to persuade Iditarod sponsors to withdraw their support. Major sponsors of the Iditarod include Exxon Mobil Corp. and Wells Fargo. Race organisers note an expansive system of checks and balances has evolved over the years to better monitor the more than 1,000 dogs along the trail. Vets are deployed to checkpoints. Musher's must keep a dog-care journal. There are mandatory rest stops and random drug testing of the dogs. Deaths are carefully scrutinized. And this year, all teams were outfitted with satellite tracking devices.

The Irish govt is to introduce legislation to tackle animal cruelty and to impose stiffer penalties on people involved in organising illegal blood sports such as badger baiting. Trevor Sargent, the junior agriculture minister, said the prevailing law is outdated and in need of reform. The Animal Health and Welfare bill, to be published this summer, aims to provide greater protection for animals. "The government wants to send a clear message to those involved in illegal blood sports that such barbaric practices will not be tolerated," said Sargent. "I believe that custodial sentences should be introduced for people who engage in animal cruelty. This option is under consideration. I continue to be shocked by what some people regard as sport. It sullies the name of sport for all of us." The legislation would also improve conditions for farm animals, including pigs and chickens which are reared intensively. "We are looking at best international practice, taking into account the interest the public has in sourcing food which has a high animal-welfare production system at its heart." Stephen Philpot, the chief exec of the Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said: "The republic is generally regarded as a safe haven for people who want to abuse animals, be they badger baiters or puppy farmers. There is no enforcement of the existing laws." However, he added: "I don't know why the Irish government has opted to replicate the Scottish legislation, when the British government has just introduced radical new legislation that is light years ahead."

Fur companies sponsor designers

Fur companies are offering lucrative sponsorship deals and expensive trips to British designers in an attempt to break the taboo on fur, an investigation by The Times has found. After a ban on fur farming in Britain and successful campaigns by anti-fur groups, designers have been reluctant to promote ranges in this country for fear of retaliation. Now it has emerged that the large companies, including Saga Furs and Copenhagen Fur, both in Denmark, are providing expensive furs free to British designers, as well as entertaining designers and stylists at their Scandinavian headquarters. Designers said that in the present financial climate, sponsorship from fur companies could make the difference between putting on a show or being able to hire the right model. At London Fashion Week last month, fur was in abundance on the catwalks for the first time in years. In addition to coats and jackets, fur trims and accessories were highly visible. Issa, a London-based designer, used fur for the first time in London. The company collaborated with Copenhagen Fur, which provided all the materials free. Issa can keep the pieces for a year then they are returned to the supplier. Furriers insist that their product is ethically produced but this is disputed by designers who have visited the factories and by animal rights activists.

The Flairline Fashions Group in Ireland has signed up to become fur free. That includes its 24 stores nationwide. They were selling skins of rabbits and foxes.

Pamela Scott, one of Ireland's leading woman's wear stores has contacted Animal Rights Action Network to state they are going fur free.

Beavers could return to the countryside after an official report found the animals boost wildlife populations and prevent flooding. The animals were hunted to extinction in England and Wales during the 12th century and disappeared from the rest of the country 400 years later. But according to a new study by Natural England, the agency in charge of the countryside, beavers could thrive on any river in Britain, including waterways around towns and cities. Restoring wetlands 'reduces flood risk. The semi-aquatic creatures eat trees and vegetation, build dams to stabilise water levels around their burrows and create channels for foraging. This not only provides new habitats for other wildlife but reduces the risk of flooding by slowing the flow of water. By creating ponds where sediment sinks to the bottom the beavers cut water-borne pollution therefore reducing the degree to which the water companies need to purify the water further downstream. Landowners are, of course, objecting, saying they'll cause damage to crops and trees.

A new Casualty Care Centre is now up and running at Whitesmith just off the A22 between Hailsham and Uckfield. East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service has opened the new Centre after having to close its old unit at Horsebridge due to rising veterinary costs and because of having no room to expand. "Although the new unit is not fully up and running and the unit is currently smaller than the old unit, there is room for potential expansion in the long term; this is an exciting time for WRAS," said founder Trevor Weeks. WRAS is in need of volunteers to help with the feeding and cleaning of casualties at the new centre which involves working about 2 hours once a week either in the morning or early evening to feed, clean and water the casualties. "We had a lot of very good and dedicated volunteers back at Horsebridge who are unable to follow us to the new unit and these volunteers will be sadly missed. Luckily a number of our volunteers are still available and will continue to help out, but we need more people to help" said Trevor. WRAS is appealing for volunteers from Lewes, Ringmer, Uckfield, Hailsham and all the surrounding villages to help out if they can. Any one interested in helping out should contact Tim McKenzie on 07969-464052 for more information. Donations can be made to East Sussex WRAS via its website www.wildlifeambulance.org

Monkey kills slave driver

A monkey who was forced to climb palm trees by his owner, took revenge by killing him with a coconut. The animal threw the missile from the top of a tree after becoming frustrated with his tiring labour, according to reports. Leilit Janchoom had employed the monkey to pick coconuts which he could then sell for around 4p each. The animal - named Brother Kwan - found the work tedious and strenuous but Mr Janchoom refused to let him rest, dishing out beatings if he refused to climb trees. It is believed that the monkey eventually snapped, and targeted his owner from a high branch Mr Janchoom, from the province of Nakorn Sri Thammarat in Thailand, died on the spot after being struck by the coconut, according to reports in a local newspaper. The dead man's wife said that the monkey had "seemed lovable" when they bought him for £130.

Monkeys are able to teach their offspring how to floss their teeth, according to a new Japanese study. Female monkeys living in a 250-strong colony were observed by scientists teaching their young how to use strands of hair to clean between their teeth. The theory that primates are able to teach offspring how to use tools was confirmed by the discovery, according to Professor Nobuo Masataka of Kyoto University's Primate Research Institute, who conducted the study.

Circus animals - Hansard 31st March

Mr. Hancock: "To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if he will bring forward legislation to prohibit the use of non-domesticated animals in circuses; and if he will make a statement." **Jane Kennedy** (Minister for being uncaring at Defra): "There is no evidence that the use of non-domesticated animals in circuses is by its nature cruel or compromises an animal's welfare." What planet does Jane Kennedy inhabit? See these incidents below just for starters. Of course in Defra World glue traps are not inhumane, so tigers and elephants being beaten and chained in UK circuses obviously isn't either! These incidents all involved UK based circuses or circus promoters. 3 circus elephants lived chained in a metal container on a ship for a 25,000 mile voyage. The journey took 3 months. A circus promoter was fined £1000 for transporting a lion cub in an overcrowded and unfit container. The cub was found to be paralysed. A zebra fell into the sea and drowned after escaping from a circus. Inspectors found a performing dog in need of veterinary treatment. 4 days later the dog had not been seen by a vet. Police found 4 fully-grown tigers abandoned in a trailer in a layby near Peebles for 16 hours. Children screamed and cried, and families walked out when tigers were beaten with sticks during a circus in Surrey. The animals had begun to fight in the ring. Police stopped and later prosecuted the driver of a vehicle that was not road worthy. The lorry contained sea lions, and the driver was their trainer. The act toured that season with a well-known UK circus.

Bull fighting - Less than 24 hours after start of ANIMAL's appeals to prevent a bullfight in the city of Braga, an important capital in the North of Portugal, the Mayor of Braga announced he has immediately instructed his services to not authorise any bullfight in the city.

Fund for Bryan Griffiths

On P. 4 in the hunt section of this paper you can read about Bryan and his murder charge after a hunt follower was killed by the gyrocopter he was flying. This news has just arrived before going to print. Thanks to the efforts of Denise, one of Bryan's loyal supporters, I am very pleased to circulate the following information: Fund for support of Bryan/family now open. Contributions need to be by cheque made out to: Monitor Funds One and should be sent to: Denise Ward, Habricia Cottage Elcombe, Stroud, Glos. GL6 7LA