



The Bitter Taste of Animal Activism

A Short Course in Animal Rights Strategy

Question: What do dog breeders, cattle ranchers, deer hunters and draft horse enthusiasts all have in common? (Cue game-show waiting music while we contemplate.)

Answer: They are all under attack by animal rights groups – as is anyone who owns, works with, exhibits, researches, eats, or otherwise uses animals in any way.

The campaign waged by the animal rights movement is global, prolonged, continuous and all-inclusive. During the last 50 years the movement has made significant inroads into American life and culture, bringing “Meatless Mondays” and “Humane Education” into our school systems, ensuring that 80-90% of our pets are now sterilized before they reach sexual maturity, influencing the steady decline of participation in hunting, bringing significant pressure to bear on scientists conducting life-saving medical research and successfully hampering animal agriculture by targeting sound, broadly-accepted, expert-endorsed animal husbandry practices via the legislative process. Animal rights specialties and concentrations are now routinely offered in schools of veterinary medicine and law, and attempts have been made to confer upon animals legal status fully equal to that of humans.

Whether we personally see these developments as good or bad, there is no denying the impact on our lives. Each of the examples given illustrates a dramatically altered reality, for all of us – whether we are looking for our next purebred dog, buying meat, eggs or dairy to feed our families, praying for a cure for a loved one’s devastating medical condition or discovering that our favorite hunting spots are now fenced and posted.

Tactically, in every animal use context (medical research, recreational hunting and fishing, circuses and zoos, food production, etc.), the animal rights movement seeks to identify an effective wedge issue or group – a “foot in the door” if you will. Such activities and issues are relatively easily marginalized. They look for an easily demonized activity or setting. Those who earn a living in partnership with their animals are often singled out, as profit is easily shamed – especially profit made “on the backs of poor, helpless animals” until they are “worn out, used up and discarded.”

Any subset of the larger group that has relatively few participants involved, in an activity or discipline about which there is little public knowledge, may serve as a wedge. Activists and followers are able to propagandize against the target group with little to no push-back.

Members of the larger peer groups, somewhat understandably, prefer to believe that those "other" people and pursuits really are a bit suspect, rather than consider that they themselves could suffer the same arbitrary and baseless attacks, simply in different clothing. Animal rights activism's leaders look for these weaknesses to exploit, much as any predator goes after the vulnerable, knowing that the rest of the herd will opt for self-preservation and flee.

Adapted with permission of author and publisher. This material is excerpted from an article on the horse carriage controversy by Candace Ware, originally published in the Spring Issue of The Draft Horse Journal, and edited as above by Elaine Hanson. Permission is granted to use this material for educational purposes provided this statement of credit to the author and publisher is included.

"Ag Gag" Bill Becomes Law in Idaho

Governor Butch Otto signed SB1337, a bill that will help to protect animal production facilities from outside interference. Otter, a rancher, said the measure promoted by the dairy industry "is about agriculture producers being secure in their property and their livelihood."

The bill came in response to videos released by Los Angeles-based vegetarian and animal rights group Mercy for Animals showing workers at Bettencourt Dairy abusing cows in 2012.

Idaho is the seventh state to adopt so-called "ag-gag" provisions to their agriculture protection laws. They include prohibitions on falsifying employment applications and surreptitiously taking pictures or making videos. Animal-rights activists say the prohibitions are deliberately designed to silence or "gag" anyone attempting to collect evidence.

Idaho joins Iowa, Utah and Missouri in passing recent "ag-gag" laws. Three other states, North Dakota, Montana and Kansas, adopted the first generation of such measures during the 1990-91 legislative seasons.

Six States Join Lawsuit against California Egg Law

Five states joined Missouri in a lawsuit against California over its law requiring more space for all egg-laying hens. The standards apply to all eggs produced within the state as well as eggs produced in any other states but sold in California.

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster announced in December last year that his office would prepare to sue the state of California. He said that, in essence, "California is attempting to nationalize its animal protection standards."

Nebraska, Alabama, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Iowa joined Missouri in its challenge, alleging that the state of California is unconstitutionally attempting to regulate farming practices beyond its borders. Together, the six states produce more than 20 billion eggs per year, 10 percent of which are sold to California consumers, according to the announcement from Koster.

In 2008, California voters approved Proposition 2, a ballot initiative that, beginning in 2015, regulates the size of the enclosures housing egg-laying hens. The California State Assembly passed legislation in 2010 requiring egg producers in other states to comply with Proposition 2 in order to sell eggs in California.

Full story at AgriPulse <http://tinyurl.com/mysbs3v>

Training Miniature Horses as Guide Animals

All candidate horses for the Guide Horse program are given a field intelligence test prior to acceptance into the Guide Horse program. Guide Horse training is mentally demanding on the horse, and the Guide Horse Foundation only accepts horses that demonstrate the cognitive ability to successfully complete the training program.

Horse Training Theory

While horses do not possess complex reasoning skills, miniature horses are quite intelligent and excel at tasks that require long-term memory skills. There is been a great deal of research into the cognitive psychology of horses, most notably by the Equine Research Foundation of Horse Learning and Behavior. They have done extensive clinical research on horse intelligence and are most noted for proving the theorem that a horse's ability to learn is directly proportional to their prior learning. In other words, the more a horse learns, the greater their capacity for future learning.

The Guide Horse training approach

Training any assistance animal requires an in-depth understanding of animal behavior. Because equine behavior is generic to all horse breeds, any professional horse trainer can start the initial training of the assistance horse, teaching it to accept the harness, and start/stop on command. Advanced training involves training the horse not to react to environmental distractions, to avoid obstacles and to recognize all potential dangers. The idea is to create a team, person and horse, working together and understanding one another.

While no formal documentation exists for training guide horses, our trainers use the horse training methods and techniques developed from a variety of sources. Don and Janet employ some techniques developed by John Lyons, a world-renowned horse trainer. Don and Janet also rely on the basic principles of operant conditioning, and apply the animal training concepts originally described by B. F. Skinner, the famous behavioral psychologist.

Even though horse training is vastly different from dog training, the Guide Horse Foundation worked closely with guide dog trainers, orientation and mobility specialists and experienced guide dog users to understand what a guide animal needs to know to keep their handler safe at all times. The Guide Horse Foundation also performed exhaustive research, studying all available training methods and techniques from the major guide dog training schools throughout the world.

For further information including training details, photographs, events, seminars, books, and contact information, visit The Guide Horse Foundation <http://www.guidehorse.com/training.htm>



The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) revised and expanded the regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2011. The regulations define a “service animal” as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other animals and dogs that are not trained to assist with a disability or who merely provide emotional support are excluded from this definition. Although not included in the definition of service animals, the regulations permit the use of trained miniature horses as an alternative to dogs, where appropriate and in accordance with the assessment factors outlined in the revised regulations. <http://tinyurl.com/conh2by>

Researching the Stamina of Iditarod Dogs

Iditarod dogs lending valuable research to our military canines

Foundation for Biomedical Research. March 6, 2014. Countless hours of research have been conducted and led to valuable knowledge to benefit some of the world's best athletes, Iditarod dogs. These dogs are capable of covering nearly 1,000 miles in roughly ten days in one of the harshest of environments out there - snowy, treacherous, Alaska. Years of research have given Iditarod competitors an advantage by knowing how to properly feed and manage their dogs. This knowledge has become a stepping stone for more animal research to benefit a different type of dog, bomb-sniffing canines for the military.

It is amazing how these animals are helping one another and as a result, they are helping our soldiers detect deadly bombs before they cause harm.

Research saves lives. Discover how this research has saved Iditarod dogs, IED dogs, and service members.

How the stamina of Iditarod dogs can help bomb-sniffing canines in the military

Jill Burke, March 2, 2014, Alaska Dispatch

Behind of the scenes of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, one of Alaska's great living legacies, is a rhythmic cycle of stop and go. Like NASCAR pit stops, checkpoints between the long overland crossings are a methodical frenzy.

Unlike high-speed race car drivers, mushers are their own one-person, full-service pit crews. They take the dogs boots' on and off; offer massages to sore, stiff muscles; unharness and reharness; snack their teams; give meds if necessary; and put down hay for naps. Done well and efficiently, the round-the-clock chores of dog care will give the musher time to rest and keep the team finely tuned for the arduous marathon that can last 10 days or more.

A lot of science has gone into developing the best mix of food to keep the dogs at peak performance. And it turns out, this know-how about the ways to best fuel these dogs' incredible athleticism is helping build better canine soldiers. The iconic dogs of Alaska's Last Great Race are helping keep American soldiers safe in the deserts of Afghanistan.

Much has been learned about why these dogs that race nearly 1,000 miles perform so well. Enough research has been done on the physical stamina and the high-performance metabolism of Iditarod dogs that studies have led to changes in the way the animals are conditioned, cared for, fed and rested. The same science behind the training of sled dogs has led to breakthroughs in the way the military deploys bomb-sniffing dogs in wartime patrols.

Full article: <http://tinyurl.com/pwn7gab>

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws. Permission granted to copy and distribute NCRAOA News and Views in its entirety as is.

NCRAOA • PO Box 455, Stem NC 27581 • ncraoa@yahoo.com

Visit NCRAOA on Facebook