



3

Taking On A California Puppy Mill



8

Rest In Peace, Tony



THE ANIMALS'

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ADVOCATE



Rubbing Out The Rubber Stamp

The USDA can no longer turn a blind eye to facilities out of compliance with the Animal Welfare Act

BY ELIZABETH HOLTZ | CONTRACT ATTORNEY

For years, the Animal Legal Defense Fund has criticized the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA)

policy of rubberstamping Animal Welfare Act (AWA) license renewals. Exhibitors like roadside zoos and circuses, dealers (which includes businesses that sell animals to laboratories for testing), and puppy mills are required to obtain licenses from the USDA to operate. First time applicants must prove that their facilities meet the requirements of the AWA to receive a license, and the USDA conducts an inspection.

Every year going forward, facilities reapply to maintain their license. Regardless of the number of violations found by USDA inspectors in the

[READ MORE PAGE 4](#) ►

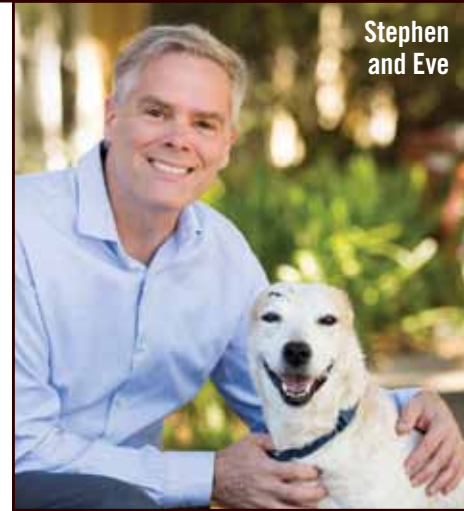
“If somebody is harming an animal, there is a good chance they also are hurting a human. If we see patterns of animal abuse, the odds are that something else is going on.”

— John Thompson, National Sheriffs' Association

PAGE 2

*LETTER FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

Reflecting on the Past, Planning for the Future



Stephen
and Eve

As the year comes to a close, the Animal Legal Defense Fund is already looking back at our work from the past year and forward to where we should focus our efforts in 2018 and beyond. It's an ongoing process, because every victory in court can set precedents that offer still more opportunities that weren't previously available. That's why our focus on the law and our legal expertise is so critical. For example, winning our lawsuit against the Cricket Hollow Zoo in Iowa over its inhumane treatment of captive endangered wildlife, was historic, marking the first time the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was successfully used to protect animals in captivity. We now have three new cases filed under the ESA, including our most recent case filed against Houston's Downtown Aquarium for mistreating four tigers.

We also have to be prepared to respond to new laws that provide more opportunities for legal action, like California's ban on the production and sale of foie gras, a grisly food product produced by ramming tubes down the throats of ducks and force feeding them to intentionally cause a painful fatty liver disease. The Animal Legal Defense Fund assisted the state of California in successfully defending the law against producers who hoped to overturn it. Now we can turn our attention to holding accountable those who violated the law by continuing to sell the cruel product.

Likewise, we have to be prepared to fight against new laws that harm animals. For example, our five year battle to overturn laws passed in several states designed to shield animal factory farms from scrutiny of their treatment of animals, so called Ag-Gag laws. We defeated Idaho's Ag-Gag law in 2015 and earlier this year we won again, overturning Utah's Ag-Gag law. We have cases pending against the states of Iowa and North Carolina.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund is constantly evaluating where our unique legal expertise can be most effective in the fight against animal cruelty and neglect. This was another great year for us and with your support we look forward to an even stronger 2018! Animals need expert legal advocates to be their voice in the legal system. We are that voice, thanks to you!

For the animals,

Stephen Wells, Executive Director



**Animal Legal
Defense Fund**

Stephen Wells
Executive Director

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TAKING A PUPPY MILL TO COURT

The Animal Legal Defense Fund is pushing to shut down a notorious California puppy mill

BY LAURA RAMOS | COMMUNICATIONS WRITER

In a residential neighborhood in Vallejo, California, one house stands out from the others. Passersby can smell it from the road, and neighbors notice the flies, the noise, and the dogs leaving the yard to roam the neighborhood.

Many people think of puppy mills as larger operations, often run in more rural areas, but this house is proof that puppy mills can be in your own neighborhood. California Carolina Dogs operates out of this one house, and it runs like any other puppy mill—treating dogs like cash crops in an effort to breed animals as quickly and cheaply as possible, to the detriment of the animals' physical and psychological health.

Puppy mills are nightmares for dogs,

and the Animal Legal Defense Fund is using the law to stop them. We sued California Carolina Dogs for illegally operating a puppy mill, and we're asking the court to shut it down.

The property, which has held as many as 50 dogs at a time, has generated numerous complaints about dog bites, unsanitary breeding conditions, and dogs running at large. On at least one occasion, a police officer witnessed a dog nearly get hit by three different cars and noted that the owner declined to recapture the dog until she'd finished eating. The owner has also admitted to keeping dogs confined in a car when she believes the weather is cool enough. Even on a 70-degree day, a car's internal temperature can reach 89 degrees in just 10 minutes.

To report a puppy mill in your community—call your local police and/or animal control. Learn more about how the Animal Legal Defense Fund is fighting puppy mills nationwide at aldf.org/PuppyMills.

PAGE 3



CALIFORNIA IS THE FIRST STATE TO BAN RETAIL SALE OF PUPPY MILL ANIMALS!

We thank supporters who answered our call to action and urged elected officials to support this law. Now all cats, dogs, and rabbits sold in stores must come from rescue organizations, not commercial breeding facilities.





USDA RUBBERSTAMP | FROM PAGE 1

preceding year, the USDA renews the license. In other words, compliance with the AWA is not required for license renewal. The renewal process is essentially an “honor system” where licensees are trusted to regulate themselves. Year after year, while federal inspectors tallied serious violations and deficiencies like failure to provide adequate veterinary care, hazardous enclosures, and failure to supply

sufficient quantities of food and potable water, the agency reissued licenses to facilities that claimed they were in compliance – regardless of reports filed by the USDA’s own inspectors.

Finally, this practice could come to an end. Thanks to a lawsuit filed by the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that the USDA can no longer turn a blind eye to “smoking gun” reports in its possession and continue arbitrarily and capriciously reissuing licenses to exhibitors it knows to be violating the AWA. The lawsuit concerned Cricket Hollow Animal Park (formerly known as Cricket Hollow Zoo), a roadside zoo in Iowa that the USDA reissued licenses to despite repeated violations of the AWA ranging from poor veterinary care to unsanitary facilities.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund has long held Cricket Hollow Animal Park accountable for its treatment of animals. Your continued support helped us win two lawsuits against the roadside zoo under the Endangered Species Act.

A LONG OVERDUE REVIEW

In the fall, the USDA opened a comment period while considering changes to its policy of rubberstamping license renewals for all facilities regulated under the AWA, including puppy mills and exhibitors like roadside zoos and marine animal parks. The Animal Legal Defense Fund submitted a comment urging the USDA to stop renewing licenses of facilities with histories of violations. Read the comments at aldf.org/USDAComments.



CONFRONTING CAPTIVITY

PAGE 5



LAWSUIT FILED: Nero, Marina, Coral, and Reef are white tigers, and they haven't had adequate access to sunlight, fresh air, or natural surfaces in 12 years. We recently filed an Endangered Species Act lawsuit against Landry's Inc.—the owner of Houston's Downtown Aquarium—where the tigers are held.

SUSTAINING SANCTUARY: The Animal Legal Defense Fund is partnering with Project Chimps, a sanctuary for chimpanzees rescued from biomedical research laboratories. Project Chimp allows its chimps to enjoy their remaining years in the atmosphere they deserve. Your support helped us sponsor their new truck, which will tow the trailer that transports chimps to their new home.



Because of our work, four tigers, two African lions, and three lemurs were removed from the roadside zoo to more appropriate facilities. But the court's ruling will benefit more than just the animals in Cricket Hollow. The USDA must now defend both its decision to renew Cricket Hollow's license and its rubberstamp license renewal policy which could have implications for roadside zoos, puppy mills, and other licensees across the country.

It's thanks to your support that we're leading the fight to overturn this dangerous USDA policy. Read more about our lawsuit against the USDA and our efforts to protect captive animals languishing in facilities across the country that fail to meet the minimal requirements of the AWA at aldf.org/CricketHollow.



Our Legacy of Love Program has reached capacity and is now closed. We are not accepting new applications. Donors currently enrolled in the program must send us a copy of their will and enrollment forms within the next 30 days. If we do not receive these materials, we will be unable to hold your spot in the program. This change is to ensure we can provide the best possible care for animals enrolled in Legacy of Love. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the program administrator at (707) 795-2533 x1046 or dthompson@aldf.org.

Taking on Iowa's Ag-Gag Law

PAGE 6



After successfully striking down Idaho and Utah's Ag-Gag laws, our fight continues in Iowa. Suing a state over its Ag-Gag law means we are committing our expert legal team to years of work, but with you in our corner, we're ready to take on these large-scale challenges that we know will make a real impact for animals. Empowered by your generosity, the Animal Legal Defense Fund is leading a coalition of public interest groups in a lawsuit against the state of Iowa. We are arguing that its Ag-Gag law violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution, which grant freedom of speech and the right to equal protection under the law.

Like other Ag-Gag laws, Iowa's criminalizes undercover investigations at factory farms and slaughterhouses, effectively silencing advocates and



ensuring animal cruelty and other illegal activities go unreported and unpunished. Iowa is one of the largest states for industrial animal agriculture.

More than 20 million pigs and 45 million laying hens are raised in Iowa each year, with tens of millions more cows, chickens, turkeys, and goats raised in the state. The vast majority of these animals are raised on factory farms, subject to intensive confinement, routine mutilations, and deplorable conditions. We are fighting for all of them, and we'll see Iowa in court. Learn more about our campaign against Ag-Gag laws and our ongoing litigation at aldf.org/Ag-Gag.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE



VICTORY: A Wyoming judge issued a partial ruling in favor of the Animal Legal Defense Fund in its lawsuit against the organizers of "Wyoming's Best of the Best"—a coyote-killing contest held throughout the state. Immediately after oral arguments, the judge ruled that at least some of the activities associated with the event constitute illegal gambling. A formal injunction permanently banning future gambling activities at Buddha Bob's Bar will be issued. The judge will issue a written ruling on the remaining two claims—that the two prize-winning categories associated with the killing of coyotes are themselves forms of illegal gambling—in the coming months.

LAWSUIT FILED: The Animal Legal Defense Fund has joined a coalition challenging plans to build a U.S. border wall that would destroy wildlife habitats, interfere with breeding and migratory patterns, and potentially result in the extinction of many of the more than 100 endangered or threatened species that call the border area their home. Read more about the lawsuit at aldf.org/BorderWall.

VICTORY: A judge ruled in favor of the Animal Legal Defense Fund in our lawsuit opposing Monterey County's contract renewal with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services. This decision is a big win for wildlife in Monterey County, California and an important warning to other counties that contract with the federal killing agency. Learn more at aldf.org/WildlifeServices.



Bringing Together Animal Law Advocates

The Animal Law Conference celebrated its 25th anniversary this fall in Portland, Oregon. Co-hosted by the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the Center for Animal Law Studies, and the Lewis and Clark Student Animal Legal Defense Fund chapter, this year's Animal Law Conference had its highest attendance ever. The weekend featured exciting panels on a variety of issues affecting animals today including the difficulty litigators face in finding animal sanctuaries for wild animals freed from captivity, gender and race in the animal protection movement, and a reflection on animal law's advancements and challenges over the last three decades.

The historic weekend kicked off with the first Animal Legal Defense Fund Student Convention. The sold out event brought together 100 law students from 23 different states and the UK, Canada, and India for a day of panels, discussions, and networking opportunities for the next generation of attorneys, prosecutors, and judges who want to make a career of helping animals through the legal system.

We offer our sincere thanks to the Animal Law Conference sponsors:

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HONORING ANIMAL LAW ADVOCATES

The Animal Legal Defense Fund relies on a network of volunteer attorneys to fulfill its mission to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. This year law professionals donated more than 12,500 pro bono hours to our cases and projects. The 2017 Advancement in Animal Law Pro Bono Achievement Awards honored some of those attorneys and their law firms for their outstanding dedication.

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Thank you for your hard work and support!

EMILY BOWEN, a second year law student at Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, is the winner of the Animal Legal Defense Fund's first New Voices in Animal Law Writing Contest. Her submission, *Friend*, detailed how the plight of Tilikum, an orca whale held captive at SeaWorld, impacted her journey as an animal advocate. Read Emily's winning essay at aldf.org/NewVoices.



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DEFENSE FUND**

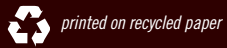
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Rest In Peace, Tony

For more than six years, you stood by us as we fought tirelessly to save a tiger named Tony from a cage in the parking lot of a Louisiana truck stop. Sadly, Tony recently died of kidney failure after spending 16 years confined to a cage as a roadside attraction. We are involved in continuing litigation to keep Tony's owner from ever condemning another tiger to such suffering. Learn more about Tony and how we're still fighting in his memory at aldf.org/Tony.

THE ANIMALS' ADVOCATE A NEWSLETTER FOR THE SUPPORTERS OF THE ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND



6

Stopping
Ag-Gag
In Iowa



7

A Gathering
Of Animal Law
Advocates