



President Obama's Administration: First Year Report Card on Animal Protection

(Listed by Agency, Not in Order of Importance)

Good

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Downed Cows – Announced by President Obama (during first 50 days in office) that a pending rule would be finalized to close the loophole allowing slaughter of downed cows, and final rule published in April. HSUS is currently seeking further action to close the remaining loophole on downed calves.

Transparency – Posted inspection reports online for animal dealers, exhibitors, and research facilities regulated under the Animal Welfare Act. Also posted annual reports from research facilities, including information on whether drugs were provided to animals used in laboratories for pain and/or distress relief.

Traveling Exhibitors – Issued a proposed rule under the Animal Welfare Act to require traveling exhibitors to send itineraries to USDA for all trips (not just longer ones).

Elephants – Enforced the Animal Welfare Act by removing two elephants suffering from physical ailments due to substandard conditions from a Texas exhibitor.

Investigations – Responded to HSUS undercover investigations by initiating agency follow-up investigations of New Iberia Research Center and Bushway Packing, Inc.

President's Budget Request - Requested increased funds for USDA to enforce the Animal Welfare Act. Also requested funds for veterinary student loan forgiveness program to ease shortage of veterinarians in underserved rural and inner city urban areas and public health practice (first time this has been requested in a President's budget).

Department of the Interior (DOI)

Sharks – Cosponsored the listing of six species of sharks under Appendix II of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (protect from the fin trade).

Polar Bears – Submitted a proposal to move polar bears to Appendix I of CITES (halt trade in polar bear skins). Upheld ban on polar bear trophy imports.

Snakes – Supported legislation to list nine species of large constrictor snakes as injurious, which will prohibit imports and interstate commerce, based on a comprehensive risk assessment by the USGS. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is now considering how to improve the process for listing species as injurious.

Canned Hunts – Dropped appeal of U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia decision overturning FWS' rule allowing canned hunts of endangered species.

DOI/Department of Commerce

ESA Protections – Revoked President Bush’s eleventh hour rule undermining ESA protections (under Section 7). Federal agencies must once again consult with FWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) before taking any action that may affect threatened or endangered species.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Climate Change – Released first comprehensive national system for reporting greenhouse gas emissions from major sources, including the largest Confined Animal Feeding Operations. Also announced that greenhouse gases threaten public health and welfare, signifying that EPA will use the Clean Air Act to address the greenhouse gas problem if Congress fails to act.

Animal Testing – Revised safety testing requirements under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to delete a one year study that involved feeding pesticide chemicals to dogs in order to assess human health risks.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Factory Farming/Antibiotic Resistance – Acknowledged during Congressional testimony that nontherapeutic use by agribusiness contributes to antibiotic resistance problems and it would be helpful to have legislation streamline the current process of withdrawing approvals for nontherapeutic uses of antibiotics.

Frogs and Salmonella – Reminded the public that frogs carry *Salmonella* after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a multistate outbreak associated with frogs kept as pets.

Department of Justice

Cruelty Depictions Law – Defended the Cruelty Depictions law, which bans the commercial sale of videos depicting extreme and illegal acts of animal cruelty, before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Downed Cows – Joined a lawsuit with HSUS against two companies, Hallmark Meat Packing and Westland Meat Company, Inc., arguing the companies defrauded the federal government by violating the terms of their school lunch contracts, which require humane handling of animals.

U.S. Postal Service

Animal Fighting – Issued a proposed rule to revise mailing standards in order to harmonize with animal fighting provisions of the Animal Welfare Act. This rule bars shipment of publications that cater to animal fighters.

U.S. Trade Representative

Tuna/Dolphins – Challenged Mexico’s argument against the dolphin safe tuna label at the World Trade Organization.

Poor

DOI/FWS

Wolf Delisting – Dropped gray wolves in Idaho and Montana from listing under the Endangered Species Act, finalizing an effort launched by the Bush Administration to deprive the wolves of legal protections, thus allowing state management and hunting.

Black-Tailed Prairie Dog – Refused to list the black-tailed prairie dog as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Bobcats – Proposed to remove CITES protections for bobcats (trapped and killed for trade in their fur).

DOI/National Park Service

Sport Hunting in National Parks – Weakened the historic prohibition on sport hunting in national parks by allowing private sport hunters to target elk in Rocky Mountain National Park.

USDA

Pork Subsidies – Provided millions of dollars to the meat industry without requiring any animal welfare reforms.

Spent Hen Subsidies – Purchased meat for U.S. schools that has less testing and lower safety standards than meat served in fast food restaurants.

Needs Improvement

DOI

Wild Horses – Adopted a five-year strategic plan that promises a more humane and effective approach to control wild horse populations, but then announced plans to removed 12,000 wild horses from Western rangelands during 2010.