Animal Welfare News

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian

Part of the Higher Education Commons, Humane Education Commons, and the Veterinary Medicine Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol48/iss1/17

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa State University Veterinarian by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
FEWER LD₅₀ TESTS

A survey by the Coalition to Abolish the LD₅₀ reveals 50–100% reduction in the use of the LD₅₀ by a number of big drug companies. The drop is chiefly explained by a switch to the “limit” test which involves the use of 10–20 rodents compared with the 40–200 animals required for the LD₅₀. In the cosmetics industry too there has been a substantial switch to the limit test. Here the decline in LD₅₀ testing is on the order of 75–90%. At the same time most companies now have in-house committees to examine the need for a proposed test and have eliminated all testing on minor formulation changes. There is also increasing use of ingredient data banks.

WILD BIRD ACT SURVIVES
BY A SINGLE VOTE!

New York State’s Wild Bird Act, which became law last year, withstood a well-financed attack by the pet industry during the 1985 legislative session. The Act prohibits sale of exotic, wild-caught birds. The pet industry attempted to repeal it by substituting a bill purporting to regulate the trade and masquerading as a humane measure.

The New York State Humane Association, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the New York Audubon Society, the Society for Animal Protective Legislation, and the Humane Society of the United States worked actively to preserve the Wild Bird Act. Nevertheless, the Assembly passed the pet industry bill, which was stopped by a single vote in the Senate Committee to which it was referred.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is at work drafting regulations to enforce the Wild Bird Act, scheduled to go into effect November 1985. Enforcement of the Act will help prevent the severe depletion of parrots, cockatoos, toucans, and other exotic birds in the wild.

Captive-bred birds of all species will continue to be available in pet shops. As a recent New York Times article What’s new in the Pet Business, states: “Indeed, arbiters of style may pronounce $1000 cockatoos the ‘In’ thing this year, but $9.98 parakeets and other small birds account for the bulk of the more than $220 million which consumers spent last year on birds and related products.” Wild birds should remain in their native jungles where they belong.

In a letter requesting sterner U.S. laws on the import of wild birds (requesting, in other words, more states to follow New York’s example), Felipe Benavides, President of Peru’s famous wildlife protection group Prodena, said:

The death of birds during capture is a human crime because they catch these birds in a cruel way. They put up nets and the birds fly into them. At least 50% hang themselves in the net; of the remainder, 40% die during transport.

They also enter the nests of macaws, parrots, falcons, etc., and take the parents out and then put the young in the bag. 50% die in the process.

Export figures are inaccurate because most of the officials are corrupt and accept bribes. At least one-third of bird exports are not registered. In Latin America it is very easy to get “Official Documents” which are in fact illegal.

According to U.S. records for 1982, 4.3% of birds imported from Peru died on the journey. So for every bird sold by the pet trade, at least 10 had died—taking into account broken eggs or birds too young to take and left to die. All this happens because of a luxury trade in the United States and Europe.
A POISONOUS DECISION:  
1080 BAN LIFTED  

Since 1972 all uses of the notorious poison, Compound 1080, have been forbidden. Until now, that is. Now the curiously named Environmental Protection Agency has seen fit to lift the ban and to allow this indiscriminate killer to stalk the range once more.

The 1972 ban was enforced for a number of interlocking reasons: the proven ineffectiveness of 1080 in protecting sheep; the huge toll of non-target species, including many on the protected list; straightforward economics—reimbursing stockmen for losses to coyotes would have been cheaper than (attempted) predator control by poison; the united opposition of environmentalists in alliance with not a few stockmen.

So surely something dramatic must have occurred during the 13 poison-free years to explain this dramatic reversal of policy? Have coyotes, perhaps, been going on the rampage, gorging themselves silly on defenseless flocks? No, in essence nothing has changed. Predation on sheep has shown no marked increase—and indeed more and more stockmen have discovered for themselves that guard dogs made far better defenders of sheep than ever 1080 did.

Admittedly, the lifting of the ban is not total. Carcasses may not be baited with 1080. Its use is limited to lacing the collars of “sacrificial” sheep—a stratagem requiring the coyote to kill its prey by going for the throat, piercing the collar, swallowing the poison and then painfully dying. But plainly even this limited use is fraught with environmental hazards: eagles and other scavengers will assuredly die from eating poisoned coyotes. The crucial point, though, is that with 1080 back on the market, there can be no real prospect of confining its use to sheep collars as the EPA directs. Stockmen dislike the ruling: the collars are expensive and killing a coyote demands losing a sheep.

Recently in Wyoming three golden eagles were found dead near a dead sheep baited with an outlawed poison. In the wake of this incident a wildlife specialist pertinently asked: “How do they expect to control use of 1080 in toxic collars when they are unable to prevent use of illegal poisons?”

N.B. The collars will contain enough 1080 to kill 185 coyotes or up to six adult men. The Fish and Wildlife Service (the primary applicant for the collar) has estimated that the attacking coyote will swallow just 10% of the poison. Which leaves 90% to be swallowed by other creatures later.