

ANIMAL *Writes*

www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca

Volume 39 - AUTUMN 2007



**VHS helps
rescue 100
battery hens**

By Debra Probert

Why egg-laying hens?" is a question we are often asked. I think the picture of the hen on the front page will give you some idea of why we chose this

issue. Let me tell you her story, and you can judge for yourself. Please keep in mind that there are **26 million** hens in Canada incarcerated in battery cages.

Josie, although not the typical white leghorn hen used on larger intensive farms, was subjected to exactly the

same treatment as her leghorn sisters. The farm she lived on is very small, with only around 100 hens at a time, but the conditions are identical to a typical battery farm.

Continued on pages 6 and 7

See page 5 for some great VHS merchandise

Editorial: The climate cost of factory farming

By Peter Fricker

The Fraser Valley, once a bucolic landscape of small family farms, has become a casualty of one of the great global issues of the 21st century: the dirty, dangerous and inhumane business of intensive agriculture – a business driven by our insatiable demand for cheap meat.

Earlier this year, the B.C. Agriculture Council quietly released a study which found “high to very high environmental risk” levels of nitrates in the soil of a number of the valley’s farms. Several previous studies have identified agriculture as the main source of nitrates leaching into the Abbotsford aquifer, which supplies drinking water to 100,000 people. Specifically, it’s the enormous amount of surplus, nitrate-rich livestock manure that’s the problem. Farmers spray masses of it on crops as fertilizer, causing excess nutrients such as nitrates, phosphates and potassium to seep into the soil and groundwater.

High levels of nitrates in drinking water are associated with blue baby syndrome, a condition which reduces babies’ ability to carry sufficient oxygen in the blood. Nitrates also cause excessive algae growth in waterways, suffocating aquatic life.

The surplus manure is from the valley’s 128,000 cattle, 95,500 pigs, 767,000 turkeys and, most importantly, its 15.4 million chickens. The chickens alone produced

736,500 cubic yards of manure in 2000 and this is expected to rise to one million cubic yards per year by 2010.

The huge excess of manure is the direct result of the intensification of agriculture over the last 20 years. The Fraser Valley has more farm animals per square kilometre than anywhere else in Canada and the highest concentration of very large farms.

The biggest change has been in the industrialization of the poultry industry. While the number of chickens in the Fraser Valley has increased, the number of poultry farms has decreased. During the 1990s the number of chickens per farm increased by 78 per cent. Out with the family farm’s hen-house and in with giant broiler barns for meat chickens and battery cages for egg-laying hens. The factory farm has arrived in a big way.

Agriculture has not only been identified as a cause of water pollution, but also as a contributor to air pollution in the valley. Ammonia from livestock manure (chiefly poultry) accounts for three-quarters of ammonia emissions in the Lower Fraser Valley. Ammonia can react with other pollutants to form fine particulates, which can be harmful to respiratory health. Last year, the Fraser Valley Regional District’s director of planning said that within the next five to seven years “agriculture will be more responsible for air pollutants than all the vehicular transportation in the valley.”

If all this weren’t bad enough, the valley’s farms are also contributing to global warming. Another sobering study by the FAO found that livestock production causes an estimated 18 per cent of total human-induced greenhouse-gas emissions globally – more than all forms of transportation combined.

Not surprisingly, intensive farming has also created an animal welfare nightmare for the chickens, pigs and cattle packed into cages, crates and feedlots to produce cheap meat, eggs and dairy products. The Fraser Valley is just one small example of an inhumane agricultural model that has been exported to developing countries worldwide.

Structural reforms, such as dispersing the existing CAFOs in the Fraser Valley and banning new operations might help reduce local pollution, but the real answer is to reduce our meat consumption. Large-scale livestock production is inflicting industrialized cruelty on countless animals, polluting our air and water and contributing in a major way to potentially catastrophic climate change.

That’s why the Vancouver Humane Society is calling on Canada’s key environmental groups to make livestock production a priority issue in their climate change work. It’s time environmentalists and all of us recognized a fact: eating less meat will not only save animals from factory farm cruelty – it will help save the planet.

This article appeared in the Vancouver Sun on Sept. 25, 2007.

DONATIONS

Special Occasion Donations

From Michael, Lisa, Rebecca and Sarah, to Thomas Douglas, in honour of Father’s Day;
Cynthia Budgell, in honour of Jonathan Budgell’s birthday;
Cathy Morton, in honour of Lil Morton’s birthday;
Ellen and J.R. Barberie, in honour of Amanda Brotman and Antoine Schetritt’s wedding;
Mark Kamstra and Lisa Kramer, in honour of Heidi Wood and Graham Olney’s wedding;
Joe, Louise and David Paquin, in honour of Keith Jarvis and Brian Fair;
From “Li’l Bro” in honour of Judy Mason’s birthday;
Dr. Maureen Lennon, in honour of Becci’s birthday;
Lori Braha in honour of Tanya Kalashnikov’s birthday.

Memorial Donations are a meaningful way to honour a loved one. VHS is grateful to have received donations in memory of the following:

Anon, in memory of Ms. Magoo;
Cathy Spence, in memory of her mother, Pearl Spence;
Sharon & Victor Rempel, in memory of Alex Wallach (for Father’s Day);
Jessie Tasker, in memory of Alex Wallach;
Irina M. Reid, in memory of Bree;

Lorna Harris, in memory of Ann Jones and Jessie Marineau;
Jim Harrison, in memory of Tina Harrison;
Cathy Morton, in memory of Brandy;
Patricia Redman, in memory of Diane Slark;
Diane and Allan Ferrell, in memory of Ivy Fales;
Jackie Weiler, in memory of Dixie;
Gordon Surgeson, in memory of Richard (Dick) Surgeson;
Carol, Gina & Family, in memory of Richard (Dick) Surgeson;
Yani Mitchell, in memory of Jenny;
David Black, in memory of Alexia Erickson;
Jackie Carnegie, in memory of Shadow;
Anon, in memory of Sasha Turunen;
Ruth Comisarow, in memory of Beastie;
Ann, Robyn, Liv & Zai, in memory of Digby;
Margaret Terry, in memory of Ben Nendick;
Hedley Heritage Museum Society, in memory of Ben Nendick;
Bruce and Marian Wallace, in memory of Ben Nendick;
Tina Cohoon, in memory of Dawn Cassidy;
Karen Nendick, in memory of Ben Nendick;
Peter and Mariana Lee, in memory of Dawn Cassidy;
June Humphreys, in memory of Oscar Edmonds.

June Humphreys, in memory of Julianna Holmes;
Joanne Chang, in memory of Lise George’s “India”.

Thank you to the following generous businesses who donate to our work directly or indirectly through owners or employees:

Cambridge Plumbing Systems Ltd.;
Doggy Style Deli;
Jamie’s Whaling Station;
Keystone Extras;
Elan Records Canada (Harmony Gig CD sales);
Harvey McKinnon Associates;
Jan Corkan Incorporated.

Employee Groups

A huge thank you to TELUS and TELUS employees and retirees for designating \$1355 to VHS in their Dollars for Dollars 2006 Campaign. TELUS has matched this donation, for a whopping \$2710 to VHS! Thank you!

Others

And a special thank you to the UBC Book Sale Committee, who supports animal groups like VHS every year with their terrific book sale.

Cage-free catching on

VHS's Chicken Out! program enjoys more success

By Bruce Passmore

Since the last newsletter, the BC Institute of Technology (BCIT) became the second educational institution in Canada to completely remove eggs produced by caged hens from campus food services. Langara College took the lead earlier this year and schools from coast to coast are now working on varying degrees of cage-free procurement policies. In fact, we won't "count our chickens before they hatch" so to speak, but we should have some big announcements to make by the end of the year. Stay tuned!

August saw the Resort Municipality of Whistler become the latest community to request the removal of eggs from caged hens from municipally-run facilities. Whistler council went one step further than both Richmond and Vancouver (which passed similar initiatives earlier this year) by sending a letter to the Union of BC Municipalities requesting all municipalities in BC follow Whistler's lead and remove battery hen eggs from menus. Who will be next? Your municipality? If you write to your council politely requesting they follow Whistler's lead,



Thanks to VHS, more and more institutions are deciding to buy eggs from cage-free hens.

let us know what they say. (For complete details on the Whistler decision, visit the news section of www.chickenout.ca.)

Does cage-free mean cruelty-free? No. Not all cage-free systems have the same standards (Certified Organic have the highest), and most egg-laying hens, cage-free or not, are subject to the same transport and slaughter conditions. But we can tell you that getting hens out of cages relieves the most egregious and longest part of their suffering – the 12 to 18 months they spend crammed into a tiny cage with 5 to 7 other hens.

Thanks to you, thousands of hens are able to flap their wings, dust bathe, nest and perch. These are the changes we are seeing immediately. This is why we do the work we do.

VHS would like to send a special thank you to the William and Charlotte Parks Foundation for Animal Welfare for their generous support of the Chicken Out! project. Their kind support means we can continue our important work getting hens out of battery cages. www.parksfoundation.org

B.C. communities want action on exotics

Animal supporters are waiting to see if the B.C. government will announce strong legislation to address the problem of exotic animals. The government promised to act after a young woman was killed by a captive tiger near 100 Mile House, B.C. earlier this year.

The Union of B.C. Municipalities voted to call on the provincial government to come up with legislation to deal with the issue. Currently, there is a patchwork of municipal exotic pet bylaws which provide varying degrees of protection for exotic species. Many cities and towns have no such bylaws at all. VHS has called for a province-wide ban on sale and private ownership of exotic pets.



Rodeo on the ropes

The Cloverdale Rodeo has been denied official sanctioning by the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA). This means the rodeo will no longer be a part of the CPRA competition circuit.

The loss of the sanctioned status is a result of the Cloverdale Rodeo's decision to drop four roping events after years of pressure from VHS and animal rights activists. The CPRA requires rodeos to have these events to be officially sanctioned.

A number of other rodeos in B.C. are sanctioned by the CPRA, including the Abbotsford Rodeo in the Lower Mainland.

Beef and breast cancer — a deadly connection?

By Dr. Ray Kellosalmi

This article was published on the Globe and Mail website on July 25, 2007

Earlier this year the Calgary Stampede issued a press release stating: "The 2007 Calgary Stampede will see a concentrated focus on the beef industry." In October, the Stampede will host "Beef 2007" the International Livestock Congress. Nothing odd about that. After all, rodeo and the beef industry are inextricably linked, with one promoting and supporting the other.

What *is* odd is that the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF) would involve itself with activities that promote the consumption of beef when meat has been linked to cancer in numerous studies.

Over the past couple of years a number of rodeos across Canada, most notably the Calgary Stampede, have taken part in a fundraising campaign for the CBCF called Tough Enough to Wear Pink.

Supported by the Wrangler clothing company, the campaign raises money through sales of pink Wrangler shirts and other pink-themed merchandise, a percentage of which goes to the CBCF.

Everyone seems to benefit. Wrangler's brand is promoted and the CBCF gets money for cancer research. And the rodeo can associate itself with a worthy cause — quite handy to blunt criticism over its controversial treatment of animals. (Although one anti-rodeo activist recently told a Calgary newspaper that it was like putting pink icing on a cow pat.)

But while the CBCF joins the cowboys, cattle producers and meat companies at rodeo barbecues across the country, shouldn't it consider the health implications of the product it is indirectly helping to promote?

In 2007 alone, several pieces of research have made connections between meat



A number of studies have linked eating meat with an increased risk of breast cancer.

consumption and breast cancer:

Just this month (July), a well-publicized study showed that Asian women who adopted the Western "meat-sweet" diet (high in meat and sugar) were at higher risk of developing breast cancer.

In May, a study funded by the American Institute for Cancer Research found that women who consistently consume a diet high in grilled, barbecued or smoked meat and low in vegetables and fruit significantly increased their risk of developing postmenopausal breast cancer.

In April, an eight-year study at the University of Leeds found that women eating large amounts of red and processed meat have a significantly higher chance of developing breast cancer compared to those on vegetarian diets.

Earlier studies made similar findings. For example: In 2006, a Harvard Medical School study found that younger women who regularly ate red meat appear to face

an increased of breast cancer; In 2003, a study at the Portland VA Medical Centre found red meat intake was significantly associated with an increased breast cancer risk.

These come on top of a number of studies associating meat consumption with a variety of other cancers, such as colon, stomach and bowel cancers.

While scientists may debate whether there is enough evidence for a certain causal relationship between meat and breast cancer, surely there is sufficient information to raise serious concerns.

Some cancer charities recommend limiting meat consumption. The World Cancer Research Fund, for example, advises eating no more than 80gm of red meat per day. Obviously, a precautionary approach makes sense to some experts.

Given all this, you would think that CBCF would stay well clear of even the most tenuous association with the meat industry. Linking up with rodeos and cattlemen is a bit like the Canadian Lung Association fundraising at an event sponsored by the tobacco industry.

The hoopla that surrounds the Tough Enough to Wear Pink campaign is supposed to raise awareness of cancer. But are all those people buying pink shirts at rodeo country fairs being made aware of the mounting research that links cancer and meat? Perhaps that wouldn't go down too well when the Calgary Stampede is hosting "Beef 2007."

Everyone wants to find a cure for cancer but there seems to be more and more people who are interested in *preventing* the disease. If diet, including the reduction of meat consumption, proves to be part of an effective prevention strategy, then how will the CBCF justify its public relations connections to the very people who help promote meat?

Perhaps it's time the CBCF looked beyond lucrative fundraising schemes and looked for partners more in line with its purpose.

Shop for Christmas with VHS

Help spread the word about VHS with one of these great gifts. Not only will you get a great product, you'll also be contributing to our work to improve the lives of animals



Show your love of animals to everyone around you AND help the environment by using one of these stainless steel VHS travel mugs. Ethically produced, the mug is a stylish and practical way to show your support for VHS. Cost: \$16 (\$7 for shipping)



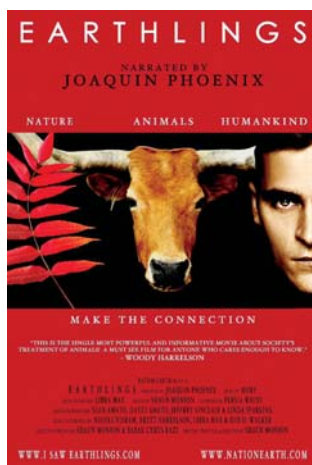
The picture on these beautiful note cards was painted by VHS supporter Teresa Knight. They're blank and suitable for any occasion. Cost: \$12 for 8 (includes shipping).



Look hot in these women's 100% cotton tank-tops. Black with white lettering. S,M,L. Cost: \$25 (additional costs for shipping outside Canada).

Nature, animals and us on film

Earthlings, a powerful documentary about the relationship between nature, animals and humankind, will be screened on Thursday, November 8 at 7 p.m. at the UBC Normand Bouchard Memorial AMS Theatre in the Student Union Building,



6138 Student Union Blvd. in Vancouver. The screening is free but donations will be accepted, with all proceeds going to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Students get connected

In early October, VHS gave a dynamic and thought provoking presentation to two classes of students from Capilano College's Global Stewardship program. The aim of the presentation was to examine if factory farming is a major global issue, and if so, how it influences or fits into other major issues like global warming, poverty, human rights, etc.

After a brief overview on modern intensive farming, students broke into small groups to analyze factory farming's effects on a single other global issue, and what, if any, possible solu-

tions existed to mitigate the negative effects factory farming might have on that issue.

The results were sobering: everyone agreed that humans need to reduce their meat consumption, and that a better solution would be to go vegetarian. As a result, many pledged to take a more active role in the issue of factory farming and its expansion in developing nations, with some even suggesting that they would incorporate educating people on the negative effects of intensive farming into their careers.

Home on the (free) range – at last!

One hundred former battery hens are set free in Gulf Islands sanctuary

Continued from front page

Josie was crammed into a cage with several other hens (see photo – Josie was delivered to the sanctuary in her cramped cage, which was her home for 18 months.) She spent her entire time in this cage, competing with the other hens for space, rubbing her neck raw against the wire cage reaching for food and laying an egg approximately every 24-36 hours. The first time she ever felt the sun on her back was when her cage was taken out of the barn and put on a truck.

Josie was never able to stretch her wings. She was never able to scratch in the earth. Her natural urge to build a nest was completely thwarted. Dr. Ian Duncan, international poultry expert, describes nesting as the strongest motivation for hens, even above that of obtaining food. Denying hens this fundamental behaviour is cruel and results in extreme frustration, and possibly even pain.

Josie's neck, as you can see in the photo on the cover, has been rubbed raw from reaching out of the wire cage for food. Her beak has been sliced off at the tip – a common procedure with battery hens, to stop them from pecking each other.

I asked Dr. Ty Binfet, the founder of Rest.Q Sanctuary, to tell me in his own words how he felt shortly after rescuing these hens in September.

“As the director and primary caregiver of the residents at Rest.Q Animal

Sanctuary, I routinely care for injured, abandoned, and neglected animals and birds. In our almost four years of operation, I've seen my share of animals who have endured a great deal of suffering.

“Our recent rescue of 100 battery hens is a stark reminder of the indifference that can take place when animals are treated as commodities. The day the hens arrive is always a day of mixed emotions - on the one hand I find myself angered that the hens are allowed to live as they do (for a full 18 months to 2 years) and on the other hand, I'm elated that for the hens we're able to rescue (but a small drop in the bucket we realize), that Rest.Q will have a chance to undo some of the horrors they've suffered.

The suffering the hens experience is told by their plumage. They often arrive with naked necks and picked bottoms. Open sores are common from battles with cage-mates and constant rubbing against metal caging. Burned beak tips are commonplace. While the hens are clearly traumatized, they slowly begin to relish life at the sanctuary. Their forgiving and resilient nature is admirable. At Rest.Q we focus on what will be, of the possibilities that exist for the hens rather than the deplorable condition they arrive in.

“We ensure the transition to a free-ranging life is taken slowly and done at the pace of the hens. A secure hen house



Above: The hens arrived at the Rest.Q Sanctuary in their cramped cages awaiting their first taste of freedom. Above right: After spending her whole life squashed together in a battery cage with four other birds, this hen has lost most of the feathers on her neck. Below right: This hen enjoys her first wobbly steps outside a cage. All the rescued hens will lead now a free-range life where they can feel the sun on their backs, scratch in the ground and live out their lives as nature intended.

is provided that allows access to a large outdoor pen. As the hens have never walked for extended periods before, they often take exaggerated steps as if walking on the moon. They are generally weak and for some, stepping over the lip of the ramp into the henhouse is a challenge. Keep in mind that these hens have lived in incredibly cramped quarters where stretching wings and turning around is difficult at best.

“In time, the hens gain strength, becoming curious and learning to relish life. I will often sit outside their pen and marvel as they scratch for seed for the first time, flap their wings, sit and enjoy a sunbath, or roll in the dirt. Eventually, they will take food from a hand, come when called for feed, and learn to run for cover when our resident eagle soars overhead.

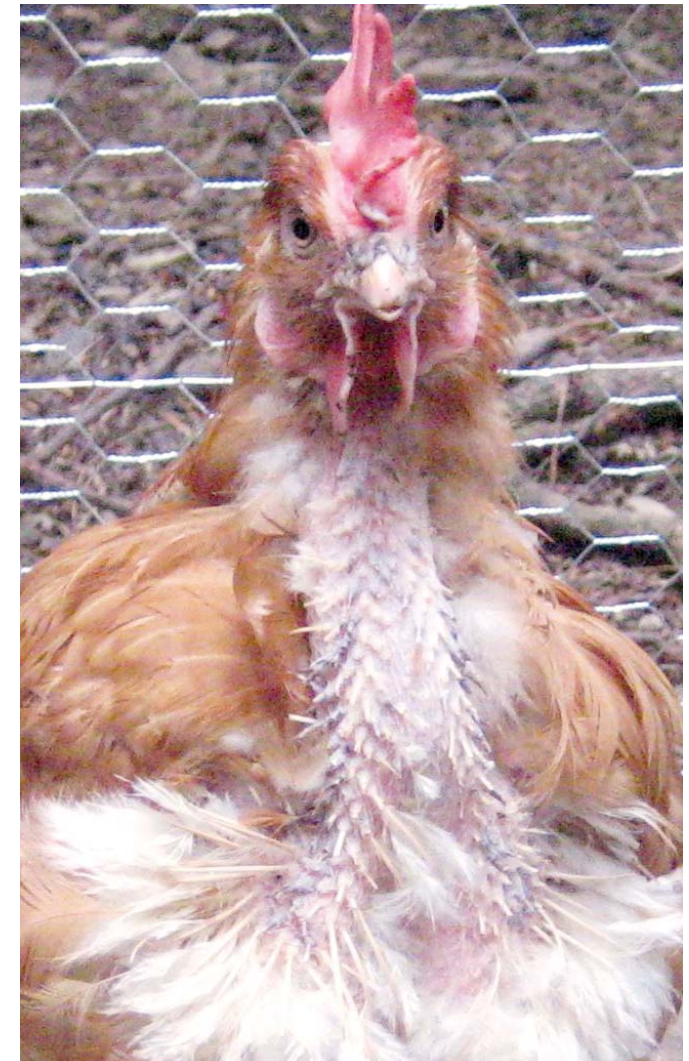
“As Rest.Q Sanctuary is already home

to a large flock of chickens, we are unable to provide permanent housing to the large number of battery hens we assist. Thus, we'll often adopt out hens to individuals equipped to take on the challenge of rehabilitation. All homes are screened and adopters pledge that the hens will never be used as food, that predator-proof housing is available, and that they may be returned to Rest.Q at any point. After a short time at the sanctuary some of the hens will transition to new homes whereas some of the more “battered” hens will stay on as permanent residents.

Rescuing battery hens is a stressful yet exhilarating undertaking. Organizations such as the Vancouver Humane Society work tirelessly to challenge conventional thinking around the treatment of hens and archaic farming conditions that con-

tinue to promote suffering. Your support of such efforts are welcomed and appreciated. Certainly, the rescue effort described here would not have been possible without the support of VHS.”

We at VHS are inspired by the story of these hens, and the compassion of Dr. Binfet and the others at Rest.Q. We will continue to support the rescue of more hens and tell their stories. Please help us by showing people this article – especially the pictures. It's an effective way to kick start the compassion that is inherent in all human beings. You have the ability to stop this suffering, by reminding people that they have a choice. If all consumers reduced their consumption of eggs and switched to certified organic eggs (available in almost every grocery store), the everyday suffering of millions of birds would be exponentially reduced.





Liberation B.C. activists gained high profile media coverage with a demo to draw attention to the plight of turkeys on Thanksgiving. Liberation B.C.'s campaign director, Joanne Chang, described to reporters the grotesque living conditions that turkeys endure before being slaughtered.

We have to change: industry

In September, VHS representative Debra Probert attended the first animal welfare conference presented by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), which is a new organization with a mandate to provide a national coordinated approach to farm animal care. Unfortunately, this organization is heavily weighted with industry members, permitting only one animal welfare representative from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) (please see <http://www.nfacc.ca/AboutNFACC.aspx> for a list of members). As a consequence, the humane community feels this organization is not likely to effectively address farm animal welfare issues.

However, the conference provided a useful forum for discussion of trends in farm animal welfare, internationally as well as in Canada. The range of speakers was impressive and their message was consistent – consumer concern about the treatment of farm animals is increasing and it is no longer an option for produc-

ers to ignore it.

Speakers included Cornelius Rhein from the European Commission; Dr. David Bayvel, Chair of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group, and Dr. John Webster from the University of Bristol. They outlined the changes in Europe, including the movement away from intensive confinement, particularly battery cages and sow crates. Repeated was the sentiment that large retailers, driven by consumers, are having a profound influence on animal welfare with internal animal welfare standards. This has become necessary because industry has been slow to respond to concerns, so the retailers are instituting standards themselves.

Mike Siemens of Cargill Beef and Catherine Scovil of the Canadian Pork Council both spoke of how effective animal protectionists and their initiatives have been, specifically mentioning PETA and HSUS. Mr. Siemens made the encouraging comment that industry obstruction-

ists must move on in order to improve moral standards.

David Trus of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada stated that the Canadian government is hearing that animal welfare is a growing concern to the public and that it can no longer be handled “off the corner of the desk.”

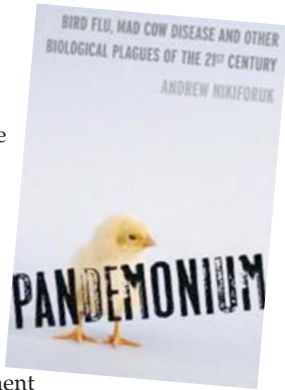
Encouraging? Absolutely. It was obvious that we are on the right track by focusing our efforts on consumers and retailers, and that our alliances with others in the animal protection movement, such as Humane Society International (Canada), the BC SPCA and others are effective and productive.

It was also obvious that you, our supporters, are having a huge impact on farm animal welfare. Congratulations – your letters, emails and comments to government and retailers; your conversations with friends and relatives, and your financial support of effective, focused organizations like VHS are all making the world a better place for animals!!

New books – read all about it

Pandemonium, by Andrew Nikiporuk. Viking Canada. \$34.

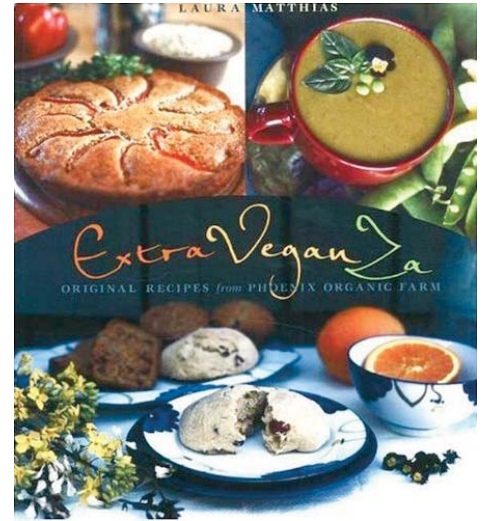
Andrew Nikiporuk, an award-winning journalist, describes how the unchecked free trade in living organisms, increased mobility, and urban crowding has created an increasingly volatile environment for the world's 6.5 billion people. In *Pandemonium*, he argues that our health and habitat are threatened by biological invaders



moving at unprecedented speed. Avian flu, just one example, has the potential to cause a human pandemic, but Nikiporuk warns there are other threats from the inadvertent trafficking in lethal pathogens around the world.

ExtraVeganZa, by Laura Matthias. New Society Publishers. \$29.95

ExtraVeganZa pushes the boundaries of vegan cuisine with delicious recipes, helpful photos and guidance on cooking with the seasons. The book embodies the vision of growing your own food – or at least knowing where it comes from – and creating a more sustainable lifestyle. Laura Matthias, a field biologist, organic farmer and long-time vegan has produced over 250 savoury and sweet recipes that will appeal to anyone who appreciates good, wholesome food.



Agreed...first thing in the morning we BOTH go down to the lottery office and cash the cheque.

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*\$2.50 from the sale of each book goes to the VHS - just say you read about it in this newsletter!

Thanks to the great companies that donated prizes to our volunteer program, allowing us to reward our hard-working volunteers:

- Bosley's Pet Food Plus
- Chi Cake
- Empire Theatres
- Festival Cinemas
- The Foundation
- IMAX
- Pacific Theatre
- Stong's Market
- The Naam
- Vancouver International Film Festival (and Vancity Theatre)

Survey says ... You like us a lot!

Readers have given a big thumbs up to *Animal Writes!* The results of our readership survey have shown an overwhelming endorsement of the newsletter and the ways in which VHS communicates with its supporters.

A large majority of readers (80%) thought the length of the newsletter (12 pages) was "just right" and most were also in favour of keeping the frequency of VHS's supporter communications the same – three newsletters and three updates per year.

There was an overwhelming "no" to introducing an email newsletter – only 17 per cent of respondents wanted an email version.

They also gave us an indication of which animal issues they were most interested in reading about, with domestic animals and farm animals leading the way, followed by exotic animals and native wildlife.

Reader comments were also very positive, with considerable support for the direction of VHS's work. Several readers

said they wanted to VHS to continue keeping costs low. Some said they regretted not being able to donate more. But the most common response was along the lines of: "Thanks and keep up the good work!"

VHS welcomes readers' comments and suggestions on the newsletter. It's important to keep *Animal Writes!* current and relevant to you, our readers and supporters.

So keep those letters and ideas coming. We look forward to hearing from you.

Be media savvy for animals

By Nicholas Read

When it comes to the news business, the good news is that the media take animal issues a lot more seriously than they used to, especially here in B.C. The bad news is that they still don't take them seriously enough.

That means getting someone who works in the media to take your concerns about animals seriously can be a challenge. But it's not an insurmountable one. You just have to know what to do.

So here's a checklist of what to keep in mind the next time you attempt to get someone in the media interested in what matters to you.

- **Be new.** Remember it's called the *news*-paper, not the oldspaper, and the *Evening News*, not the *Evening We Already Know That*. So whatever you have to pitch, make sure it's something the reporter won't have heard before. That can be tricky when the issue is a continuing one. There are always too many cats, and fur has been around as long as Canada has. So you have to think of how you can spin that old story into a new one.
- **Be specific.** People in the media don't want to hear general complaints about the state of anything. They want concrete examples of what it is you're complaining about. Is there a new lab procedure that's



The media often stereotype animal-rights activists as difficult and extreme. Don't allow them to exercise that prejudice.

particularly offensive? If so, what is it and why is it so offensive? Is there a new product on the market that's particularly loathsome? What is it, and why is it so bad? (Again, notice the emphasis on the word, new.)

- **Think in pictures.** More and more the news business is about pictures, both moving and still. Regardless of whether you're pitching a story to TV or the newspaper (the radio is an exception), think about how best to illustrate your story with pictures. Is there something a TV crew can film or a newspaper photographer can shoot? If so, set it up for them.

- **Think individually.** People relate far better to stories of individual animals than they do to stories about hundreds, thousands or millions of them. So to tell that story about what happens to hundreds of cats or thousands of lab rats or millions of chickens, find one cat or lab rat or chicken with an extraordinary tale to tell. Then by telling the story of that one animal, you tell the story of the rest by extension.

- **Be brief.** People in the media have very short attention spans. So when you have an idea, get right to the point in as few words as possible. A press release should never be more than one page, and an e-mail never more than one paragraph. Provide comprehensive contact details. Whom should the reporter contact about the story and how? Make sure that person is available when the reporter calls.

- **Be polite.** Animal-rights people have a (sometimes justified) reputation for being rude, impatient and unforgiving. That won't get you anywhere. Instead, be as nice as you can, because the reporter will respond to that and be nicer to you.

- **Be conservative.** Don't look like a stereotypical animal-rights activist or crazy cat lady when you meet the press. Dress neatly and conservatively. In other words, don't give them any ammunition to make fun of you or take you less seriously — because they will.

New take on humane education

We are thrilled with how successful this project has proven to be! Since its inception in February, 2006, hundreds of students and dozens of teachers have been stimulated into thinking about the choices that they make and how these choices impact animals, the environment and other human beings on the planet.

Along with success, however, have come challenges. In order to address these challenges and have the most impact on the greatest number of people, we are revamping the program. We need to take a step back and concentrate on establishing a more stable foundation so that we can continue this important initiative. One avenue we'll be exploring to strengthen the program is to partner with

other organizations within the environmental and human rights movements.

So, for the time being, we will no longer be offering one-off presentations in local high schools. Instead, we are focusing on making our presentation materials available to teachers via our website, so that teachers themselves can download information to present to their classes. We also plan to develop new presentations on an ongoing basis for teachers to use.

We'll continue to maintain the website, along with its exciting student forum. And each year we'll host (along with EarthSave Canada and other partners) the Institute for Humane Education's Sowing Seeds Humane Education training workshop, which will be taking place in

Vancouver as this newsletter is going to print. These new plans will ensure the maximum benefit within the limited parameters of an organization as small (but dynamic!) as VHS.

Thank you to all of you who have donated and who continue to donate specifically to this program. Our sincere gratitude as well goes out to Lesley Fox for her hard work, enthusiasm and inspiration in getting this project off the ground. And a special thanks to the wonderful people at the Vancouver Foundation who have supported our project not just once, but twice, believing in VHS and our vision for a more humane and compassionate society.

Stay tuned!!!

News briefs ...

A high-fat diet, especially one with lots of red meat, not only can increase the risk of developing colon cancer, it increases risk of reoccurrence of colon cancer or death, according to a study published in the August 14, 2007 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Study participants who most closely followed the "Western" diet with lots of red and processed meats, sweets, desserts, French fries and refined grains experienced 3.3 higher risk for reoccurrence than those who followed a more "prudent" diet. (*Western Producer, August 23, 2007*)

Cruelty-free, environmentally-responsi-

The British Columbia Foundation for Non-Animal Research has a new website: www.bcfnar.org. The BCFNAR is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to the support and promotion of alternative methods to the use of animals in scientific research.

ble household products are increasingly available. Shoppers Drug Mart Life Brand Bio*Life dish soap is not tested on animals and does not contain any animal-derived ingredients. It contains renewable, plant-based oils in place of synthetic and petroleum-based chemicals and is phosphate-free. (And it works!!)

Amsterdam's coffee shops are switching to free-range eggs to make their famous "spacecakes" which are baked with hashish or marijuana and can give an intense high. The switch is due to campaigning by the Dutch animal rights group Wakker Dier. (*Reuters, Africa; October 3, 2007*)

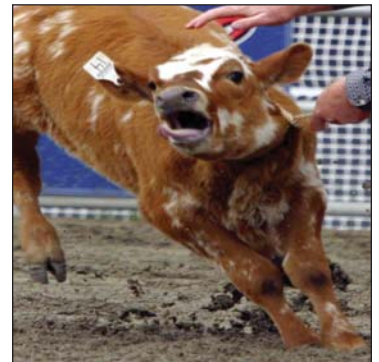
VHS would like to thank these media for their coverage of the egg issue:
The Nik and Val Show (CFUN Radio)
Animal Voices (CO-OP Radio)
The Vancouver Courier
The Vancouver Sun
The Richmond News
The Richmond Review



VHS out and about

VHS attended these summer events:
Richmond Hamilton Community Festival
Riley Park Farmer's Market
Golden Spike Days - Canada Day
Vancouver Folk Music Festival
Richmond Animal Wellness Expo
West End Farmer's Market
East Van Farmer's Market
Animal Rights Day
Davie Days
Kitsilano Farmer's Market
Taste of Health
UBC Sustainability Fair

HERE ARE 4 GOOD REASONS



WHY YOU SHOULD REMEMBER ANIMALS IN YOUR WILL



Vancouver Humane Society

Please contact our office for further information.

*Against
all animal
cruelty!*



HAPPY ENDINGS

VHS is used to helping animals get out of bad situations, but this is one of the happiest endings we've helped achieve.

Some schoolchildren found a rooster at the bottom of a ravine in East Vancouver. He was missing most of his toes and had also been abused (some sick individual had shoved a paint brush up his rear). The kids took him back to their school and a teacher contacted VHS.

We advised calling the BC SPCA and a constable collected the rooster. VHS offered to pay for veterinary treatment and to find the unfortunate bird a home.

He was transferred to the Night Owl Bird Hospital where the veterinarian found he had suffered no serious trauma but had an ear infection. While he received treatment, VHS found a generous supporter in Maple Ridge who had a flock of hens and said she would welcome a rooster.

After completing his treatment he was transferred to his new home, where he was at first stunned to see the hens, but then extremely excited and pleased (he crowed a lot!). He was also thrilled to be fed a variety of vegetables and other food, having probably eaten only pellets before.

Despite his lack of toes, he gets around well and is now cock-a-hoop about his new life. This is one happy rooster.

Fluffy, a 13-year-old male cat with kidney and thyroid problems, need urgent medical help so VHS ensued he got the veterinary care he needed. Fluffy is doing fine now.



Sunshine (below right) is a 14-year-old female cat who was very ill with thyroid problems. She means everything to her guardian, who lives in supported housing and could not afford Sunshine's veterinary bills. VHS is helping out with the cost of Sunshine's ongoing care and we are hopeful she will make a full recovery.



Phoenix, a handsome Rottweiler, needed surgery to repair a ruptured cruciate ligament. VHS contributed toward the cost of the operation and Phoenix is now on the mend.

Punky, right, a two-year-old male Persian, was gravely ill with a urinary tract blockage. VHS helped cover the costs of urgent medical care and Punky is now home and getting back to his old self.



Leo (below right) is a young male cat who was hit by a car and wandered injured for nearly a week before returning to his guardian. His right hind leg was broken in two places and was completely out of the hip socket. His guardian, a student, could not afford the full cost of Leo's medical treatment so VHS stepped in to help. He is now recovering well.



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Our Privacy Commitment to You

You, our supporters, are our most valuable resource. Without you, we would not be able to do the work that we do. You are our lifeblood. When we expose and protest animal abuse, we know that you are right behind us, ready to speak out for those who cannot defend themselves. And for that, we thank you.

Sometimes it is very advantageous for groups like ours to share information. This is the fastest and most economical way for us to inform people like you about animal issues. It is also the most efficient way for VHS to grow and become more effective.

It is very frustrating for all of us when we open our mailbox to find that we have received donation requests from worthy organizations, many of which we would like to support. Not only is it a waste of paper and postage, it is often heartbreaking to open the envelope and be told yet another story of sadness and despair.

That is why when we do share information about our supporters; we do it ONLY with like-minded organizations - other people who care about animal suffering and want to put their resources towards exposing and stopping it. If you allow us to share information with other like-minded groups,

simply put, we can help more animals. And it is our sincere promise to you that we will only exchange lists with organizations with similar views and policies. Even knowing how important it is to us, if you still do not want VHS to share your name, just phone the office and we will honor your request.

Do you want to become a VHS member? Just let us know. The membership fee is \$2 per year. The only other things we require are that you have interests that are compatible with our goals and philosophy, and that you donate two hours per week (or the equivalent) of your time.