

A close-up photograph of a small, white piglet standing on a bed of straw in a barn. The piglet is looking directly at the camera and has a piece of straw in its mouth. The background is slightly blurred, showing wooden structures and more straw.


**animal
wellness
action**

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Major Highlights of Our Work in 2023

Highlights of 2023



A U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Prop 12, new organic standards for farm animals, and Nike's decision to stop sourcing kangaroos as shoes are some major highlights of our work.

A Message from the President

Dear friend,

Since inception of the organization in 2018, the *raison d'être* for Animal Wellness Action has been to provide legal protections for animals and to drive enforcement of those legal standards. In our relationship with animals, human beings have all the power, and legal standards must be in place to shield animals from people acting with disregard or malice.

Our policy work takes us into many consequential domains of animal use, including food and agriculture, testing and science, wildlife management and human-wildlife conflict, fashion and footwear, spectator sports involving animals, and so much more.

In our work, each subject area has its own history and challenges and opportunities, with our political adversaries having varying abilities and resources. When you look at each campaign individually, it feels sometimes like we are playing 15 or 20 games of chess at one time — making bold offensive moves as our opponents counter. But with each move, the goal is to position us for ultimate success, even if it takes a while to get there. Our end goal is to checkmate our opponents. But that doesn't mean vanquishing them; it often translates into finding a better way for individuals and society to meet their needs without causing torment and pain to animals in the process. It's a win for animals and for people, too, even though the individuals involved in institutionalized use of animals don't always see it that way on the front end.

As federal lawmakers launched their work in the 118th Congress, they worked with Animal Wellness Action to shape a new national animal protection agenda. When you roll up our policy goals for animals, you'll see that we are working to close out industries that have dogged animals for decades or centuries and also tackling, and softening, major institutional uses of animals that will be with us for decades to come.

In our legislative work to end the “cage age” in industrial animal agriculture, for example, we won the second most important vote, after the

Animal Wellness Action, along with its affiliates the Center for a Humane Economy and the Animal Wellness Foundation, work to prevent cruelty to all animals, taking on systemic exploitation of domesticated and wild animals.



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ballot initiative itself, on Proposition 12: the 5-4 vote of the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court that affirmed that the anti-confinement measure was constitutional and a proper exercise of state authority. And also in 2023, we were proud to have given a lift to the first-ever farm animal standards under the “organic seal,” providing legal protection for 60 million farm animals at the outset and a number that may swell by many factors in the years ahead.

Add in the seismic change in our three-year *Kangaroos Are Not Shoes* campaign to spare the marsupials from horrific slaughter in their native habitats just to make shoes. We clinched the case with key athletic shoe manufacturers. Nike, Puma, and then New Balance pledged that 2023 would be their last year to support the open-air killing of kangaroos by commercial shooters. Adidas, based in Germany, remains the only major athletic shoe manufacturer still actively driving the killing of kangaroos in their native habitats. These corporate successes set us up for success in the legislative realm down the road.

Also in 2023, we built major momentum in our serious-minded efforts to close out industries that have been with us for longer than any of us have lived: horse slaughter for human consumption, greyhound racing for gambling, and dogfighting and cockfighting for the thrill of the bloodletting.

On horse slaughter, we worked to push a ban in New York that helps clinch the national case that all slaughter of American horses exported to Canada and Mexico must end in 2024. And we worked last year to shut down major illegal fighting pits throughout the nation, even as we opened up the most consequential legislative attack on animal fighting in history in the form of the FIGHT Act. And, having worked with allies to shrink the greyhound racing industry, we are poised to strike a blow to end it all in 2024.

And central to our mission, we worked on implementing the laws that we passed in 2022, including the FDA Modernization Act 2.0 to reduce the biggest category of animal testing, the Big Cat Public Safety Act to halt the trade in tigers and lions as pets and props, and the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act to reduce racetrack risks that have turned dirt ovals into crash sites.

There’s so much to our work. It’s hard. And it’s complex. But in every case where we launch a campaign, we execute plans to win. And throughout the travails and battles, you’ve been there to enable it all. Without you, none of this work happens.

With the utmost respect, I thank you so much for being part of this kind of major societal change for animals.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Pacelle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne Pacelle
President

Major Break: Animal Welfare Campaigns in Action



We believe that helping animals helps us all by creating a more civil society where people, animals, and nature are living in balance.

While our work is never complete, and the risks that animals face mean that our work is urgent every day and every year, there was unmistakable progress in 2023. We executed on our major campaigns to drive lasting change, reorienting the public debate about the use of animals and asking lawmakers and corporate leaders to rethink past assumptions and to force a new, safer, better relationship with animals.

Campaign: Creating a Cage-Free Future



- ***U.S. Supreme Court upholds Prop 12 as constitutional.***
- ***Question 3 goes into full effect.***
- ***Organic livestock and poultry standards codified.***
- ***NJ votes in humane standards***

Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action, was a key architect of the two most important ballot measures for farm animals in U.S. history: Proposition 12 in California, passed in 2018 by the voters, and Question 3 in Massachusetts, enshrined into law two years earlier. Both measures not only mandate expanded living environments for pigs, laying hens, and veal calves, but they also restrict sales of pork, eggs, and veal in the states. Both measures require the sale of crate-free pork and cage-free eggs, no matter where the production occurs.

The National Pork Producers and their allies campaigned against both measures, and they lost badly at the ballot box — by 26% in California and by an astonishing 56% in Massachusetts. After they lost, they redirected their attacks against the measures and went to the federal courts.

They lost every case, but in 2022, they won a commitment from the U.S. Supreme Court to hear *NPPC v. Ross*. Without any question, it was an existential threat before a conservative court. The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), the American Farm Bureau Federation, and other major actors want no federal or state legal standards to protect animals.

In deciding the most consequential case for animal welfare to come before the high court, an ideologically diverse majority of U.S. Supreme Court Justices ***upheld California’s Proposition 12 as constitutional***, putting that measure and a similar Massachusetts statute on track for ***full enforcement within weeks***.

More broadly, the decision, at least for the moment, ***safeguards the rights of states*** to restrict agricultural commerce for animal welfare, food safety, and other compelling purposes. Prop 12 built on a prior voter-approved, anti-confinement measure (Prop 2), enacted a decade earlier, that restricted extreme confinement of laying hens, veal calves, and breeding pigs, stipulating that any eggs or pork sold in the state come from animals afforded sufficient space to move around, regardless of where the animals are raised. Question 3 in Massachusetts was similar in construction. (The current leadership at Animal Wellness Action had played a central role in initiating those two ballot measures and

The Supreme Court justices determined that the National Pork Producers “invite us to fashion two new and more aggressive constitutional restrictions on the ability of States to regulate goods sold within their borders. We decline that invitation. While the Constitution addresses many weighty issues, the type of pork chops California merchants may sell is not on that list.”



the three prior winning farm-animal protection measures approved by voters between 2002-2021.)

In siding with the state of California in its defense of Prop 12, Justice Neil Gorsuch, joined by Justices Clarence Thomas, Sonja Sotomayor, Amy Coney Barrett, and Elena Kagan, determined that the National Pork Producers “invite us to fashion two new and more aggressive constitutional restrictions on the ability of States to regulate goods sold within their borders. We decline that invitation. While the Constitution addresses many weighty issues, the type of pork chops California merchants may sell is not on that list.”

The most consequential high-court ruling in the history of the animal welfare movement was widely covered, from the [Des Moines Register](#) to the [San Francisco Chronicle](#). Our team has had op-eds published in more than 15 newspapers, from the [Orange County Register](#) to the [Worcester Telegram Gazette](#), and has called on state officials in Massachusetts and California to proceed with resolve to implement measures adopted by voters in 2016 and 2018, respectively. The laws’ provisions barring the sale of veal and eggs from animals kept in extreme confinement had already been in effect. (For your information, here is the [SCOTUS ruling](#), [a blog](#) about the win and its effects, and our [legal brief](#) and [veterinarians’ brief](#) to the court.)

As we expected, the debate then moved immediately to Congress, where lawmakers aligned with the pork industry pushed the so-called Exposing Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act to nullify Prop 12 and other state laws restricting agricultural commerce.

Make no mistake, the [EATS Act is an attack on American elections](#), and it will hurt thousands of farmers who have invested in more animal-housing systems and planned on accessing the revamped markets in California and Massachusetts. [China will be the biggest beneficiary if EATS were to pass](#), given the Chinese Communist Party controls more than a quarter of the U.S. pig industry. China has already built a set of massive high-rise factory farms in that country and may try the same here if pig farming is deregulated, that’s exactly what EATS aims to achieve.

We have worked diligently to build broad opposition to the EATS Act in Congress, from nearly all Democrats and from dozens of Republicans as well. There were 16 Republican House Members who [sent this letter](#) to the leaders of the House Committee on Agriculture, urging them not to include the provision in the Farm bill. By the end of the year, more than 200 lawmakers had explicitly signaled opposition to the measure.

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We continue to make the case that Prop 12 is the right policy and that the pig industry has diversified its operations over the last 20 years and is amply prepared to provide more humanely raised pork to California and Massachusetts right now.

Costco and dozens of other major food retailers have been shifting their procurement practices, purchasing pork and eggs from farmers who give the animals space to move and signaling the shift in the marketplace that we've been pressing for years.

In July, we applauded New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Democrats and Republicans in the state legislature for enacting an Animal Wellness Action-backed measure to ban gestation crates to house breeding sows. The Senate voted 35 to 1 and the Assembly 73-1 in favor of the ban. That made 11 states with gestation-crate bans, including comprehensive measures in California and Massachusetts that incorporate sales restrictions on factory-farmed pork that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld in May as constitutionally sound.

Also last year, we applauded the federal government's release of its final Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) rule — a regulatory regimen that for the first time in federal law establishes specific legal standards for at least 60 million animals used in production agriculture.

The farm animal welfare standards will apply to animals raised under an “organic standards” regimen, assuring consumers that the animals raised on organic farms are not immobilized in cages or crates, subjected to routine mutilations, denied access to pasture for meaningful periods of their lives, or otherwise treated in ways inimical to their well-being. This was an eagerly awaited rule, with two decades of delays from the USDA and interference from factory-farming interests. Animal Wellness Action president Wayne Pacelle identified the national significance of the final action after working on the issue for a quarter century.

Campaign: Animal Fighting Is the Pits



Unprecedented actions taken to shut down illegal, staged animal fighting

In 2023, there was never more activity against animal fighting thanks to our relentless campaigning. We extend our thanks to our partners at Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK), who like us, bring a tenacious attitude toward pulling animal fighting up by the roots.

We worked to shut down fighting pits across the nation, expose the people and players behind the enterprises, and create a sense of urgency that all of these staged fights must end once and for all. Animal fighting truly is the pits, whether it is dogs fighting

to the death, or roosters with icepick-like razors strapped to their legs to slice one another and create suffering to the end of every bloody battle. In 2023, we saw the United States take up more dogfighting cases than ever before.

Building on our work in 2018 that established a national ban on animal fighting, including in the U.S. Territories of Puerto Rico and Guam, we introduced the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act, H.R. 2742 and S. 1529, to amp up federal enforcement tools and capacity so law enforcement can run to ground every dogfighting and cockfighting pit and breeding operation in our nation. Despite laws against the scourges of dogfighting and cockfighting, we have hundreds of illegal fighting pits in the United States, and animal fighters breed hundreds of thousands of animals for pits from Mexico to the Philippines.

With more bipartisan support than any other animal welfare bill in this Congress, the FIGHT Act has attracted 500 endorsing agencies and organizations — from the National District Attorneys Association to the American Gaming Association to the Florida Sheriffs’ Association. The measure will ban on-line gambling on animal fights; allow for criminal forfeiture of equipment and properties used in the commission of these crimes; prohibit shipping adult chicken roosters through the U.S. mail; and create a private right of action for citizens to bring civil cases against dogfighters and cockfighters when federal law enforcement doesn’t take action.

The FIGHT Act is driven by concerns for the barbarism of animal fights, mass shootings, and other commingled crimes, as well as disease threats to poultry and other birds posed by illegal transports of fighting roosters.

Meanwhile, we are working through the annual spending process to secure funding for enforcement, so the FBI, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other key actors can bring cases against known animal fighters. The U.S. House of Representatives, without dissent, **passed an amendment** to require at least \$1 million in spending on casework against animal fighting by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Inspector General. Final spending levels were not set, though, by the time the year ended, with the Congress punting on its annual spending bill to action in 2024.

In Oklahoma, the cockfighters boldly came out of the shadows, formed a political action committee, and worked to launch a legislative campaign to gut penalties for animal fighting. We met them head on and defeated them, as their three primary pro-animal fighting bills died. In the process, **we condemned** Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt for releasing a video to “cheer them [cockfighters] on from the sidelines.” Big names in Oklahoma politics and sport — former Republican Governor Frank Keating, Attorney General Drew Edmondson, and legendary Oklahoma football coach **Barry Switzer** — joined us in urging the governor to stop giving support to these criminals.

Our work here was headline news in **The Oklahoman** and Tulsa World and also received major

billing in the **New York Post**, **The Guardian**, **The Daily Mail**, **Daily Beast**, and **The Hill** when YouTube removed the governor’s video because it violated the company’s community standards promoting cruelty to animals. NonDoc got the **governor’s team on record that he opposes cockfighting and any effort to weaken the state’s voter-approved law.**

We partnered with SHARK on a wide variety of investigations in Alabama, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and other states. There have been investigations and arrests in a growing number of states, including Arizona, California, Delaware, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Kentucky, Texas and Virginia.



In Delaware, with Animal Wellness Action supporting the field investigations of Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK), a single animal-services officer broke up a cockfighting derby in progress. We partnered with SHARK on a wide variety of investigations in Alabama, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and other states. There have been investigations and arrests in a growing number of states, including **Arizona, California, Delaware, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Kentucky, Texas and Virginia.**

Our **veterinary experts** are making their case in major agricultural states, such as **Idaho, Nebraska, and South Dakota**, that animal fighting bears no resemblance to accepted agricultural practices and that animal fighting is bound up with a wide range of **other organized criminal operations.**



Campaign: Kangaroos Aren't Shoes



Three big brands announced plans to get out of the kangaroo-sourcing business

With our sister organization, the Center for a Humane Economy, we secured monumentally significant wins when we won commitments from Puma, Nike, and New Balance to halt their sourcing of kangaroo skins for athletic shoes. A fourth big brand, the Italy-based Diadora, committed to that same policy in 2021, leaving Adidas as the outlier among the major names in athletic shoes.

Since the launch of our [Kangaroos Are Not Shoes](#) campaign in 2019, the commercial slaughter of kangaroos has declined by more than 700,000 animals, based on the government's crude estimates.

With that kind of momentum behind us, we worked with a bipartisan group of six U.S. Representatives, led by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., and Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., to introduce the Kangaroo Protection Act to halt any trade of kangaroo parts in the United States. A Senate bill will soon follow.

Animal Wellness Action also played a leading role in the introduction of state legislation banning the import and sale of kangaroo products, including in [Arizona](#), [Connecticut](#), [New Jersey](#), [Oregon](#), and [Vermont](#).

"As a co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, I am proud to lead the charge on policies that promote animal welfare and conserve our wildlife. Our bipartisan Kangaroo Protection Act will prohibit the commercial sale of kangaroos, ensuring that those who exploit these animals in the United States are held accountable."

— Rep. Fitzpatrick



"Over two million kangaroos are killed for commercial purposes each year. As a staunch animal rights advocate, I believe we owe it to these majestic creatures to protect their welfare. I am proud to lead the bipartisan Kangaroo Protection Act, which will make it illegal to exploit kangaroos in the United States and impose penalties for violations."

— Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Campaign: Modernize Testing



FDA Modernization Act tremors felt domestically and internationally

The biggest win on animal testing in the history of the animal protection movement came with our shepherding to final passage FDA Modernization Act 2.0 in the last days of 2022. That bill, and a companion measure called the Reducing Animal Testing Act, eliminated a federal mandate for animal testing for new drugs and for biosimilars.

As we turned into 2023, we began working on implementation and to spread the idea around the world, since the use of animals in drug screening for safety and effectiveness is a worldwide industry. In 2023, the government of India passed its own version of the FDA Modernization Act, which authorizes researchers to use non-animal and human-relevant methods instead of animals. A similar effort is underway in the Republic of Korea. A marketing research report shows that 55% of industry

respondents said that the FDA Modernization Act 2.0 is driving exploration into human cell models, and additional research shows that alternatives to animal testing are being used in about 70% of companies.

More than 500 articles have been published about the impact of the FDA Modernization Act 2.0, including in the [American Heart Association Journal](#) and [Forbes](#). We are pressing the FDA to update its regulations given the enactment of the new law and ensure that the agency moves swiftly towards qualification and regulatory acceptance of non-animal methods and that work continues robustly in 2024.

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Campaign: Greyhound Racing in the United States



Retreat of simulcasting of greyhound racing at home

With just two live-racing venues remaining in the United States — both in West Virginia — we are seeing major gambling companies stop simulcasting races from other nations, cutting off profits to these foreign tracks. With our [Greyhound Protection Act](#) building bipartisan support — which bans live racing and simulcasting — the legislation may complete what we and GREY2K USA have previously set in motion. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with GREY2K USA to end this century-long era of putting greyhounds at risk for racing purposes.

Campaign: End Horse Slaughter



Keeping horses in the stable and off the table

In one more landmark gain — tipping the scales even more decidedly in our direction — New York State joined California, Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas in **banning horse slaughter for human consumption**, underscoring that big border states want to end the live export of horses for slaughter to Canada and Mexico.

The state laws are, however, no substitute for a federal ban, given that our goal is to halt all exports of horses bound for slaughter. U.S. Sens. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., reintroduced anti-horse slaughter legislation just months after we partnered with Animals' Angels on a **North American investigation** documenting that the extraterritorial slaughter of American horses is rapidly waning but still a merciless journey for around 20,000 American horses. A House companion bill, also rewritten to go to the Agriculture Committee, has strong bipartisan support, and we are seeking to attach the SAFE Act to the 2023 Farm bill. We've won enormous bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress for a comprehensive ban on horse slaughter, and this is our moment to complete the job.

We **continue to pile on support** for national legislation to halt live exports of horses for slaughter, with more than half of all Members of the U.S. House now publicly signed on to legislation to ban horse slaughter for consumption. The SAFE Act would ban the slaughter of U.S. horses for human consumption, including live exports to Mexico and Canada.

Pressure for passage of the SAFE Act is mounting just as recently released USDA export data shows that kill buyers shipped 17,997 horses from Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to slaughter plants in Mexico in 2023. Sadly, it is the most significant annual percentage increase of live exports since 2012, and that means that our work to pass the SAFE Act has never been more important.

Indeed, an **investigation by the Center for a Humane Economy and Animals' Angels** revealed immense suffering of horses and other equids during transportation, holding, and slaughter, with results showing a lack of care, deficient delivery of food or water, and transport in cramped, dangerous, and unsanitary conditions.

Actress Katherine Heigl joined in our campaign, speaking up and **sending a letter to President Joe Biden** urging him to fight against live exports of thousands of American horses for slaughter for human consumption. **Our action was triggered by favorable action from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** in calling for an end to Canada's role in exporting draft horses to Japan for slaughter. Both North American leaders should be aligned on this issue.

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Campaign: No Doping in Racing and a 'Zero Tolerance' Standard for Horse Deaths at Racetracks



No animal should be exposed to risk merely for human entertainment

Declaring that the “show must not go on with so many athletes dying on the field of play,” Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy called on Churchill Downs to take an indefinite pause with its live-racing schedule until it could return to competition without more young, fit horses dying on the track.

Twelve horses died at what is arguably the nation’s premier racing venue in the run-up to the Kentucky Derby in Louisville, including seven in the week preceding the big race. The deaths of young, healthy, fit horses prompted us to call on the new Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) to embrace the goal of “no young, healthy horses dying on tracks in training or competition,” with the new Authority urged to suspend trainers whose horses enter into competition and do not get off the track alive. We also called on the Authority to ban the use of the whip.

The spate of deaths drew national attention, and Animal Wellness Action was at the center of the national discussion, with a **national column** from an Associated Press writer, stories in the **Wall**

Street Journal, and other major outlets. Criticism spiked just days later after a horse trained by Bob Baffert died at Pimlico in Baltimore, yet the famed horseman was **allowed to run a horse later** that day. Baffert celebrated the win while the nation mourned the loss of yet one more horse under his control.

By the end of the year, with HISA in effect starting in May 2023 at Thoroughbred tracks across the nation, racing deaths were down. But aggressive enforcement by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority, prodded by Animal Wellness Action, will be essential to stop the phenomenon of major deaths at American tracks.



Campaign: Cats Aren't Trophies



Our Colorado ballot initiative will protect mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx

Cats Aren't Trophies (CATs), a new political committee formed by Animal Wellness Action, filed language toward the end of 2023 as a crucial step to place a measure on the November 2024 ballot to ban trophy hunting of mountain lions and trapping or hounding of bobcats or lynx. Mountain lion trophy hunters use a pack of up to eight dogs fitted with GPS collars to keep track of the pack as it chases a fleeing cat up into a tree. The “hunter” then finds the location with high-tech telemetry equipment, walks up, and shoots the cat off of a tree limb. Trophy hunting guides offer these “guaranteed” kills for a bucket list trophy tom, collecting fees of up to \$8,000 for a highly commercialized exercise for their clients.

This campaign, thanks to Animal Wellness Action, marks the return of the ballot initiative process in the animal movement, after two cycles with no statewide campaigns in the United States. With our guidance, CATs worked to place a column in the [Denver Post](#) to frame the issue, and that same piece ran in papers throughout the state, including the [Greeley Tribune](#), [Boulder Daily Camera](#), and [Longmont Times Call](#). Two of our spokespersons conducted an interview on [KGNU radio](#), and the [Denver Post](#) (if you cannot read it behind paywall, a replica of that story ran in the [Spokesman Review](#)) ran a feature on the campaign, and a couple of days before that, so did the [Grand Junction Sentinel](#). This ballot measure will draw national attention given that trophy hunters and trappers kill 500 lions and 2,000 bobcats a year in Colorado.

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Campaign: Getting the Lead Out



More than 500 peer-reviewed studies showed detrimental effects on wildlife, including a continent-wide effect on bald and golden eagles.

Fish and Wildlife Service condemns lead ammo, but more must be done

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service **issued a final rule** in 2023 asserting that the “best available science” reveals that “lead ammunition and tackle have negative impacts on both wildlife and human health.” Disappointingly though, the agency is phasing out lead ammunition over three years on just eight national wildlife refuges, while allowing sport hunters to leave behind tons of lead on hundreds of other refuges that will kill animals from 130-plus species. The eight refuges are Blackwater, Chincoteague, Eastern Neck, Erie, Great Thicket, Patuxent Research, Rachel Carson, and Wallops Island national wildlife refuges. All refuges except Chincoteague will also phase out lead fishing tackle.

More than 500 peer-reviewed studies showed detrimental effects on wildlife, including a continent-wide effect on bald and golden eagles. A study, **released in January in Science**, determined that about half of bald eagles had “bone lead concentrations above thresholds for chronic poisoning” and one-third of eagles had “acute [lead] poisoning.” Fragments of lead ammunition in the remains (so-called “gut piles”) of hunted animals are having population-level effects on eagles, **according to our statement**.

In 2024, we’ll continue with our campaign to halt the biggest driver of lead dispersal in the environment: sport hunting.



Campaign: Dunking the Milk Mandate in Schools



Sparing cows by eliminating the forced acceptance of milk in schools

Animal Wellness Action, the Center for a Humane Economy, and Switch4Good launched a new Congressional campaign in 2023 to end the milk mandate in the National School Lunch Program and to give kids a choice and cows a break. U.S. Sens. John Fetterman, D-Pa., John Kennedy, R-La., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., introduced the **ADD SOY Act** to give kids a nutritionally equivalent, plant-based milk option to cow's milk in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Reps. Troy Carter, D-La., and Nancy Mace, R-S.C., introduced the companion bill because perhaps half of the 30 million kids participating in the NSLP are lactose intolerant.

Under law, the USDA spends \$1 billion a year of taxpayer dollars to fulfill a “milk mandate” in public schools, even though **70-95%** of Black, Pacific Islander and Asian, Native American, and Latino individuals are lactose intolerant. In fact, the National Institutes of Health **reports** the majority of all people have a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy, and lactose intolerance “is also very common in people of West African, Arab, Jewish, Greek, and Italian descent.” This “milk mandate” leads to millions of kids getting ill in the classroom (making the learning experience more difficult) and also to extraordinary food and fiscal waste. According to the USDA's findings, 29% of the cartons of milk served in our schools are thrown away unopened, sending at least \$300-\$500 million in tax dollars and more than 100 million gallons of milk down the drain.

The Soy Nutrition Institute Global “advocates for the removal of this specific requirement to ensure the foods and beverages in school meals serve all children.”

Soy milk is better for the environment than cow's milk. One gallon of cow's milk requires 1,000 gallons of water to produce, compared to 28 gallons of water for a gallon of soy milk. Producing soy milk uses less land (8%), produces fewer emissions (31%), and requires less energy (23%) compared to cow's milk. A dairy cow produces 120 pounds of waste per day, with 9.42 million cows collectively generating or 412 billion pounds of waste annually.

Fifty years ago, a cow on average produced 3,621 pounds of milk a year, but now the average cow on a big production facility pumps out an astounding 22,500 pounds. That unbelievable level of output complicates wellness — from routine and painful inflammation of the udders to foot and leg problems resulting from the massive body mass they carry. Many cows go to slaughter at just four or five years of age.

The government is overreaching by subsidizing and promoting milk beyond its natural appeal to consumers and denying kids choice in the lunchroom.



Inside Animal Wellness Action



We see a time when animal cruelty is no longer common or accepted.

Financial Summary for 2023

In 2023, AWA had unaudited cash basis total revenues of \$2,335,900, and an additional \$182,800 in revenue for Animal Wellness Action PAC. AWA had unaudited expenditures of \$900,700 and AWA PAC had expenditures of \$130,000. AWA ended the year with assets of \$2,335,000, and AWA PAC with \$146,955.

In odd-numbered years like 2023, AWA often does not spend significantly in candidate or issue elections, and builds cash reserves for expenditures in even-numbered years, when most of those elections occur. In addition to driving better policy outcomes for animals, AWA seeks to inject animal welfare into the national political discourse and to drive better policy outcomes for animals.

AWA has earned Guidestar's Platinum Seal of Transparency. You can view our profile [here](#).

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Ways You Can Help

1

Get educated on animal issues

Stay updated on animal welfare issues by reading our blog [here](#) for an in-depth look at what's happening at the intersection of animals and politics.

2

Influence lawmakers

Take action on our [Contact Congress](#) page. And don't forget to sign our petitions [here](#). Make your voice heard by letting your local, state and national lawmakers know you want them to introduce new animal welfare bills and vote for existing ones.

3

Vote with your conscience

Vote in your local, state and national elections for candidates who support animal welfare policies and programs. Check if you're registered to vote by [checking here](#). Or you can [register to vote here](#).

4

Be social

Keep up on the latest in animal welfare news by following us on social media and alerting your followers to the opportunities to help the animals.



5

Donate for Change

Donate to candidates and law makers who support better animal welfare laws. Support organizations like [Animal Wellness Action](#) that move forward public policy surrounding animals. We have [multiple ways for you to give](#) to help prevent cruelty to animals by supporting our work influencing legislation that shapes animal welfare laws and regulation.

6

Campaign for Compassion

Seek opportunities to campaign and support legislators, law enforcement personnel, judges, and other candidates for public office who support animal welfare policies. Volunteering at their campaign offices, door-knocking, and phone banking are easy and productive ways to help.

7

Show appreciation for legislative leaders

Spread the news about legislation and legislative leaders. Write letters to the editor, post information on social media about key legislative items. Remember to thank lawmakers who carry animal protection legislation and help lead on our issues.

8

Educate others

Further the dialogue surrounding animal welfare issues with friends and families. Make sure the people who care are getting the latest information by sharing our feeds.

9

Urge proper enforcement of animal welfare laws

Speak out with any information you have about the inhumane treatment of captive, farmed or companion animals, wildlife trafficking or environmental crimes by calling The Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice at 202-514-2701.

And send tips about the cruel spectacle of illegal animal fighting here:

animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org

10

Eat and act with conscience and purpose

Eat more plant-based foods, reduce food waste, minimize packaging waste, buy cruelty-free products, and live your life as if every choice matters. When we live this way, we create a healthier planet and build a more humane economy.

animal wellness action

helping animals helps us all

animalwellnessaction.org

info@animalwellnessaction.org

