

Animal Wellness Announces Rewards Program, Aimed at U.S. Territories, for Information About Illegal Animal Fighting

All Citizens in the U.S. Territories Must Comply With New Federal Law Forbidding Animal Fighting

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 9, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) and Animal Wellness Action (AWA) today announced a rewards program to run for an indefinite time that provides a \$2,500 reward for any individual who provides critical information that results in a successful federal prosecution of an individual or set of individuals who violate the federal law against animal fighting (7 U.S.C. § 2156). The publicizing of the rewards program will concentrate on the U.S. territories, where cockfighting is explicitly outlawed starting on December 20, 2019. The reward program is mentioned on the [new campaign website, www.endcockfighting.org](http://www.endcockfighting.org), which will serve as a comprehensive resource about the issue and call citizens to action to help.



Cockfighting Match

“

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Chanel Cruz Jarrett, a former Miss Guam with the Animal Wellness Foundation

If you have information about illegal cockfighting activities, citizens can send tips and other information to us at animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org. You can also consider contacting the appropriate U.S. Attorneys or state or territorial attorney general representing the jurisdiction where the crime occurred, the USDA's Office of Inspector General at 1-800-424-9121, or the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

“I am convinced the people of Guam care about animals and want to see the winding down of cockfighting on our beautiful island,” said Chanel Cruz Jarrett, a former Miss Guam and the anti-cockfighting spokesperson for the Animal Wellness Foundation. “We are an appealing destination for people across the Pacific Rim and it’s time to remove the stigma of any form of animal cruelty on Guam.”

“Cockfighting does not represent the true values of Puerto Rico and it is a great relief that it will end on our island,” said Ana Maria Hernandez, an animal law attorney in San Juan and also a spokesperson for AWF. “The people of Puerto Rico abhor animal cruelty and want to see the end of cockfighting.”

Under the federal anti-animal fighting law, it is a crime to:

☐ Knowingly sponsor or exhibit in an animal fighting venture;

☐ Knowingly attend an animal fighting venture, or knowingly cause an individual who has not attained the age of 16 to attend an animal fighting venture;

☐ Knowingly buy, sell, possess, train, transport, deliver, or receive any animal for purposes of having the animal participate in an animal fighting venture;

☐ Knowingly use the mail service of the U.S. Postal Service, or any “written, wire, radio televisions or other form of communications in, or use a facility of, interstate commerce,” to advertise an animal for use in an animal fighting venture, or to advertise a knife, gaff, or other sharp instrument designed to be attached to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture, or to promote or in any other manner further an animal fighting venture except as performed outside the U.S.;

☐ Knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce “a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument” designed or intended to be attached to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture.

“I grew up on Guam, and I know the people of the territory care deeply about the well-being of animals and the rule of law,” said Marion Look-Jameson, a board member with Animal Wellness Action. “Our organization will pay the rewards as necessary, but my hope is that we don’t have to pay out a dime because every American will adhere to the law.”

Penalties for each violation of any one of these provisions allows for a maximum of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for perpetrators, except for an adult attending an animal fighting venture. Penalties for an adult attendee are 1 year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

An “animal fighting venture” involves a fight conducted or to be conducted between at least two animals for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

Prohibitions on attending on selling, buying, possessing, training, transporting, delivering, or receiving an animal in an animal fighting venture; attending an animal fighting venture; or trafficking in knives or gaffs for use on a bird have long applied to all U.S. territories. On December 20, 2019, these prohibitions are effective in the U.S. territories: sponsoring or exhibiting an animal in an animal fighting venture or knowingly using the mail service of the U.S. Postal Service, or advertising an animal for use in a fighting venture, to advertise a knife or gaff, or to promote an animal fighting venture.



Cockfighting Ring

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Animal Wellness Brands Logo

"Federal agencies and officers have a duty to enforce our laws against the barbaric practices of cockfighting and dogfighting," said Wayne Pacelle of the Animal Wellness Foundation. "But their good works depend on the cooperation and alertness of citizens. We ask people who know about illegal animal fighting activities to help us stop these forms of cruelty."

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