

Animal Wellness Groups Offer \$5,000 Reward for Info that Leads to Animal Fighting Arrests, Convictions in Kentucky

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, USA, August 13, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) and [Animal Wellness Action](#) (AWA) today announced a \$5,000 reward for information resulting in successful prosecution of any individual for violating the federal law (7 U.S.C. § 2156) against animal fighting. The announcement follows the groups' release of an extensive cockfighting [investigation](#) in Kentucky last week and formal request to the U.S. Attorneys for the Eastern and Western districts to investigate trafficking of fighting animals from Kentucky to U.S. territories and to foreign countries.



Cockfighting that runs rampant in the U.S. | Photo: Shutterstock

AWA and AWF developed detailed dossiers on a nine individuals and alleged their involvement in activities related to cockfighting, with several of them shipping cockfighting birds to Mexico, the Philippines, Guam, and other distant locations.

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Wayne Pacelle, President of Animal Wellness Action

“Federal agencies and officers have a duty to enforce our laws against the barbaric practices of cockfighting and dogfighting,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “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.”

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.

Penalties for each violation of any one of these provisions allows for a maximum of five 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 one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.



Wayne Pacelle



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby

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. As of Dec. 20, 2019, it is also a federal crime to sponsor or exhibit an animal in an animal fighting venture.

“Cockfighting breeds a cesspool of other illegal activities, such as gambling and drug use,” said [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action and a former agriculture policy advisor for retired U.S. Rep. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky. “We hope the U.S. Attorneys will review the results of the Animal Wellness investigation, and we are also asking members of the public to come forward with information that could help root out this activity in the Bluegrass State.”

Kentucky is one of just eight states without felony-level penalties for cockfighting. The law has no prohibitions on possessing or training animals for fighting. State Senate Minority Leader Morgan McGarvey, D-Louisville, has agreed to introduce legislation in the new state legislative session to bring Kentucky’s law in alignment with most other states in cracking down on animal fighting. Former Kentucky Attorney General Chris Gorman also announced his support for this effort, along with appealing to the U.S. Attorneys in Kentucky to take enforcement action against animal fighting traffickers operating out of Kentucky.

What to do:

Anyone with information about illegal cockfighting activities can send information to animalcrueltytips@animalwellnessaction.org. Residents can also contact the appropriate U.S. attorneys, the state attorney general, or county sheriffs or district attorneys.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we

must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Marty Irby

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