

Animal Wellness Action Applauds Cleveland County Sheriff for Raiding Cockfighting Operation

Dozens of Cockfighting Arenas, Hundreds of Major Cockfighting Breeding Operations Continue to Operate in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action (AWA) applauded Cleveland County Sheriff Chris Amason and his deputies for putting a stop to a major cockfight in Noble. This bust comes weeks after a bust in Bryan County that caught up as many as 300 individuals at a major fighting operation in the Texoma region. Sheriffs' deputies in both cases found all the tell-tale signs of cockfighting, with roosters prepared for fighting and a range of cockfighting paraphernalia.

"Sheriff Amason is upholding the law by cracking down on the barbaric practice of staged animal fighting," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. "There's nothing good or noble about strapping knives or curved ice picks to the legs of animals, putting them in a pit, and watching them carve each other up just for human amusement and illegal gambling.

In 2020, AWA and the Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) announced the results of a major investigation showing a major cockfighting industry openly operating in the state. Former Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson, co-chair of the National Law Enforcement Council of AWA and AWF, provided evidence to three U.S. Attorneys in Oklahoma about 21 individuals operating major cockfighting complexes in the state. Included in that cache of information are 13 videos made by a Philippines-based broadcaster featuring Oklahoma-based cockfighters who marketed their birds to other cockfighters in the broadcasts.

This incident in Cleveland County is the latest evidence of widespread cockfighting and trafficking of fighting animals in the Sooner State, despite a state law making it a felony to stage fights between birds or even to train or possess them for fighting. Cockfighting and possession of fighting animals, along with transporting them across state lines, is also a felony under federal law.

"Cockfighting is a serious crime, and the people involved must get the message that the law is going to come down on them if they continue to engage in criminal acts of animal cruelty," noted General Edmondson.

AWA and AWF revealed that Oklahoma is home to some of the biggest traffickers of fighting

animals in the United States. Nine Oklahoma cockfighters shipped 3356 animals to Guam for fighting purposes over a recent three-year period, according to an investigation conducted by the organizations. Through public records requests to the Guam Department of Agriculture, AWF and AWA obtained nearly 2,500 pages of avian shipping records dated November 2016 to September 2019, with more than 500 shipments. Oklahoman cockfighters accounted for more than a third of all birds illegally shipped to Guam.

AWA and AWF are continuing their investigations. Mr., Pacelle reminds Oklahoma citizens that Animal Wellness Action provides a \$5,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest of any individual for involvement in illegal cockfighting activities.

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.

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.

The Center for a Humane Economy ("the Center") is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

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