

Animal Welfare Groups Applaud Potter County Sheriff for Busting Cockfight in Amarillo This Weekend

Sheriff's Office in the Texas panhandle notes many involved were "unlawfully in the United States"

DALLAS, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, February 12, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy, applauded the work of deputies with the Potter County Sheriffs' Office who broke up a large cockfighting derby in Amarillo this weekend.



Cockfighting Match

The sheriffs' office noted that many of the 50 people participating in the fights were "unlawfully in the United States." The sheriffs' office alerted Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the federal agency made additional arrests, in what was described as an "ongoing investigation." There were 160 birds seized at the location.

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*Wayne Pacelle, President of
Animal Wellness Action*

“We applaud the Potter County Sheriffs' Office for busting this cockfight and working to stop this barbarism,” Pacelle said. “When authorities arrest perpetrators of animal cruelty—including people participating in staged animal fights and who are unlawfully in our country—they make our communities safer for animals and people.”

American cockfighters are sending hundreds of thousands of fighting birds to die in fighting pits run by cartels in Mexico, and there is also a brisk trade of fighting animals

from Mexico into the United States. There have been 15 introductions of virulent Newcastle Disease into the United States since 1950, 10 of which occurred via the illegal smuggling of

gamecocks across the southern border from Mexico. (Virulent Newcastle disease is endemic in Mexico and all of Latin America.) Just three of those outbreaks cost the federal government close to \$1 billion. Animal Wellness Action and the Center released [a comprehensive 62-page report](#) on the links between cockfighting and avian influenza and virulent Newcastle Disease.

“We have an animal fighting crisis in our nation, and it’s part of the larger border crisis that is acutely afflicting Texas and other states on our southern border,” added Pacelle. “U.S.-based cockfighters are engaging in a massive trade with Mexican cartels that control many of the major cockfighting venues on both sides of the border.”

There is also a wave of violence associated with this animal trafficking for staged fights. The [latest mass shootings](#) at a cartel-controlled cockfight came just two weeks ago, producing six dead and 14 injured at a cockfight south of the border. One of the dead was a 16-year-old boy, who was a resident of eastern Washington State. A year earlier, there was a mass shooting that produced 20 dead, [including a Chicago woman caught in the crossfire](#).

Congress Must Take up the FIGHT Act

Pacelle and others are working in Congress to speed the passage of the FIGHT Act (Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking). It would enhance enforcement opportunities by banning simulcasting and gambling of animal fighting ventures; halting the shipment of mature roosters (chickens only) shipped through the U.S. mail (it is already illegal to ship dogs through the mail); creating a citizen suit provision after proper notice to federal authorities to allow private right of action against illegal animal fighters; and enhancing forfeiture provisions to include real property for animal fighting crimes. [Read more here](#).

“I consider passing the FIGHT Act in Congress as urgent a priority as we have at Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy,” Pacelle said.

U.S. Representatives from Texas who are cosponsors of the bill are Jasmine Crockett, D-30; Lloyd Doggett, D-37; Lizzie Fletcher, D-7; Lance Gooden, R-5; and Troy Nehls, R-22. H.R. 2742 has 58 Democrats and 43 Republicans as cosponsors. Senators Cory Booker, D-N.J., and John Kennedy, R-La., are the lead authors of the Senate companion measure, S. 1529.

The FIGHT Act has more than 450 endorsing agencies and organizations, including 200 law enforcement agencies, the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executive Association, the American Gaming Association, and the United Egg Producers.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction_News.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more 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. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter.

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