

Animal Cruelty & Fighting



Captured 7/1/2010

- Animal Cruelty
- Dogfighting
- Cockfighting
- Hog-dog fighting

- Victories
- Resources
- News & Press
- Multimedia
- Legal Action
- Legislation
- Donate
- About Us

[HSUS >> Animal Cruelty and Fighting >> News and Press](#)

A Nation in the Ring (Part 2: The Costs of Dogfighting)

000

September 7, 2007

By Nancy Lawson

From Part 1 of the series: While some 40,000 people participate in organized rings with high-stakes betting, The HSUS estimates that at least another 100,000 people fight dogs informally for the chance to win a few bucks and bragging rights.



©Michelle Riley/The HSUS

Franklin County spent more than \$500,000 since 2002 to house this scarred dog and others seized from dogfighters.

For animal shelters, the **consequences** are staggering. Nationwide, pit bulls and pit bull mixes comprise up to a third of dog intake; in city facilities, that figure can be as high as 70 percent.

Although most animal welfare organizations agree that euthanasia is the safest and most humane option for dogs bred and raised to fight, many **shelters must hold them** for months until owners lose legal custody.

Doing so safely and humanely comes at a high price: Last year, the Houston Humane Society in Texas spent \$133,000 to care for pit bulls seized from a single property. Taxpayers in Franklin County have footed a nearly \$520,000 bill to house dogfighting victims since 2002. And the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center in nearby Dayton has spent \$120,000 on dogs seized in 2006.

Dogfighting: A National Epidemic

- [1. The Dogs and the Territory](#)
- [2. The Costs of Dogfighting](#)
- [3. Pit Bulls as Currency](#)

A year later, 36 of those dogs—along with 10 more from a neighboring shelter stretched to capacity—still fill a third of the kennels in Dayton.

"Welcome to the other side of the world," says director Mark Kumpf as he enters the pit-bull housing area. Vinyl window coverings thwart dogfighters searching for their own confiscated dogs or new prospects to adopt. Vision-restriction panels adorn kennels to prevent next-door neighbors from attacking each other. Hard plastic beds are frayed like the yarn of a scarf, and a wire that once operated a door pulley has been gnawed in two.

Costly Care

"We had to go back and re-engineer our housing because the dogs were able to literally pull apart the cages," Kumpf says. "They were able to get through the stainless steel guillotine doors because the doors were not large enough and heavy enough to prevent it. They were able to fence-fight by jumping

\$5,000 REWARD Report Dogfighting

Prosecutor's Resources

[Click here >>](#)

four-plus feet in the air to fight with the dog on the other side of the bars...They eat the resting mats, they eat the fiberglass panels, they eat the water bowls off the wall."

Compounding the financial burden are expenses for 24-hour security, overtime and loss of labor due to injuries. "I have witnessed...the friendliest dog in there actually turn around and attack two employees," says Elizabeth Loikoc, a crew leader for the shelter's animal care providers. One employee, she reports, was bitten repeatedly.

Before the conclusion of its 2006 cases, Montgomery County will spend more than \$300,000, Kumpf predicts. The emotional toll can be just as costly, he says: "More often than not, the dogs end up being euthanized by the very same people who have dedicated a year or more of their lives to taking care of them."

Help The HSUS Fight Back

Donate today to our Animal Cruelty Response and Reward Fund.

"Treading New Ground"

Atop Kumpf's desk sits a copy of the "[The Final Round](#)," an HSUS video used to educate prosecutors, judges, and police about dogfighting. Nationwide, HSUS experts [train](#) thousands of law enforcement personnel, advocate for [stronger laws and penalties](#), and [assist local, state and federal investigators](#).

"A lot of what we do, we're treading new ground," says Jim Conlan of Chicago's recently expanded Animal Crimes Unit, which works closely with The HSUS. Dogfighters know no boundaries—as Conlan says, "it is international, it is interracial, it is intereconomic"—so police need to form networks of their own to catch them.

Part 3: [The lure of dogfighting in a world of poverty, guns and drugs](#).

 [E-MAIL THIS PAGE](#)

 [SHARE](#) 

[PRINTER FRIENDLY](#) 

See the Video

 [HSUS Undercover: Inside Animal Fighting](#)

Related Links

 [A Nation in the Ring \(Part 1: The Dogs and the Territory\)](#)

 [A Nation in the Ring \(Part 3: Pit Bulls as Currency\)](#)

 [The HSUS's Animal Cruelty Response and Reward Fund](#)

 [Dogfighting](#)

 [Dogfighting Fact Sheet](#)

 [Dog Eat Dog: The Bloodthirsty Underworld of Dogfighting](#)

 [Taking Action to End Dogfighting: How to Spot the Signs and What You Can Do](#)

