

Agriculture by Suzanne Rose

Cartels back 'animal welfare'

Animals are not the ones that will benefit from PETA's latest disgusting advertising campaign.

Newspapers in five Midwestern cities last month rejected an ad sponsored by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) which compared human meat consumption to the cannibalism of Jeffrey Dahmer, the Milwaukee sodomist/mass murderer. The *Iowa Des Moines Register* accepted the ad following a series of pro-"animal rights" events in the state.

The ad, which appeared on Aug. 9, began, "Milwaukee . . . July 1991. . . . They were drugged and dragged across the room. . . . Their legs and feet were bound together. . . . Their struggles and cries went unanswered. . . . Then they were slaughtered and their bones were discarded with the trash. . . . If this leaves a bad taste in your mouth, become a vegetarian." Thousands of Iowans have reportedly canceled their subscriptions to the paper.

Among the goals of this anti-human cult are bringing an end to meat consumption and use of animal products for food or clothing. PETA wants to eliminate animal experimentation for human medical progress. Its founder Ingrid Newkirk asserted in a 1986 interview, "I don't believe human beings have the 'right to life'; that's a supremacist perversion. A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

After the ad, a puff piece for the organization appeared in the Aug. 25 *Des Moines Register*. The next day, columnist Lauren Soth, a former editor, contributed yet another piece legitimizing the group. Soth wrote, "Livestock officials should have welcomed the ad as evidence of thoughtless leadership of the PETA crowd."

He attacked the livestock producers' organizations for their attempts to prevent its publication, and he treated PETA as a legitimate pressure group with extremist rhetoric. Soth is otherwise a publicist for the George Bush's free trade operations: the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which will remove much of the U.S. livestock industry to Mexico.

Hollywood, too, has become one of the strongest pushers for PETA, whose annual awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. drew some of the biggest "stars," including Wynona Ryder and Elliot Gould.

PETA has recently trained its guns on Iowa, the nation's leading hog producer and fifth in cattle production. Last September, the Humane Society of Iowa State University hosted PETA's annual conference. In July 1990, former Beatle and environmental activist Paul McCartney chose Iowa State University in Ames to hold a publicity concert to push "animal rights." PETA was invited to distribute its literature. PETA's backers, however, are Iowa's financial and academic elite. The repulsive PETA campaign was presaged by a 1989 study by the Iowa Business Council, a roundtable of upper echelon planners in the Midwest. Called "Job Creation in Animal Agriculture in Iowa," the study proposed the rationalization and cost-cutting of Iowa agriculture, according to the needs of the cartel companies such as Cargill and Iowa Beef Processors (IBP).

A significant portion of the 1989

study is devoted to the animal rights and animal welfare issues taken up by PETA. "Humane treatment of animals appears to be a growing social concern. Some animal-welfare and animal-rights activists suggest that confinement facilities should not be used in livestock production. Issues such as this need to be addressed and resolved." Elimination of such facilities as proposed by PETA would bankrupt the independent livestock producers.

The Iowa Business Council board includes Robert Peterson, the chairman of IBP, the largest U.S. beef company, as well as enterprises controlled by the malthusian Wallace family and assorted other business, financial, and academic interests. The president of the Cattlemen's Association and the Iowa Pork Producers Council were among those listed as members of an advisory council for the report.

The PETA campaign is intersecting and promoting a precipitous decline in meat consumption, which is furthering the interests of the grain cartel exporters, and destruction of independent livestock producers by the same cartels. The cartels are collapsing livestock producer prices after a period of high prices relative to other farm production, which has bankrupted the independent feedlots. Now the cartels are free to drop the prices and destroy the independent cattlemen and ranchers. Cattle prices have fallen from \$83 to \$69 per hundred pounds since April.

Under the NAFTA agreement, much livestock production will be "rationalized" away to Mexico. A similar assault is occurring against ranchers who graze their cattle on public lands. So-called environmentalist measures are before Congress, which will increase annual grazing fees by 33%, thereby eliminating thousands of beef producers in the Western states.