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**The Animal Rights Agenda:
An Issue That Can No Longer Be Ignored**

SPEAKERS:

Marsha Kelly: Principal, MSK Ventures, Inc.

Patti Strand: Co-Founder and President, National Animal Interest Alliance

Ms. Wendy Davis: There we are.

Now we're on.

Thanks so much.

We'll go ahead and come on in.

We'll get started.

I'd certainly like to thank our session sponsor Trakus as well as Roberts Communications Network for the beverage break.

This is certainly going to be a real different panel session than the one that you were just in here for with new technology and innovation.

This is probably an issue that has been around for a long, long time, but really racing, I think, is just now starting to realize how big a part the animal welfare, animal rights — and there is a difference between those two — how much that's gonna come into play in what we are able to do with our horses and our racehorses coming into the future.

Since the title is "Animal Rights Agenda: An Issue That Can No Longer Be Ignored", I realize that that topic or that title may be had gotten a few people upset.

We're not talking about the great work that's being done with rescue horses, with horses that are coming off the racetrack and rehomed.

This is going really to the root of the movement that we have to realize is out there and that we have to deal with.

With that and going forward, I want to introduce to you our panelist who will also serve as moderator.

This is Patti Strand.

She's the cofounder and current president of the National Animal Interest Alliance.

It's a mainstream, not-for-profit animal welfare organization.

Its mission is to provide media, lawmakers, and the public with accurate information about complex and controversial animal issues and we cross over all animals.

The NAIA just had their national conference with folks from SeaWorld, from Barnum and Bailey.

We don't see Shamu anymore and we don't see elephants anymore in the circus.

There are a lot of animal issues out there.

Another thing that NAIA does is advocate for the preservation of the human-animal bond which is really a hot topic these days.

Patti coauthored with her husband one of the first books published on this movement and was called the hijacking of the humane movement.

She's very well-versed in the issues that we in the racing industry are going to face.

I'd like to thank both of our panelists today for being here and turn it over to Patti.

Ms. Patti Strand: Thank you, Wendy, for that very nice introduction.

It's a real honor to be here, to have our topic included among all of your other really important topics and to be one of your speakers.

I'm also really thrilled to be here with Marsha Kelly because she actually has been one of my mentors.

I've been working on this issue for a very long time.

Actually, as Wendy just said, we founded the National Animal Interest Alliance quite a while ago, actually 25 years ago.

I am not a horse person.

I always picked my friends — while I was growing up, I picked my friends by whether they had a horse so I could go over to their place and ride when I was growing up but always lived on a city lot in a city setting.

I didn't get to really fulfill my dreams there.

My husband and I have been dog breeders since 1969.

We've bred some of the top dogs in our breed.

We are connected with husbandry in a really important, deep way.

We understand the value of maintaining blood lines of just husbandry in general.

How some of the things that we do with the animals in our lives are just by urbanization alone, before you even start talking about any kind of movement being out there, to threaten us or challenge us.

Just urbanization alone puts great challenges on those of us who raise, keep, breed animals.

This is the book that Wendy mentioned that we wrote and then NAIA was found 25 years ago.

We're in our 25th anniversary right now.

This is our logo.

As she said, our main function, we're an animal welfare group, but we focus primarily on protecting the relationship between people and animals.

I've been asked today to talk about the animal rights movement or the animal rights agenda.

Before we talk about the agenda, we have to talk a little bit about what animal rights itself is, what it means.

Everybody in the audience probably is familiar to some degree with this issue and probably everybody out there has their own working definition of what it is.

I'm gonna go back to the roots of the animal rights movement in England and just give you a little bit about where it comes from and then progress on, giving you our distillation of what the challenges are.

Then I'm gonna turn it over to Marsha who's going to give you some good tactics, some good things to — that you'll be able to deal with the movement better as a result of.

Animal rights agenda, we've experienced it all.

If we go to legislative settings anywhere, we find that that there are people there who seem to have very strong views against what we do.

We're dealing with it in the media.

We see things said about the various hobbies or businesses that we have that seem to put them in a bad light.

We're all familiar with it in that particular way, but I just wanted to point out to you too that there's actually a document.

It was written way back in the 80s that laid out all of the goals of the animal rights movement and one of them does deal with animals in entertainment and performance.

It says very clearly, "We call for an end to the use of animals in entertainment and sports."

I just boldfaced that part of that particular No. 11 which covers you, but it also goes on to talk about how circuses and zoos and so on, aquariums also need to be stopped.

I think, again, from Wendy's introduction, we all recognize that, certainly, circuses are not operating in a way that they've operated in the past.

They've been banned in I don't know how many cities, maybe 50, 60, but many, many major cities, they can't even enter anymore or they can't have elephants.

They can't have certain species if they go in.

Of course, we all know what has happened in recent times with SeaWorld.

You're in the same category, animals in entertainment and sport, that is in this particular agenda item.

I'm gonna just talk to you a little bit next about the framework of the animal liberation, animal rights movement.

I'm just gonna give you a little bit of a glimpse of the founder of the movement, what he says the goals are, and then we'll move on.

[With the same basic logic as those movements that struggled for many years but finally overcame human slavery. In the same way, we will overcome animal slavery.]

Okay.

It is a liberationist movement that we're dealing with.

They do believe that using animals for any purpose is wrong, immoral.

Certainly, there are degrees of belief in this among people who call themselves animal rightists.

A lot of people refer to themselves as being in favor of animal rights without really understanding what the underlying philosophy is.

They simply love animals and they have the idea that animal rights is just a souped-up version of animal welfare; that it's just animal welfare on steroids; that the people who care about animal rights just care more about the welfare.

It's an altogether different philosophy. It's a philosophy that says no animals should be used, no matter how humane, no matter how responsible, very important to understand that.

This is the book that launched the movement.

This is back in England.

I should go back to that previous slide or maybe I'll just, from my memory, point out to you that Peter Singer is a Marxist.

He's been involved with a lot of other movements and causes that ultimately redistribute things from one person to another.

That's just interesting to keep in mind.

In *Animal Liberation*, the book that launched the movement, he says, "A liberation movement is a demand for an end to prejudice, and I ask you to recognize that your attitudes towards members of other species are a form of prejudice no less than objectionable than prejudice about a person's race or sex."

Basically, what they're doing here is they're piggybacking on the entire Western liberal tradition of continuously expanding rights.

What they're saying is that animals should be given the same consideration. Of course, the problem is animals can't speak for themselves.

That requires an individual, a group, one of the animal rights groups, to speak for them.

It requires a whole bevy of new lawyers to come forth to argue on their behalf and so on.

It is a challenge to the legal system too.

It's operating in a lot of different areas but it's important to understand that if animals have rights, their keepers can no longer be owners.

They have to be guardians. Ownership responsibility becomes assigned to someone else, the government typically.

Here are just some of the basic beliefs that go along with the philosophy and it is antidemocratic, antireligion, anti-all animal use, again, no matter how humane or responsible or how much benefit comes from it.

Anti-eating meat, anti-raising livestock, animal research, animals in education and, again, animals in entertainment, sports, and performance events.

All of these things are on the table.

Hallmarks of the movement are that they are doctrinaire, religious in the fervor that they bring to it.

It's a very organized, tight ideology they have and it is practiced more like a religion than like a political philosophy, I would say.

It is extremist and by that, I mean it is intolerant, hateful, subversive, and political.

The other side also has a strategy.

I come from purebred dogs.

My distinction as being an expert on animal rights movement is this dubious title I didn't intend ever.

Nobody goes to college to become an activist or to become an expert on a subject like this.

I've been involved with purebred dogs, as I've mentioned, since 1969 and in the late 80s, we started seeing legislation that was accompanied by major media campaigns.

You could ignore the legislation.

Maybe you could get a hold of a few legislatures, tell 'em what the facts were, show them what the truth of the matter was, and just win.

Even if you won, we came to the realization, about 1988, '89, '90, that the public was getting a constant diet of misinformation of material that was focused on making purebred dog breeders look bad.

At that time, we saw this little thing in one of the magazines that was out there by Ingrid Newkirk, PETA's director, and we didn't take it seriously at all.

It says, "We must abolish companion animal breeds and restrict animals in the home to refugees from the animal shelters and the streets." Then it goes on and it says, "Over time, these animals would be eliminated altogether."

By the way, one of the tenants of the animal rights agenda is to restrict the breeding of purebred animals.

Anyway, we looked at this. We thought that this looked absolutely absurd.

I was on the board of the American Kennel Club for 16 years and I will tell you that from 1993 — and all the advertising campaigns that went with the legislation started in the late 80s.

From 1983 to now, we have dropped two-thirds of our registry.

I wouldn't lay all of this at the feet of the marketing and the advertising and the fundraising of the animal rights movement, but they have played a huge role in this decline in popularity of purebred dogs.

We went from 1.5 million to 470,000 dogs and that is as human population went up dramatically.

I just want you to understand they can have an effect on the real world, right?

Later, during the time we were fighting the legislation, we went to one of the workshops that one of the leaders was giving and this started rolling around in my brain.

This is actually one of the things that got me engaged in, I guess, becoming a full-time activist and that was that the message to the people in the room was not one to encourage better animal welfare.

All of us in this room are involved in, care deeply about the welfare of the animals that we work with.

I expected that maybe that there would be programs in this particular workshop that I went to that would be about spaying and neutering and developing funding for those kinds of things.

Not true.

This particular meeting that I went to said — this was the takeaway.

“Our goal is to make the public think of breeding dogs and cats like drunk driving and smoking.”

This is a marketing message.

This is a message for changing public perception of dogs and cats.

I used to sit around the AKC board table and people would say, “Don’t worry about this, Patti, people will always love dogs.”

I would say, “Yeah, but they don’t have to love our dogs. They can love dogs in general. They are capable of drawing fine distinctions.”

Then here’s another one that is relevant more to all species and this is from another leader in the animal rights movement.

“Our goal is to convince people to rescue and adopt instead of buying or selling dogs,” or excuse me, “animals to disavow the language and concept of animal ownership.”

You can see how that ties into the basic fundamental framework of the ideology of the movement.

We have a sanctuary rescue movement.

I will tell you in purebred dogs we do a lot of rescue.

We started it long before anybody told us to do it.

We did it because we thought it was the right thing to do.

I know that you folks also do rescue.

It’s important that you do your own rescue.

There is another kind of rescue and sanctuary movement out there that is very deeply connected to the more radical part of the animal rights movement.

You need to get credit for your own good works is what I’m saying here.

I will tell you that at the same time that our registry dropped from 1.5 million to 470,000, the number of dogs being adopted in shelters has grown exponentially.

Many of the dogs being adopted today don't even come from the United States.

A CDC report showed that over 199,000 of the dogs that came through the year they did their sting operation, which was back in 2007, came from Mexico.

We are seeing dogs come in from every foreign country of the world to maintain shelter populations at this point.

Not exactly the kind of rescue that we were involved with or that we support.

Okay.

Leading animal rights organizations, I think you know who they are: Human Society of the United States, PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Animal Legal Defense Fund.

These are the legal beagles that come in and do the court challenges.

The annual revenues, I just put a few of them here.

This is from GuideStar's.

All of these groups file their taxes and then GuideStar reports on what their revenues are.

I just took this off of there yesterday.

For 2014, for all of 'em except for ASPCA which is for 2015.

You can see \$135 million and some change there.

Then ASPCA, 190,000, 806,070.

I mean, this is not change and I just put these four groups up there.

There are probably another 20 groups between the 190,000 and the 13,000 at the bottom.

For instance, Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, I know that they took in over \$90 million last year too.

This is big business.

This is huge.

By the way, the assets of these groups are in the quarter million or better which is really something because it's not like you're seeing a lot of positive service activity from any of them or goods being provided.

Okay.

Then this particular movement, unlike other social movements in the United States, has a terrorist wing.

They're folks that get people in line.

They use a lot of different methods to persuade the public.

One of them is intimidation and there's just violence.

Back about six years ago, they were ranked as the number one domestic terrorist throughout the United States, these particular parts of the animal rights movement.

Then this fellow was, at the time he did this, a spokesman for PETA.

Excuse me, go back.

Uh oh, having a little trouble with that one. *[These animals do have the same right to be free from pain and suffering at our hands. Then, of course, we're going to be, as a movement, blowing stuff up and smashing windows. For the record, I don't do this stuff but I do advocate it. I think it's a great way to bring about animal liberation. Considering the level of the atrocity and the level of the suffering, I think it would be a great thing if all of food outlets and these slaughterhouses and these laboratories and the banks that fund them exploded tomorrow. I think it's perfectly appropriate.]*

[Applause]

He was at a national animal rights convention.

[I think it's perfectly appropriate for people to take bricks and toss them through the windows and everything else along the line. Halleluiah to the people who are willing to do it.]

I think it's indisputable that there is a violent wing to this movement.

[Laughter]

The extremism that they practice often looks crazy.

It looks like it's spontaneous and people are just very, very emotionalized in the moment.

It's very rational and strategic if you look at what they do over a long period of time.

For instance, if you study some of the court cases they've been involved with, you'll see that the planning for going after a particular industry, hobby, sport, whatever it is, sometimes there's three, four years in the planning.

Every single I is dotted.

Every single T is crossed.

This is the group that is the mainstream legitimizer for the movement.

These people never act crazy in public.

This is Wayne Pacelle from the Humane Society of the United States and just the different ways that he relates to the public allow his group to understand what side of the fence he's on, so to speak.

He's a vegan and makes that very public.

Then the little quote at the bottom that you can't read says, "One generation and out.

We have no problem with the extinction of domestic animals. They are creations of human selective breeding."

In fairness to him, he said this a long time ago.

In fairness to those of us who work with animals, he's been on the other side of practically every single legislative issue that I've been involved with in 25 years.

Okay.

You have all these extremist tactics.

All the different tactics that they engage are ultimately aimed at ending all animal use, no matter how humane or how responsible.

This is the listing of the different tactics that they use.

I would just tell you that there's not much that we can do about the extremist tactics and I think that, certainly, the philosophy is very interesting.

For us, the things that we wind up having to deal with are the result of the propaganda that they initiate and the legislative and legal battles that they engage us in, whether we want to be engaged or not.

Here's how we define the battle after the all the years of fighting this.

We just say we're in a propaganda war.

I think it's really important for you to think about it that way too because this is one area in which you can have a very positive effect.

It's a very particular kind of propoganda that they are basically utilizing.

It's called cause marketing.

If you think back to the Keep America Beautiful ads that were in the 70s and the crying Indian looking out at the land that was just spoiled.

People were throwing their trash all over the place.

That was the first that I know of or the most well known cause marketing campaign that was ever done.

It was a very positive one for a very good purpose.

Cause marketing, in and of itself, is certainly not a bad thing.

It can be a very good thing but that is what they use.

Then they use a very specific variety of that. *[sound of cash register ringing]* It's called conflict fundraising, right?

They sell a cause.

The way that they do it is through a particular style of fundraising.

How does the fundraising work?

Well, they identify a problem in order to raise money.

If you identify a problem, you have horses, for instance, that need to be taken care of.

You create a rescue group.

You take care of it.

They identify a problem to exploit it and raise money.

It's not like they are physically creating the environment for the group.

I'm talking now about the leadership groups in this.

In order for them to raise money, they have to find a victim.

They have to find an animal that has been abused or that can be perceived to have been abused.

They have to find a villain.

You don't raise money unless you make somebody responsible for the victimhood of the animal you're talking about.

In my world, it's always dog over population or puppy mills.

By the way, these things have existed over time and there's nobody in my community that supports them.

We all donate money, do everything we can to try to improve the lot of dogs in all of these situations.

In the case of these particular issues, that's all they focus on.

They represent the entire — when people think about breeding today, they think about dogs dying in shelters and they think about dogs living in horrible situations.

Okay.

Victim, villain, and then in order for them to make money, they have to be the ones that save the day.

They're the ones that come in with the positive message and the idea about what needs to be done.

Then because the First Amendment is so incredibly protected in this country, even if they tell lies in the process, even if most of the result of everything they say is a really serious distortion of the truth, you are probably not ever going to be able to win in any court of law.

In fact, and here's an irony, the animal rights agenda, the animal rights philosophy actually protects them from losing a defamation suit if you think about it because they're starting out in the beginning saying, "We believe that all use of animals is cruel."

I've seen that used effectively in a couple cases where people had claimed that they were defamed.

In the minds of rational, normal people, you would agree with them.

It's virtually impossible to sue somebody today and win on defamation.

Okay.

Here's a new definition and my friend, Marsha Kelly here is gonna say this is a run-on sentence.

You gotta figure out a different way of saying this but this is it in a nutshell.

Animal rights is an ideologically based political movement that finances its drive for power and control by defaming people in industries for their use and alleged abuse of animals.

That's it.

Okay.

Political rather than substantively caring about animals.

Political because it's about who decides what people do.

It's not about what people do.

It's not about the animals.

It's about who decides what people should do.

I'm talking legislation that they get passed.

The defaming people really converts their targets into their product, if you think about it.

Again, they make no product.

They provide no services.

The target of their fundraising becomes their product.

Okay.

It's easier for the public to accept a simple lie than a complex truth.

This is on their side.

As I mentioned earlier when people think about purebred dogs today, a great many of them think in terms of dog over population and puppy mills before they think of the beautiful animals that we raise and put all of our hearts and our money, our resources, our time into.

Propaganda can be a matter of focus.

When think back to the money that these groups raise every year and you realize that few, if any of them, have to maintain facilities, have to put on big events that are gonna cost money, are going to have to put their money into major programs, whether it's spaying or neutering or anything.

They put their money into cause marketing, right?

That's a huge budget to just talk bad about their targets.

Keep that in mind.

That's a huge budget.

We would all like to have a fraction of that to be able to raise the image of our own sports and hobbies and in what we do.

It's a matter of focus.

They continually keep the focus on the dark side, use language that promotes a particular kind of image.

They change the lexicon.

I won't go through all of this now.

They use imagery that paints a certain picture.

This is what we deal with on our side.

This is something everyone would agree is a puppy mill and nobody would approve this.

By the way, it's been outlawed in the United States for years.

Certainly, there are places where these kinds of facilities still exist but there isn't anybody that is in favor of them.

I would just say, before, it was horses and purebred dogs.

They've had a good long time working on this.

The first picture is of a monkey that was used in the case that literally launched the animal rights movement, I think raised PETA its first \$3 million.

Long story behind it but, basically, they defamed a guy in research saying that he was mistreating the animal and they used this picture of the animal in a restraining device.

What turned out to be true is that this particular picture, one of the partners, Ingrid Kewkirk's partner, Alex Pacheco, actually put the animal in this contraption, took the picture.

Anyway, long story short, the scientist was exonerated of all 21 counts. It took him a number of years.

In the process, lost all of his friends.

The good news is that the particular research he was working on has efficacy for over 300,000 people worldwide annually.

There was a little justification in that.

Flipper, this is the dolphin-safe campaign.

I won't go into a lot of details.

I will tell you that legislatures told me that when this campaign was going on, it was second only to the Vietnam war in terms of the number of letters they received from people who were concerned.

That's how good the grassroots organization is for some of these legislative campaigns.

Basically, the United States tuna fleet and the eastern tropical Pacific is pretty much like the AKC registry now.

It's just a fraction of what it used to be as a result of this.

Then we have the spotted owl which it turns out all these years later — I live in Oregon where the timber industry has been harmed tremendously.

Now, all these years later, we find out that the spotted owl is not only not endangered.

It's not a species.

It breeds freely with the barred owl and produces fertile young.

Anyway, you can't count too much on what they say as being true either. Again, going back to that Tocqueville quote, it's easier to tell a simple lie than — get the public to believe a simple lie than get them to understand a complex truth.

Propaganda leads to perceptions.

Perceptions lead to public opinion.

Public opinion leads to legislation.

By the time we're battling legislation, we've almost always already lost the public relations war.

Just very important for people to understand that they usually put their money at the other end of things on legislative fights and on the courts.

I will tell you that if you change the public's opinion about what you're doing, you won't have to go down the same road that so many other industries have gone down.

Before I pass this over to Marsha who will give you some concrete ideas about what you can do, I'll just tell you we have a lot of resources at NAIA for you to use.

We are a mainstream animal welfare group.

We do work with all animal groups that work responsibly and lawfully with animals.

We have a new website called Discover Animals.

I hope you go and visit it. It's an absolutely beautiful website and it is going to become a media machine. January 1, we have all kinds of things planned to be able to distribute information from there multiple times every week, a really gorgeous site.

We also have a legislative group and that's an example of it, a little lobby center.

This is actually an old slide here.

It says, "We tracked 1,000 bills last year."

Actually, last year we were doing so much work on infrastructure, I'm not really sure that this is true.

Many years, we've tracked many more bills than 1,000 and worked on many more than 100, and that is it for me.

I'm gonna now turn it over to the expert, Marsha Kelly, who will tell you a little bit about what you can do.

[Applause]

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Thank you, Patti.

As Patti said, she and I are both long-time veterans of managing this issue and trying to understand this issue.

We got started addressing animal rights impacts on various animal industries back in the late 80s.

I began my exposure to this issue with the fur trade.

I was representing fur producers in the United States and that segued into a relationship with the greyhound racing industry.

I've represented greyhound racing for 25 years in managing the animal rights issue and trying to help greyhound racing develop initiatives to respond.

As many of you in this room know, there are many corporations in the racing landscape that have had involvement in both horse and greyhound racing.

Some of you, I'm sure, are gonna relate more than maybe some others to some of the stories that I'm gonna tell you about how in the greyhound racing industry we've approached managing this issue.

One of the things that Patti mentioned that I think is so important is that this really is a war being fought on two fronts: the propaganda or public relations front and the legal front.

The legal front is becoming of more concern, not only because of the lawsuits that are popping up all over the country against various animal industries, in particular, vendors and suppliers within an animal enterprise.

Also, in terms of the more abstract view of animal rights law as a legal specialty.

Twenty years ago, you could not find a law school that had an animal rights law curriculum.

Now, over 50 percent of the accredited law schools in the country have an animal rights law major so that lawyers can come out of law school with a specialty in animal rights law.

Many of those lawyers, even while they're still law students, are providing free legal services on a pro bono basis to animal rights organizations that wanna go on the attack against various animal industries.

There is an upcoming crop of legal experts who are gonna devote their lives to making sure that you guys have to spend a lot of money to defend yourselves in court.

One of the ways — as managers or leaders in track operations where live racing is still being done, one of the ways that you can and, in fact, you must approach this issue is by trying to capture the high ground on animal welfare.

As Patti said, this distinction between animal welfare and animal rights is not very well understood.

Many of these extreme organizations hide their extreme agenda behind the smokescreen of animal welfare.

To the unsuspecting public who really just only expect reasonable good faith and conscientious behavior, they don't expect perfection.

To the general public, they position these issues as though they're about animal welfare.

We all know that in any animal industry, no matter whether it's horseracing or dog racing or cattle breeding or chicken raising or the circuses or the rodeos, whatever, it's not very hard to find one example of a bad apple.

That's all they need to find is one example of a bad apple. From that can explode a propaganda war, a 60 Minutes report, a 20/20 exposé, and it all comes back down to one isolated incidence.

Now, some industries and, in fact, I would say most industries, probably have more than one bad apple.

It's always the most progressive, most conscientious members of the industry that are in leadership positions. They try to develop codes of behavior.

They try to develop standards and practices.

The good guys, the white hats in these industries, they're not the problem but every industry has its share of boneheads.

Your job, as people in management, is to make sure that at the corporate level you are articulating and expressing a sincere commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare that you can really make sure your whole organization understands.

For example, in your mission statement, if you have a corporate mission statement, you should be making sure that there is a reference to humane care and high standards of animal care in that mission statement.

Your policies and procedures should be very much focused on ensuring the best possible practices.

Your employee education and training programs should be structured not only so that your employees know what you expect in terms of animal care and handling on your facilities.

Also, what are the penalties is a person is caught violating those procedures?

If a kennel employee — at one of the greyhound kennels in the National Greyhound Association, if a kennel employee is found guilty of neglecting or abusing an animal, not only is that employee fired but that kennel operator can be banned from the sport for life.

Other kennels can be prohibited from doing business with that operator.

If you violate the basic standards of animal care in the greyhound industry, you're out of the industry and you don't come back. It's for life.

Now, that may not be practical for your industry.

The reality is that the perception that creates is that there is a very strong commitment to animal welfare and it's got some teeth.

It's not just verbal. It's

it's not just theoretical.

Claiming the high ground on animal welfare, making sure that your internal documents, from your mission statement all the way down to policies and procedures, making sure that those reflect that commitment.

That is really critical.

Making sure that you develop and well develop programs like track safety.

When there is an injury on the track, I know that all of you work hard just as they do in greyhound racing.

You look at the track. You try to figure out what are the causes of this injury.

Is there something we can do differently about the way we surface that can minimize injuries?

Track safety is an important part of your animal welfare program.

Adoption or moving horses out of racing and into retirement, that's an area where the greyhound racing industry has really, I think, achieved an amazing success story.

More than 95 percent of the registered greyhounds are now being adopted when they retire from racing.

Now, we know that there are additional issues that make it a little more complicated for the horse industry to do that and we know that you're making a good faith effort.

Again, I say you should be proud of that and you should let the public know about that because the reality is most people are pretty reasonable.

If you look at the general public, you have ten percent of the people who are animal abusers and they really don't care because they're the ones that are doing dog fighting and cock fighting and all the crazy illegal things.

They really are not responsible.

That's ten percent.

Then you got another ten percent at the end of the spectrum that is the animal rights — excuse me, the animal — well, animal rights, slash, animal welfare and they're not synonymous as we've said.

Sometimes there is overlap because people don't understand the distinction. You've got extreme positions on both ends.

The great unwashed in the middle, these are just people who say, "Look, I don't mind eating hamburger.

I don't mind that there's horseracing.

I don't mind that there are circuses.

I'd like to think that the people that are running those businesses are doing it in the most responsible and humane way possible."

As long as you can establish your own credentials as conscientious practitioners of responsible animal care, as long as you can give people a sense that your commitment to that is genuine, then when catastrophic things do occur, at least you have the benefit of the doubt on your side because people know that you're really doing everything you possibly can to prevent these things from happening.

When they happen, you respond in a responsible way.

Letting people know about what you're doing is really important.

I have a particular interest in following the activities of the racing industry, more, obviously, on the greyhound side than on the horse track side.

I have a little bit of knowledge about what you're doing in terms of transitioning horses into retirement and so forth.

I don't talk to very many people that are aware that you have these initiatives.

I think, as Patti said, you have to blow your own horn.

You have to let people know.

Don't forget.

It's a lot of physics.

Nature abhors a vacuum.

If there's no information out there about what you're doing coming from you, it's gonna come from the bad guys and you can't afford to have that happen.

Don't be shy about letting people know about the positive initiatives that you've undertaken to make sure that your track is a safe place that respects the welfare of animals and that makes a conscientious commitment.

How do we go about getting that message out?

Educate your local media.

Sportswriters generally are pretty sympathetic to the racing industry.

Use those people as vehicles to get that information out.

Educate them.

Bring them to the track.

Let legislatures and regulators come and visit the track and look at the programs, look at the facilities, understand the initiatives that you're offering.

These are people who are ultimately going to wind up making big decisions about whether your industry lives or dies.

That is really important to make sure that those people get the information that they need to understand your commitment.

It's also important to educate employees.

Your employees can be your best ambassadors and sometimes your employees don't even know about some of these programs and initiatives.

These employees will work in their own little niche and they don't really know what's going on in the corporate office.

They don't really know what's going on in the backstretch.

Make sure that even your employees know about the extent of your commitment and what you're doing to make sure that you do the right thing for the animals.

In politics, there's an old saying.

It's not the crime.

It's the cover up.

Transparency is really, I think, in the long term, in your best interest, letting people see what you do.

When we respond to an inquiry with a "no comment", that says we have something to hide.

When a TV stations says, "Let us come out and take pictures," and we say, "No, that's not possible," that suggests we have something to hide.

If you're ashamed of what you're doing and you don't want it to be on television, then maybe you should change what you're doing.

If you're not ashamed of what you're doing, if you're doing the right thing, then why be embarrassed to bring people in and let them see it?

Explain to them and help them understand why are doing it the way you are doing it.

One of the important elements of that, catastrophic things do occur.

We all know that there are gonna certain times when bad things happen.

Sometimes customers see that.

It can be very upsetting.

It's really important that you have a comprehensive communication strategy in place for that kind of catastrophic incident.

There should be a drafted template statement that you issue that you can tweak and adjust as needed to address the particular situation.

There should be a quick and thorough review of any facts that might have led to this particular incident so that you can say, "We're looking at what caused it. We're gonna do everything in our power to make sure that we address whatever issues may have contributed to it."

It's important for people to know that you take it seriously and that you're working to try to prevent those issues from happening in the future.

Again, transparency and being responsive in a timely way ultimately is gonna serve you much better than trying to hide and pretend that if you just ignore it, it'll go away.

Because I guarantee you, these things don't go away.

You wanna position your industry on the high ground.

You wanna let people know what you're doing to stay on that animal welfare high ground.

Then at the same time, you wanna challenge and expose the agenda of your adversaries.

As Patti said, most people, and that includes media and that includes legislatures, don't know that there's a big difference between the animal rights agenda and an animal welfare agenda that says, "We're gonna be as humane as possible."

In the animal rights view, there is no such thing as humane.

All animal use is exploitation and it should not be continued.

Now, in groups like the HSUS come up and they tell you, "We just wanna work with you.

We wanna be your allies.

We wanna be your partners," know that that is not their long-term goal.

Their short-term goal is to get close to your organization so that they can begin pushing your policies into the animal rights direction.

They wanna change your policies.

They wanna change your procedures.

They want to limit your options.

They want to increase the cost of what you do so that, ultimately, it's not economically feasible for you to do it.

Don't be misled.

It's the old Trojan horse.

Don't be misled by some of those animal rights groups that come in and offer to be your friend because they're not your friend.

I mean, you can ask the people in the Iditarod dog race organization that, back a few years ago, decided they were gonna invite HSUS to participate on their board.

Within two years, the Iditarod was threatened with closure, with no more racing.

They've been doing that race for decades.

The HSUS pushed and pushed and pushed them to change procedures without any real knowledge of why these procedures made sense or why they were perfectly acceptable from an animal welfare standpoint.

The Iditarod, they just kept getting pushed and pushed further in a corner and then HSUS went to the corporate sponsors of the Iditarod and said, "Look, we've been trying to work with these guys but they just won't work with us.

We are gonna pressure you now to withhold your sponsorship because the race can't go on because they haven't done what we told them to do on animal welfare."

Keep in mind that these are people, for the most part, in HSUS, they're not veterinarians.

They don't have any knowledge about the animals that are involved.

They really don't understand the sport or the activity but it's all about perception.

Be very careful about inviting those guys into the tent because once they're in the tent, you've got a big problem and your survival is at risk.

This is just something that we've learned after 25 years.

As you look at the way you manage these issues in the public and in the press and with your legislatures, it's important that you tackle these ethical issues head on.

So often, I've heard people say, "Well, we can't allow you to abolish horseracing because too many jobs depend on it."

You cannot address an ethical argument with an economic response.

It's like two ships passing in the night.

You have to attack that animal rights ethical issue head on.

You have to say, "Look, what you're saying is a reflection of an extreme value system.

You don't believe that it's possible to use animals in a humane way."

We believe that horseracing is perfectly acceptable.

It's perfectly proper as long as we do it in a responsible way.

It gives enjoyment to our customers.

The horses naturally run.

They're natural runners.

They love to run.

That's what they do.

It's like in the greyhound racing industry.

You don't have to teach greyhounds to run.

You gotta work like heck to stop 'em from running.

The only thing you have to teach them is how to run around in an oval.

That's it.

Otherwise, they're gonna run whether you like it or not.

You need to know how to frame this as an ethical response to the issue and not an economic response to the issue.

Otherwise, you're always just gonna be missing the boat.

The last thing I wanna just mention is how important it is to establish relationships with other groups that are targeted by animal rights activism.

When I was working for the fur trade and the fur trade was really one of the first segments of the agriculture community that really started having an aggressive response to this issue.

Before the milk producers, the pork producers, the poultry producers, before any of those folks were dealing with this issue, the fur trade was on top of it.

One of the things I learned was that none of those other producer groups even wanted to be in the same room with the fur farmers when it came time to fighting this issue.

They could've learned a lot.

They didn't.

They thought that they were holy because they were producing food and nobody was ever gonna go after food producers.

Well, fast forward 20 years.

One of HSUS's biggest campaigns is its vegetarian campaign.

Stop eating meat.

You can't afford to isolate yourselves and try to manage this issue with no help and no allies.

You gotta have allies and in order to have an ally, you gotta be an ally.

Sometimes you gotta quietly, behind the scenes, work on behalf of other animal user groups.

When you see greyhound racing under attack, instead of saying, "Oh, yeah. Those are sleaze balls. They're not the sport of royalty like us," that's not a good strategy.

That's not a good strategy, and I'm not talking as a greyhound person now.

I'm just talking as an issue management person.

You need to have allies, so think about how you can reach out and build relationships with the lobbyists of those other industries, with the people who are doing their media relations.

How can you mobilize your own people to write letters to the editor in support of other industries that are under attack?

They don't have to say they're a track employee.

All they gotta say, "I'm really tired of these radical groups from the East Coast coming in and trying to tell us how to run our local businesses."

Reach out.

Spread the message.

Share in the information that other organizations have and let them see what you're doing.

That way, everybody is connected together in this fight to preserve your right to use animals for entertainment.

If that's what you still wanna do, that's what you're gonna have to do in terms of building a network to help you and support you in that effort, and that's the gospel according to me.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Yeah.

Either one of us will be happy to take questions, if there are any.

Audience Member: I'm Joe Harper, the president of Del Mar Racetrack.

I hope you all appreciated what these two ladies have been talking about because I can attest to the absolute truth to just about everything you've said and I hope we're listening.

I'll tell you a little quick story about Del Mar.

We have great relationships with the press.

They love us at Del Mar.

They talk about us.

We were the big thing in San Diego.

The biggest social event that happens is opening day.

Everything that goes on at Del Mar is reported, every single thing.

For the past, probably, 20 years, every horse that's been euthanized because of injury shows up in the newspaper.

I don't think there's any other racetrack in the world that that happens every single time.

Eventually, it ends up off the sports page and onto the front page.

A number of years ago, we had an editor of the San Diego Union who was very animal rights conscious.

The front headlines, large headlines, inch and a half, on our biggest day of the meet was, "What's killing the horses at Del Mar?"

This kind of press leads to demonstrations which leads to legislation which leads to, well, investigation, and it's not a good outcome.

I can tell you right now that the extremists are out there.

They've been at our track almost every day.

I receive, on average, about four to five death threats every year.

It's very real.

In all our marketing research, when we asked the questions, it's real clear.

"We don't wanna come to your racetrack to see dead horses."

The people that are out there protesting have pictures of dead horses every way they can be slaughtered.

They have nothing to do about racetracks mainly but that doesn't matter.

They'll yell at children coming in, saying, "Are you sure you wanna come in here and see a dead horse? Cuz there's a dead horse dies here every day. They murder them right on the racetrack."

Well, the First Amendment, they're covered by it.

We can't even move them.

They have to be able to be close enough to our patrons to hand them literature and so it's a very difficult situation.

I've been dealing with the press on this for many years.

At first, I'm pretty good at spinning things, but I was at a loss to how to spin this.

I first started trying to be a victim which is true.

We're in this business cuz we love horses.

I kept trying to say that to the media and I got a lot of sympathy from it.

It was true.

I'm here because I was raised around horses.

I loved 'em, cared for 'em and did everything in that.

It's still not enough.

Eventually, you're gonna get the perception to hit you over the head and we're gonna get people involved in this.

I've seen it now happening at Del Mar.

The last California horseracing board meeting we had, the protestors came.

They talked about nothing but shutting us down.

There was no middle ground.

We were killing horses.

The media has been understanding.

There was an article in Sunday before last, San Diego Union, on the front page, the front section, about the future of Del Mar and racing.

Most of that article, which was very kind to us, most of it was about the horse injuries at Del Mar.

There was a good reporter by the name of Bryce Miller.

He understands the situation.

It was a very well written, balanced, honest piece, but it still had a whole lot of dead horses in it.

A couple of years ago, a new reporter came to the track and wanted to talk about it, wanted to interview me.

His first question was, "How do you live with yourself?"

[Laughter]

When you get asked that question, believe me, there's no good way to answer it.

We're dealing with this more and more.

To those tracks who haven't had to deal with it or simply can say, "Well, that's part of the industry," boys, you better get your act together because they're coming.

They came to Saratoga this year as well as Del Mar.

They're gonna come to all your racetracks.

These are people that are very, very — you've seen it.

You showed it, Patti.

It's absolutely the truth.

I would certainly recommend to everybody in this room, or anybody listening, to get a plan together.

Our only hope that we've done is we're actually opening later this year due to the fact that we're telling people we're getting our track more ready for horses, that they'll have more time over the track before they run which is, I think, gonna help.

The medication issues are certainly something we all have to deal with.

We're going to the biomarkers now with horses to get a little better idea of what they're doing.

I recommend that to everybody.

We've had a necropsy program in place for Del Mar for years in California.

Every horse that's euthanized at our track is necropsied.

We find, sure, all or most of the horses have preexisting injuries and that type of thing.

I think we need to take it farther.

I'm gonna push strongly for every horse that dies on a racetrack should have their veterinarian's records open to the racing board, if not to the public.

Too often, I go to see a jockey that was injured or thrown off and say, "Are you okay?" He said, "Don't worry, boss. It wasn't your fault."

I can certainly take the blame for a lot of the things that the racing surfaces and we do our best to do that, but the trainers have to understand that the damage they can do if they put a horse on a track that isn't ready.

Chris McCarron said it best a few months ago.

Somebody asked him why horses break down.

His answer was simple, "Bad decisions."

Granted, we're probably part of those bad decisions, but I hope everybody certainly understands the magnitude of this.

This is the most dangerous thing to racing ever that I've seen in my 40 years in management, and I thank you for bringing that to our attention, ladies.

Ms. Patti Strand: Thank you.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Thank you.

[Applause]

Ms. Marsha Kelly: One of the things that I think is important, when an incident at a horse track or a dog track results in a death to an animal, that is what really gets people worked up.

I mean, nothing else is so impactful as that kind of an incident.

It's really important that you sit down and really think through, "What can we do to reduce the incidents of these things happening?"

I mean, I'm just gonna throw this out and it's just an example more than anything else.

You said that in many cases these injuries, particularly these fatal injuries, turn out to be because of a preexisting condition.

Maybe there ought to be a way to screen these animals before they hit the track when they're still in training, to screen them or do MRIs or whatever needs to be done to identify the ones that might have a condition that would make them injury prone.

Now, that could be a very expensive solution.

I get that and I'm not saying it makes sense.

I'm just saying if that is a solution that, in the long run, would save you millions of dollars in bad press, it might be cost effective.

That's not necessarily the solution.

What I'm saying is I think that when you understand the impact of those incidents, it puts a responsibility on you to really sit down and think about, "How can we reduce these incidents? How can we reduce this problem? How can we minimize these terrible catastrophic incidents?" because that's where you really lose the high ground.

No matter how good a job you've done, that's where you really lose the high ground.

I wish I had an easy answer and I don't.

I think you guys who know the industry, who know the way this process works, who know what's involved in training a horse to get that horse ready to race.

You're in a much better position to figure out if there is a solution, to figure out that solution and to recognize that even though it might be expensive to do that, the alternative is gonna ultimately cost you the industry.

Audience Member: My name is Lenny Shulman. I write for the BloodHorse magazine.

As Mr. Harper knows and everybody else, these programs are already in place.

I mean, in Kentucky, we have veterinarians looking at every horse the morning that they are in to race and examine them and examine their gait and try to weed that out.

The reality is these accidents are gonna happen.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Sure, yeah.

Audience Member: We have to minimize 'em. We have to—

Ms. Marsha Kelly: You're never gonna eliminate them all.

Audience Member: — do everything we can.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: That's right.

Audience Member: My question to you is we had an interview in the last year with Mr. Pacelle and just as you said, he said all the right things, said he didn't have a problem with horseracing, very good with his public relations in what he said.

Is it absolutely out of the question that these people can be compromised with?

Or is your take on it absolute in your mind that they're just looking to get into the tent and —

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Yes.

Audience Member: — then overthrow it?

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Yes.

Ms. Patti Strand: That they make no product.

They provide no service.

If they're not under the tent, they can't make any money.

[Laughter]

I mean, they make money by being connected to an industry, by being connected to an animal, by being connected to an issue and, therefore, getting a lot of media attention.

I have never seen one situation where working with them benefited our side at all.

Audience Member: There's no sincerity there at all?

It's a complete fabrication of his position?

Ms. Patti Strand: I can't speak to somebody's soul, but I have never seen one iota of sincere interaction from them ever.

I have seen situations where it appeared on the run up that there was, but I have never seen that demonstrated by the outcome.

Audience Member: Thank you.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Essentially, what happens, as I said, in many of these cases is once they believe that they have a role in advising your industry and in telling you what you need to do in order to be more humane, the minute you say, "Well, it's not practical what you're suggesting," or, "It's too expensive what you're suggesting," or, "We really can't educate the industry to make that happen."

The next thing you know, they're having a news conference and talking about how you're unresponsive to animal welfare issues and they can't work with you.

You really just need to stop the sport because there is no way to work the sport.

Ms. Patti Strand: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: That's the agenda.

Ms. Patti Strand: Yep.

Audience Member: Tom DiPasquale from the Minnesota Racing Commission.

I think the three areas of vulnerability, and two of them have been touched on, are breakdowns, abuse of medication, and the third I'd throw out there is abuse of the riding crop.

We know from statistics and surveys that a broad swath of the public that attends the races, particularly first timers, flinch at the sight of horses being abused by the riding crop in the stretch.

Even when they understand the purposes and proper use of the crop, they still don't like to see it.

I would just use this platform as an opportunity to recommend to the industry that we start to adopt the three-strike rule uniformly across the country.

Thank you.

Ms. Patti Strand: That's great. Good, yeah.

[Applause]

Ms. Marsha Kelly: You might be interested that it was a horse being beaten with a crop that launched the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in England in 1864, whenever it was.

That was the triggering incident and that so outraged an observer who saw that horse being beaten.

That observer was well connected to the royal family and that's how the Royal Society was formed under the umbrella and the protection of the royal family in England.

Then that was exported to the United States as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

It all began with a horse being beaten by a crop.

Audience Member: Unfortunately, I can't get this microphone to work, so I'll try to speak up.

My name is Duncan Patterson.

I'm chairman of the Delaware Racing Commission.

The past few years, quite frankly, we had a catastrophic breakdown rate that exceeded the national average.

This year, we hired a safety steward.

I talked our Secretary of Agriculture into doing that cuz I said in other jurisdictions it dramatically reduced the number of catastrophic breakdowns.

Well, we hired this gentleman July 1st.

From July 1st to the closing of our meet, we had no breakdowns.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Wow.

That's incredible.

Audience Member: Now, I'm not gonna attribute that —

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Exclusively.

Audience Member: — solely to the safety steward.

I mean, obviously, our vet checks were strong, our condition of our track was good, and luck was on our side.

What we found is that the trainers knew that there was a gentleman in the stable area overlooking their shoulder.

We had a situation where he shut down an entire stable because he felt those horses weren't properly taken care of.

It's not the end all, be all but it certainly contributed.

Three years ago, I was chairman of the ARCI, so I was on the speakers' tour.

One of the things that came up was the abuse of the Thoroughbreds.

In the speech that I gave, I said, "Thoroughbreds are better taken care of than we are. They get three meals a day at the same time. I guarantee you, most of us don't get three meals a day at the same time. They get clean sheets every night, every day. We don't have clean sheets every day. They get exercised every day. I guarantee you most of us don't get exercise any time."

[Laughter]

Audience Member: "They get bathed every day. I hope y'all out there do bathe every day."

[Laughter]

Audience Member: "That's counter to what you say," and that follows up the ethical argument rather than an economic argument.

Thank you.

Ms. Patti Strand: Yeah, that's so important and the fact is that very few of us has heard this.

I mean, it's not out in mainstream media what you're doing already.

I mean, you're talking about programs that are doing great things, but nobody knows it except for the people in this room, right, for the most part.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: It's interesting that you said that you thought a big part of the success of that safety steward effort was that the people in the backstretch were aware of it — I mean, the people behind the scenes.

That's exactly what I was talking about when I talked about demonstrating the commitment to animal welfare from the top down and making sure that people understand that this is real.

This is not just performance for the sake of appearances, but this is a real commitment backed up by real policies and procedures.

That's awesome. That's awesome.

Ms. Patti Strand: It is fabulous.

Audience Member: Is it on?

I'm Janet Van Bebber. I'm chief racing officer at the American Quarter Horse Association.

Within the organization, we do a lot of things that mirror the things you've already discussed and that the other people have gotten up and talked about.

What I wanted to touch upon, Patti, you just mentioned in the media.

Through our media department at AQHA, we've launched a campaign that covers the different disciplines within our breed.

You can google AQHA: You Hold My Heart.

It's a real touchy-feely piece and our intent is to get it out there into the public.

We run it at a lot of national events.

It ran as a commercial during the NFR and other type of things like that.

I want to bring it to people's attention because it may be a tool that they can use in combating the image against racing.

In looking for it, as I mention, there's breed-specific ones and we have — I mean, discipline-specific ones.

We have one that covers our 2015 All American winner and what his owner breeders felt about him and the type of care he was given.

They're nice pieces.

Ms. Patti Strand: I think what you're saying is just — first of all, I'm pro everything that Marsha has said and everybody from the audience in terms of taking care of animal welfare, making sure you do it right, that it's not just words on a piece of paper, that you actually back it up.

We also need to communicate to the public in a way that enables them to identify with us as people who love our animals.

The program that you're talking about is really valuable too.

If you talk to a hunting group, they just call the animal rights people the ANTI's.

I thought for a long time ANTI just meant they were against everything. I was at a meeting of the foxhound folks a while back.

A guy from Ireland came over and he told me, no, that's an acronym and this is what it means.

The A is for abnormalize. The first thing they do is they make you, the target of their fundraising, seem abnormal in some way, different from the rest of the public.

Number one, you have to do something to encourage the public to understand that you love animals, that you're a normal kind of person.

N is neutralize the value of the good that you do, the second letter, N, neutralize.

If you give a lot of money to a lot of different projects for, in our case, canine welfare or horse welfare, they say, "That's blood money they're just paying."

They tend to neutralize it.

T, they terrorize you and that's something for one of the things that's really changed in this movement since I got started and since Marsha got started.

When we first began, there was a lot of physical violence against facilities and that has pretty much ended.

In the old days, the T in the ANTI is for terrorize and then finally I is for isolate.

The idea that you're putting out media that enables the public to see your heart is really, really important too.

I just wanted to say that.

Thank you, everybody.

Ms. Marsha Kelly: Thank you.

[Applause]

Ms. Wendy Davis: I just want to remind everybody we're back here at 1:30, and thank you.



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