

An Editorial about:

1. The USDA's Clarified Position on Tethering,
2. HSUS' Misuse of USDA'S Original Statement, and
3. The Michigan Dept of Agriculture's Support and Endorsement of the HSUS

On August 13, 1997, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) promulgated its Rule concerning tethering. It prohibited facilities regulated under the Animal Welfare Act from using tethering as a means of primary enclosure. On September 25, 1997, it promulgated a statement that its rule was based on its conclusion that tethering can be an inhumane practice when used as a means of primary enclosure in facilities regulated under the Act. It said that under other circumstances ... **the use of tethering may be entirely appropriate and humane.** (Emphasis Supplied)

Less than two months later, September 25 1997, The Department clarified its Rule:

“We recognize that many persons not subject to the Animal Welfare Act do tether their dogs. Persons not regulated under the Animal Welfare Act who tether their dogs are likely to be using this means of restraint under circumstances different than those typical to breeding and wholesale facilities. In these cases, tethering may be a humane method of restraint.”

Nevertheless, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is currently campaigning all over the country for state and local laws and ordinances to prohibit tethering—usually making it a criminal act so that dog owners can be put in prison. It has created a bulletin, which is easily found on its web site, which purports to state the Facts about tethering. It quotes from the USDA's original explanation of the reasons for its Rule, but without any reference to the Department's clarification. HSUS's use of the USDA's words is just plain deceitful. HSUS also ignores completely a study of and the conclusions about tethering by a five year old study by Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Lamentably, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has swallowed HSUS' deceitful propaganda hook, line and sinker. It has copied the HSUS bulletin on its own web site as carefully and unthinkingly as a Chinese print setter, but with a recommendation that further information is available on the HSUS web site. It is difficult enough to try to contend with the HSUS and the millions of dollars it spends selling its frightening animal rights legislative agenda, but it is made immensely more difficult when the MDA always supports and endorses every proposal HSUS makes, and denies MAPBD any audience at all.

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