



Don't allow dog racing in Philippines

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By Christine A. Dorchak

I write this letter to urge against the authorization of commercial dog racing in the Philippines. Good public policy argues against such action. GREY2K USA is a national greyhound protection group which was formed for the explicit purpose of ending dog racing in the United States. It is our sincere hope that the Philippines will not create a new market for this cruelty. This would represent a step backwards in time, and result in both financial losses and harm to the humane traditions of your country.

In the United States, greyhound racing is a dying industry that is inherently cruel to dogs. According to track records, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a dog is injured every three to four days. New Hampshire reported over 1,200 injuries to greyhounds from 2005 to 2008. In Arizona last year, over 500 dogs were hurt while racing. Reported injuries include broken bones, cardiac arrest, paralysis, and seizures. The most frequent injuries are broken legs, but broken necks and crushed skulls are also reported each year. Some dogs die while racing, while others are put down because of the severity of their injuries, and/or because of their diminished value as racers.

When not racing, these gentle dogs are kept confined in warehouse-style kennels, inside small, stacked cages which are too small to allow free movement. Other than for brief turn-out periods, greyhounds live restricted for an average of 20 hours per day with little ability to interact with one another. The average greyhound stands 30 inches at the shoulder, but a standard cage size in the United States is just 32" wide by 41" deep by 34" high. To put it simply, this is no way to treat a dog.

The standard diet for dogs in the racing industry consists of rejected and diseased meat from downed animals. Deemed "4-D" by the federal government, this flesh may not be sold for human consumption; but it is purchased at very low cost by greyhound trainers and owners. Some argue that rotten meat spurs dogs to run faster, but the real reason for its use is the low cost. As revenues continue to plummet, it is essential that tracks and kennels keep overhead as low as possible. This reality suggests that veterinary care may also be subject to a cost-benefit analysis.

The decline of greyhound racing has been ongoing for years, and media outlets have long reported the spiraling collapse of this industry. Not only have humane concerns come to the forefront, but competition from other forms of gambling has also forced tracks to close. Since 2004 alone, 16 American tracks have shut down operations, and nine states have made greyhound gambling per se illegal. The trend is definitely with the greyhounds.

As of 2009, dog racing remains legal and operational in just a handful of our 50 United States. The Territory of Guam has just closed its track as well. After several years of financial losses, the owner abruptly shut the facility down and abandoned hundreds of dogs, resulting in a public health and humane dilemmas that have now been publicized world wide.

For more information about GREY2K USA, contact Christine Dorchak at info@grey2kusa.org or visit www.GREY2KUSA.org.

Editor's note: Christine A. Dorchak is the president of GREY2K USA.