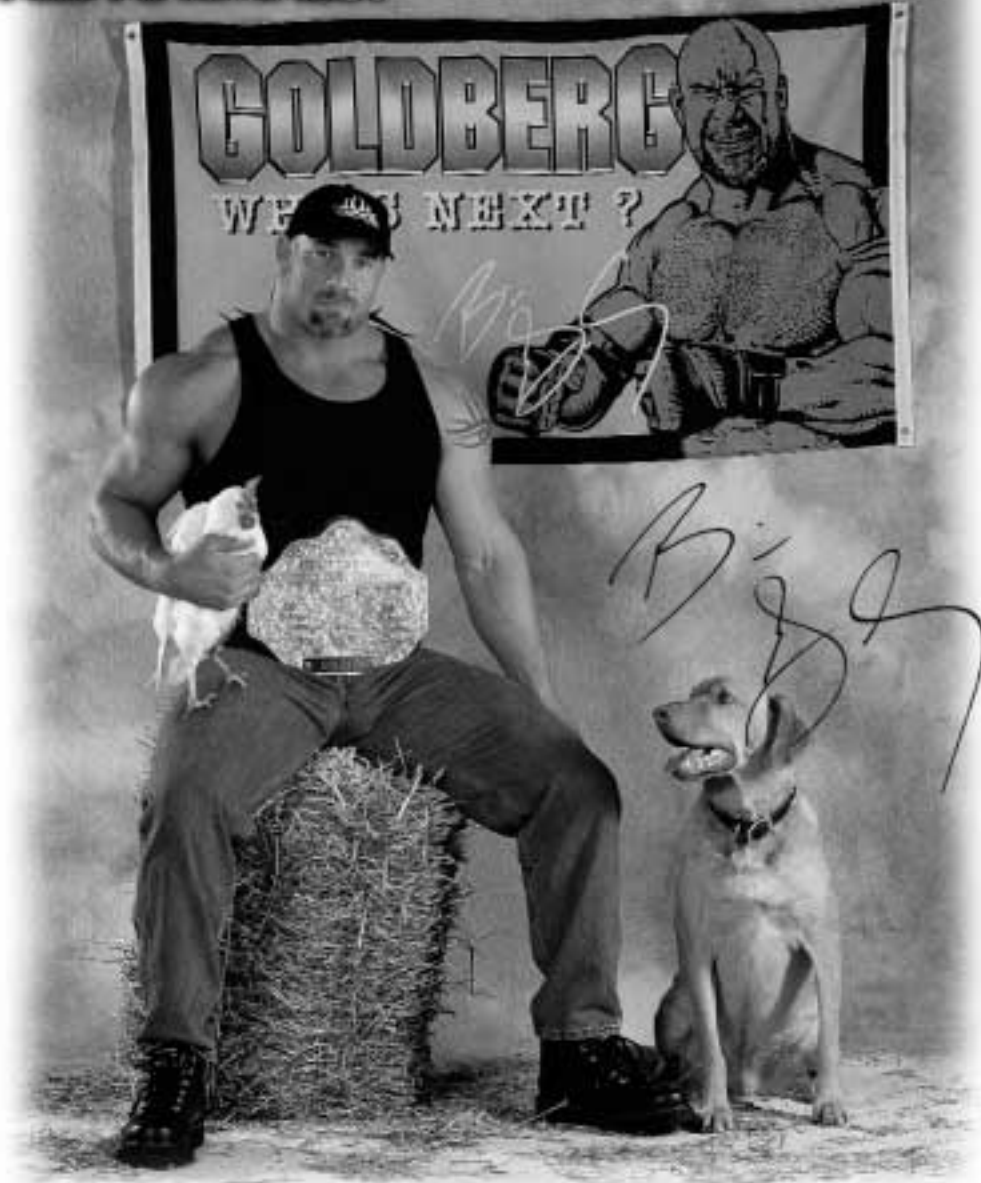


HB 922

Cockfighting is not entertainment.

**Real champions care about animals.
ALL ANIMALS.**



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

WCW WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
WRESTLING

"...a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason."

—Thomas Paine, "Common Sense"

Cockfighting Facts



Since 1981, dogfighting has been punishable as a fourth degree felony in New Mexico. At that time New Mexico became a leader in the nation by passing that law. However cockfighting is still not banned statewide in New Mexico.



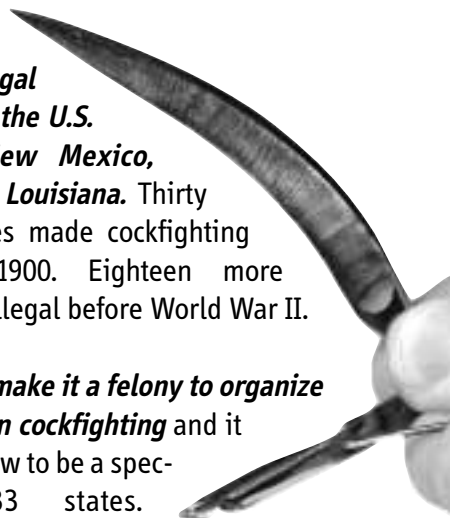
Cockfighting is a violent spectator event in which two roosters are placed into a pit to fight. Razor sharp steel blades or ice pick-like devices called gaffs are strapped to the birds' legs and the birds are then placed in a pit to fight until one is unable to continue fighting or is killed.



Cockfighting is currently illegal in all states in the U.S. except for New Mexico, Oklahoma and Louisiana.

Thirty of the 47 states made cockfighting illegal before 1900. Eighteen more states made it illegal before World War II.

Twenty states make it a felony to organize or participate in cockfighting and it is against the law to be a spectator in 33 states. Cockfighting is prohibited in eleven counties and at least 27 municipalities in New Mexico.



How New Mexico Voters Feel

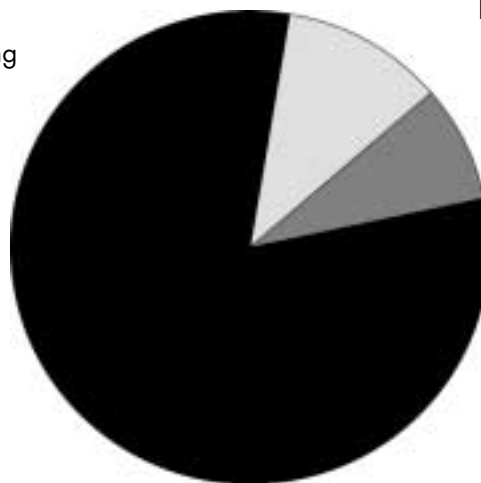
A January 2001 survey of New Mexico voters by Research and Polling, Inc. revealed the following:

- The vast majority of registered New Mexico voters are philosophically opposed to cockfighting and would support a law banning the practice in New Mexico. In fact, 81% of registered voters say they would support a law banning cockfighting, while only 11% oppose such a law.
- Eighty-four percent of Anglo voters and 76% of Hispanic voters support a law banning cockfighting.
- Geographically across the state, voters support a ban on cockfighting as follows:
 - 77% on the east side
 - 83% in the south/southwest region
 - 80% in the northwest region
 - 80% in the north central region
 - 82% in the Albuquerque metro area
- Political party was not a determining factor in voters' support for a ban, with 80% of Republicans, 83% of Democrats and 72% of Independents/Other supporting a ban on cockfighting.

Support Law
Banning Cockfighting
(81%)

Oppose Law
Banning Cockfighting
(11%)

Don't Know/
Won't Say
(8%)



Above images taken from Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) video on animal fighting. This flyer is courtesy of Animal Protection of New Mexico, Inc., (APNM).

Frequently Asked Questions About Cockfighting:

WHERE IS COCKFIGHTING TAKING PLACE IN NEW MEXICO?

After exhaustive research of county records in New Mexico, it is clear that very little documentation of even legal cockfighting and cockfighting “pits” exists. However, based on common knowledge and some limited records, cockfighting is believed to be mostly practiced in the southern and eastern parts of New Mexico. Pits are believed to exist at least in Hidalgo county, Cibola county, Lea county, Valencia county, Sierra county, Otero county, Luna county and Roosevelt county, among others. Part of the difficulty in obtaining records stems from the fact that cockfighting activity seems to be taking place without business licenses and without paying gross receipts taxes.

ISN'T COCKFIGHTING EXEMPTED FROM THE FELONY ANIMAL CRUELTY LAW PASSED IN 1999?

In 1999, the legislature wisely made intentional cruelty to animals a fourth degree felony, recognizing that intentionally hurting animals was a serious crime. Cockfighting was omitted from the 1999 bill because many lawmakers felt that the animal fighting issue should be addressed separately from that measure. Cockfighting is blatant and intentional cruelty to animals and should be punishable as a fourth degree felony, just like other kinds of intentional cruelty to animals.

WHY SHOULD ALL COCKFIGHTING BE PUNISHABLE AS A FOURTH DEGREE FELONY?

Since 1981, dogfighting has been punishable as a fourth degree felony in New Mexico. Cockfighting also deserves to be punishable as a fourth degree felony, because it is a cruel and violent activity which results in the intentional harming and killing of roosters for fun. The New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association supports making cockfighting a felony. If cockfighting were only a misdemeanor, the small fines would simply be considered a “business expense”. Further, crimes with misdemeanor penalties receive lower priority in the criminal justice system.

DON'T THESE BIRDS FIGHT NATURALLY?

While it's true that this type of bird has a fighting instinct, its natural purpose is to establish a “pecking order” and seldom results in serious injury. In cockfighting, birds are specifically bred for aggressiveness, fitted with knives and gaffs, and sometimes given drugs to maximize their aggression and stamina. Unlike birds in the wild, these animals cannot escape. They are placed in an enclosed pit and forced to fight until one quits, is severely injured or dies.

DO CHILDREN ATTEND COCKFIGHTS?

Yes, children are often spectators at cockfights, and this fact is alarming to many New Mexicans. Studies show that exposing children to violence desensitizes them to the suffering of others. Children watching cockfights can learn that it is ok to be cruel to those who are smaller, weaker and different than them, just for fun. To teach our state's children to be compassionate members of society, adults need to set good examples, not condone cruelty for entertainment. Some cockfighting enthusiasts have even stated that the activity is a great family event, and that their children would be joining gangs if not for raising fighting cocks, as if those were their children's only choices.

IS GAMBLING TAKING PLACE AT THESE EVENTS AND IS IT ALLOWED?

New Mexico law prohibits gambling at cockfighting events. However, side bets and “lotteries” are a standard part of cockfighting, and an undercover investigation by a New Mexico television station proved that illegal gambling is taking place at cockfights in our state.

IS THERE A LOT OF MONEY INVOLVED IN COCKFIGHTING?

According to an investigative report on animal fighting by the Humane Society of the United States, the most common type of organized cockfight in the U.S. is the derby, in which dozens of people participate. Entry fees, ranging from \$100 to more than \$1,000, are pooled into a pot that makes up the purse for a derby. Participants' roosters are fought round-robin, and the person whose roosters win the most fights is the winner of the purse. The pit owner may also charge a fee for spectators. A winner could go home with tens of thousands of dollars from one derby.

WHY NOT GIVE COUNTIES THE OPTION OF ALLOWING OR BANNING COCKFIGHTING?

The legislature made intentional cruelty to animals a fourth degree felony in 1999. Given that cockfighting is a blatantly cruel spectator event, counties should not be given a local option on intentional cruelty to animals such as this; state lawmakers should address our state's silent endorsement of events intended only to hurt animals. *The results of a January 2001 public opinion poll in New Mexico clearly show that support for a ban is overwhelming throughout the state. Therefore there is no reason not to pass a state law.* In addition, some people in rural counties have been reluctant to take on the issue of cockfighting, for fear of intimidation by a small minority of vocal cockfighting enthusiasts. Some peo-

ple fear for their personal safety if they speak out against cockfighting in their community.

IS COCKFIGHTING IMPORTANT TO NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

When asked about cockfighting's role in New Mexico's economic development, John Garcia, Secretary of Economic Development, recently said on KOAT Channel 7: “It's an absurd form of entertainment that is from the Dark Ages. I think we need to look ahead at different benefits, different industries ... prostitution has an economic impact, too, but it's not legal.” In addition, the Grants/Cibola County Chamber of Commerce and the Lordsburg/Hidalgo County Chamber of Commerce both are opposed to cockfighting in their communities. “Cockfighting is not the image we want the world to have of Cibola county. We don't want tourists or businesses to perceive our community as a place that condones animal abuse,” Dr. Cecelia Perrow, President, Grants/Cibola county Chamber of Commerce.

HOW DO FAITH COMMUNITIES FEEL ABOUT COCKFIGHTING?

The New Mexico Conference of Churches, which is governed by a fifteen-member board represented by the Bishops and executives of regional churches, is supporting HB922 to ban cockfighting in New Mexico. Cibola county's Ministerial Alliance stated, “Having considered the matter of cockfighting, including its social, moral and theological degradation and implications, as well as the negative precept and example imparted by adults to children, registers its opposition to such activity.” A United Methodist church minister in Grants, NM stated: “Those opposed to cockfighting..... enter our community into an ever widening population of forward thinking communities in our nation which are concerned with decency, compassion, and the long range implications of actions.”

AREN'T FACTORY FARMED ANIMALS TREATED WORSE THAN FIGHTING ROOSTERS?

Many Americans agree that factory farmed animals suffer tremendously from overcrowding, poor ventilation and conditions unsatisfactory for the animals' well-being. However, improper conditions in one situation do not justify intentional cruelty against animals in another situation. In addition, cockfighting is done purely for entertainment.

Voices Against Violence

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE COALITION MEMBERS SUPPORT
MAKING COCKFIGHTING A FOURTH DEGREE FELONY IN NEW MEXICO.

As of February 5, 2001

New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid
New Mexico District Attorneys Association
New Mexico Land Commissioner, Ray Powell, Jr.
New Mexico Conference of Churches
New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association
Albuquerque Veterinary Medical Association
New Mexico Animal Control Association
Ruidoso Police Department
Santa Fe County Animal Control
And dozens of animal protection organizations
throughout New Mexico

More voices against violence:

"USDA agrees with you that, whether it involves dogs or birds, animal fighting is inhumane and, rightfully, is also illegal in most of the country."

– Dan Glickman, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

"New Mexico needs to step out of antiquity and modernize its feelings about the humane treatment of animals."

– Police Chief Maddox, Ruidoso, NM

"I have grandchildren, and this is a part of our culture that I don't want them to learn."

– Dolores Montez, Lordsburg, New Mexico

"Kindness and compassion towards all living things is a mark of a civilized society. Conversely, cruelty, whether it is directed against human beings or against animals, is not the exclusive province of any one culture or community of people...Racism, economic deprivation, dogfighting and cockfighting, bullfighting....are all cut from the same fabric: violence..."

– Cesar Chavez, Farm labor leader



Forty-seven states have banned cockfighting.

Cockfighting is currently illegal in all states in the U.S. except for New Mexico, Oklahoma and Louisiana.

81% of New Mexico registered voters say they would support a law banning cockfighting.

STATE	COCKFIGHTING BANNED
Massachusetts	1836
Delaware	1852
Vermont	1854
Connecticut	1862
Iowa	1868
Pennsylvania	1869
District of Columbia	1871
Minnesota	1871
Missouri	1873
Nebraska	1873
Arkansas	1879
Mississippi	1880
New Jersey	1880
New York	1881
Tennessee	1881
North Carolina	1881
Idaho	1883
Hawaii	1884
Virginia	1887
South Carolina	1887
New Hampshire	1887
Utah	1888
Wisconsin	1889
Kansas	1889
Maryland	1890
North Dakota	1891
Kentucky	1893
Wyoming	1895
Montana	1895
Rhode Island	1896
Alabama	1896
Washington	1901
Maine	1903
South Dakota	1903
California	1905
Texas	1907
Colorado	1913
Michigan	1915
Nevada	1919
Illinois	1921
West Virginia	1923
Indiana	1926
Ohio	1929
Georgia	1933
Alaska	1953
Oregon	1970
Florida	1986
Arizona	1998
Missouri	1998