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Governor, Agricultural Leaders and Humane Society Announce Agreement to Remove HSUS Ballot Initiative, Enhance Animal Welfare and Care Standards

Columbus, OH--Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, the major organizations representing livestock producers and other agricultural interests and the Humane Society of the United States today announced a joint agreement which will result in the Humane Society not pursuing a ballot initiative this fall and enhance animal welfare and animal care standards.

"This agreement represents a joint effort to find common ground. As a result, Ohio agriculture will remain strong and animals will be treated better," Strickland said. "Instead of expending tens of millions of dollars and unproductive energy fighting an acrimonious campaign through the fall, both sides will be able to continue investing in our agricultural base and taking care of animals. I'd like to thank Jack Fisher, Wayne Pacelle and others representing Ohio agriculture for committing to a good faith discussion, which paved the way for this strong agreement that appropriately balances animal welfare and economic concerns."

The agreement preserves the integrity of the Ohio Livestock Animal Care Standards Board and provides meaningful recommendations on animal welfare and animal care standards. It has the support of Ohioans for Livestock Care Steering Committee, which is made up of poultry, pork, dairy, beef, corn and soybean associations and the Ohio Farm Bureau.

"This agreement allows the Ohioans for Livestock Care Board to carry out its mission as approved by the voters last fall," said Ohio Farm Bureau Executive Vice President Jack Fisher. "It allows Ohio farmers to continue producing safe, local, affordable food for Ohio consumers."

In comparison to other states where the Humane Society has negotiated a settlement with agricultural interests and state leaders, this agreement is unique in that it addresses more than just livestock care issues. The agreement also addresses regulations on dog breeding kennels, cockfighting and dangerous and exotic animals.

"This agreement provides a pathway for the enactment of a series of eight major animal welfare reforms, representing an historic advance on animal welfare issues," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "We are grateful, in particular, for the Governor for helping negotiate this deal, and to agricultural leaders who sat down in good faith on these issues."

Today, June 30, is the final date for petition signatures to be submitted to the Secretary of State's office for consideration of a November ballot initiative.