



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 31st March 2008 - 31st March 2009

Another successful year has passed and once again Beauty Without Cruelty has proven itself to be a leading force for change and in improving the lives of animals in this country. We have worked well with other organisations and this informal interaction has helped to create a certain amount of unity in a sometimes fractured movement.

BWC is primarily an educational organisation, dedicated to exposing the suffering of animals, specifically with regard to vivisection/cosmetic testing, factory farming and the exploitation of wildlife and informing and educating people about issues that are often hidden from public scrutiny. We also campaign for animals to be legally reclassified as sentient beings, instead of as "things" or moveable property, as they are at the moment. It's surprising how many people are unaware of the cruelty that occurs in factory farming, or don't realise that millions of animals die in laboratories every year. Many people view hunting and other so-called "sports", as being humane or as an environmental management tool, without realising the tragic suffering that lies behind the industry. BWC's task is to educate people and to encourage them to make better lifestyle choices.

BWC has an exciting education programme and we must thank Dennis Fajans for donating his precious time to running the programme in Johannesburg and for taking time off work in order to give talks at schools. We are also happy to have Dennis' levelheaded advice and support on the national committee. We are also lucky enough to have Heather Howe volunteer her time to take over our education programme in Cape Town. Heather has come up with some very exciting projects, including a number of vegan/vegetarian cooking demonstrations at schools and various class projects focusing on animal rights and animal sentience. We have also had a number of students choose BWC as the subject of their projects and we have been able to supply them with all the information they have needed.

BWC has held many protests during the year including one for the No Foie Gras campaign, which is affiliated to BWC and is so successfully managed by our events liaison manager, Toni Brockhoven. A number of other protests were held during the year in Cape Town and Johannesburg including ones against the seal killing in Canada and Namibia; the fur trade, World Day for Laboratory Animals; KFC; the killing of the Robben Island rabbits; the circus and other issues. Thank you to all those caring people who support these

protests. While protests and petitions will not necessarily put a stop to the cruel exploitation of animals, they do draw public attention to these issues and hopefully make people aware of the suffering inflicted on animals.

In August, BWC organised a protest against the proposed killing of an estimated 10 000 rabbits on Robben Island. However, efforts by BWC and other animal interest groups failed to stop the slaughter, which was monitored for a short time by the NSPCA. Although we were unable to stop the carnage, BWC applied for permission from the Island authorities to witness the killing, in the interests of transparency, but this too was denied! Our request for support from the SPCA was also refused, so we and other interested parties, approached the Human Rights Commission to intervene on our behalf, but this was also refused. With the exception of the island authorities and the SPCA, there have been no other groups or individuals, including the press, allowed to monitor what has happened on the island.

During the year we took part in numerous radio interviews, speaking on a number of different issues and distributed information to the press and other media, students and consumers. Thousands of leaflets and other educational information have been distributed and we appeared on the TV programme 3 Talk in February. Our sincere thanks go to Radio Today for advertising the work of BWC at various time slots during the months for the past year. We really appreciate the publicity this affords our cause.

For many years BWC had investigated the humane claims of cosmetic and household product companies and the BWC approved product guide is published as a free service to the public. There is absolutely no charge to companies that appear on the guide and this year we decided to improve our humane criteria by only endorsing products that are suitable for vegans and vegetarians. If it were possible, we would only include vegan products on the list, but because of the relatively few acceptable products that are available in this country, we will be including vegetarian products for the time being. We were happy to be able to grant BWC endorsement to Woolworths, whose beauty range, bath and skin care and Earth Friendly household product ranges all comply with BWC's humane criteria and are organic. Earth Friendly household products are suitable for vegans and the Earth Friendly skin care and Woolworths beauty products are suitable for vegetarians. Other companies that we were happy to endorse include Enchantrix, Esse and African Organics. BWC remains the only organisation in South Africa to conduct an in depth investigation into companies' humane claims and our humane criteria are in line with, and in some cases more stringent than, internationally accepted standards.

BWC opposes the legalisation of greyhound racing and earlier in the year, we attended workshops held to discuss the issue. We sent a written submission to the organisers and will continue to keep abreast with the situation and voice our opposition to this so-called sport.

BWC also expressed its concern about elephant management plans, canned hunting, the elephant back safari industry, seal killing in Namibia and a

number of other issues. It is of great concern to us that national, regional and local government and authorities such as SANParks, Cape Nature and other organisations claim to adhere to the democratic principle of public participation, but in reality the public is often unaware of laws, standards and regulations that are developed or passed without their input. With minimal advertising of these bodies intentions, one is expected to be aware of and check government web sites for information on issues on which one may wish to comment and an example of this is the SABS standards division – Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes - which was published in January 2009. Although BWC was reluctant to sit on the committee, we decided that, as the NSPCA would be the only organisation or body representing the animals' interests, we would contribute as much as we could to benefit animals who suffer in SA laboratories. We are happy that we were able to not only persuade the committee to acknowledge animals as sentient beings, but also to have other beneficial points included in the finished standard. Unfortunately, there are still points, such as death as an end point, that appear in the standard and it is unfortunate that BWC was the only organisation to oppose this and other unacceptable points. Although BWC took part in the process, we do not support the contents of the standard and do not wish to be associated with its implementation.

In Cape Town, our "Gimme Shelter" Saturday music afternoons were a great success and we are so grateful to all the bands that gave their time to our cause. These events were an opportunity for us to get young people together, not only to listen to good music, but also to learn about the suffering of animals in vivisection and factory farming and other issues. Many leaflets and other information were handed out and we were happy with the impact these music afternoons had on those who attended.

Another success was the annual Animals Rock Concert in November, which was a fundraiser with an educational slant. Once again leaflets were handed to the crowd and images of animals were flashed on a screen. BWC also held its third Animal Awareness Day, at which animal interest organisations showed their work to the public and sold merchandise as fund-raisers. There were stalls, lots of vegetarian food and amazing bands who once again offered their services free to the cause.

BWC also took a stall at the Grahamstown Festival and our thanks to Les Mitchell and the ROAR students at Rhodes University for all their help in making it so successful. A number of videos were shown and hopefully members of the public learned about issues of which they may have been unaware.

In October, as part of our Living Without Cruelty education programme, BWC held its second Animal Rights Film Festival in the District Six Museum in Cape Town and in Johannesburg we presented Liberate, in conjunction with Uncaged and the SA Vegan Society, at Roxy's live music venue. Guest speaker at both events was Dr. Steve Best, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University Of El Paso Texas, author, philosopher, animal rights advocate and international speaker. A number of films were shown, including

the African premiere of Meat The Truth. Dr. Best's concern for humans, animals and the environment is tangible and he is unrelenting in his opposition to actions that threaten the earth and its inhabitants.

In June the report that we had commissioned regarding vivisection in South Africa today was completed. The report: Animals in Laboratories – SA State of the nation – Global Lessons and Future Strategy – gives an insight into the vivisection industry in South Africa, focusing on legislation, or the lack thereof, current animal experimentation taking place in this country, information on facilities conducting animal tests and much more. The report is available from BWC and will be sent via e-mail to interested parties.

BWC was also deeply concerned at proposals that had been submitted to the government, by the SA Veterinary Foundation in SA, to upgrade or replace the existing Animals Protection Act. In the interest of public participation and to guarantee that all voices will be heard on this issue, BWC arranged a public meeting in Johannesburg to discuss the way forward regarding the new Act. Certain decisions were accepted by those present at the meeting and consensus was reached on a number of issues. We will be keeping a watch on future developments and will be involve in any further discussions or actions regarding this issue.

Early in 2009, Bunnyhuggers, the company employed to manage BWC events and promotions ended its association with BWC. However, I know that company's owner, Lejane Hardy, is always happy to help and promote BWC and we thank her for the work she did for us in the past year. We are delighted to welcome to BWC, dynamic animal rights campaigner Toni Brockhoven who will manage BWC events and liaison in future and we know with Toni's energy and passion we will go from strength to strength. BWC also welcomes Angela Tucson as our representative in East London and hope that she receives huge support from animal lovers and BWC supporters in her area.

In closing I would like to thank the National Committee of BWC for their loyalty, passion and dedication to the cause and for their personal time they so generously donate to BWC. Without the support of the committee and our amazingly generous members, we would not be able to carry on our work.

Thank you.