

DON'T LET CANADA, NORWAY, AND THE WTO STOP THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SEAL PRODUCTS BAN!

Canada's Seal Hunt: A Tradition of Cruelty

With its annual seal hunt, Canada is responsible for the largest mass slaughter of marine mammals in the world. In 72,000 baby seals were killed. Beginning at 12 days of age, the seals are clubbed (often with illegal weapons), hooked in the eye, cheek, or mouth to avoid damaging the fur, and are at times skinned alive because of the carelessness of the hunter. In some areas, seals are shot. For every seal landed, another is shot and lost under the ice. Canada's annual, government-subsidized slaughter seeks to profit from the misery of seals by exporting fur for fashion, seal oil, seal meat, and seal penis bones (sold as an aphrodisiac in China.)

An Ecological Disaster The seal hunt is not only cruel; it's also ecologically devastating, threatening the survival of the harp seal as a species. The hunt has reduced seal populations on the east coast of Canada from approximately 30 million down to just over 5 million. This number is expected to drop even further if the hunt continues. Annual kill quotas set by the Canadian government are condemned as unsustainable by scientists and environmentalists. Moreover, the quotas are ignored – in 2002 sealers killed 75,000 more seals than were allowed by the quota!

As ocean predators, seals play a vital ecological role, regulating the population balance of the fish they eat. As seal populations decline, populations of the fish they eat increase, and those fish in turn over consume their own prey, destabilizing a delicate ecosystem. Further, recent evidence suggests that killing seals contributes to bacterial infestation on the ocean floor which leads to hypoxia, a condition in which patches of ocean lose all the dissolved oxygen and are unable to sustain cod or fish or marine life of any kind.

European Parliament: Taking Action for Compassion

The European Parliament placed an import ban on all Canadian seal products with the intention of finally ending the inhumane yearly hunt, which it considers "inherently inhumane." The ban will prohibit the sale of seal skin, meat, oil blubber, organs and seal oil. Canada exported roughly \$2.5 million worth of seal products to European countries in 2008, considerably cutting Canada's profit if the ban were to be put in place. If upheld, the ban may be enacted as early as 2010.

After the European Parliament's decision, Canada quickly announced that it will challenge the ban at the WTO if Canada is not exempted. Trade Minister Stockwell Day states that "if one country wants to ban the products of another, it has to have clear scientific, medically acceptable reasons for doing so."

The WTO: Trading Away Animals' Lives According to Our World is Not for Sale, "The World Trade Organization was established in 1995. It includes 153 countries and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO has been used to push an expansive array of policies on trade, investment and deregulation

that exacerbate the inequality between the North and the South, and among the rich and poor within countries. The WTO enforces some twenty different trade agreements, including the General Agreement on

Trade in Services (GATS), the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

The WTO is inherently undemocratic. Its trade tribunals, working behind closed doors, have ruled against a stunning array of national health and safety, labor, human rights and environmental laws, which have been directly challenged as trade barriers by governments acting on behalf of their corporate clients. National policies and laws found to violate WTO rules must be eliminated or changed or else the violating country faces perpetual trade sanctions that can be in the millions of dollars. Since the WTO's inception in 1995, the vast majority of rulings in trade disputes between member nations have favored powerful industrialized countries. Consequently, many countries, particularly developing countries, feel enormous pressure to weaken their public interest policies whenever a WTO challenge is threatened in order to avoid costly sanction."

The WTO has consistently ruled on the side of animal exploiters, treating efforts to protect animals as merely a barrier to trade in need of elimination. In the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP), some schools of yellowfin tuna associate with dolphins. Commercial fishing operations, including the Mexican fishing fleet, have consequently found that setting nets on dolphins to catch the tuna swimming underneath is a lucrative technique for tuna fishing, despite the fact the practice is extremely injurious to dolphins. In the past 40 years this practice led to the deaths of over 7 million dolphins. In 1984, the US banned dolphin-unsafe tuna under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but in 1995 the WTO ruled that that the US would have to lift this barrier to trade or pay compensations to Mexico or face severe trade sanctions. Under pressure from the Clinton administration Congress agreed to comply.

The shrimp fishing industry catches sea turtles in purse seine nets, where they drown, and pushes them to the brink of extinction. New nets were devised that allowed the turtles to escape if entangled, and the U.S. refused to import shrimp from any country not using "turtle exclusion devices." But upon



complaints from 4 nations in 1996, a WTO dispute panel found this policy to be in violation of free trade rules, and so the US was forced to accept imports of shrimp from countries using turtle-killing nets.

The WTO also ruled against a 1989 EU health ban on bovine products with growth-promoting hormones, determining that the ban violates the US' right to trade freely. The EU has been paying trade ban concessions to the US rather than harm the health of EU citizens. The US continues its practice of injecting bovine with hormones and will be trading freely with nations who will not be able pay trade concessions. RBGH has been reliably linked to health problems that cause extreme suffering to cows, including mastitis, a painful inflammation of the udder.

Abolish the World Trade Organization!


Today's protest begins a week of actions marking the tenth anniversary of the historic Seattle WTO protests and the start of a new WTO meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. According to BattleinSeattleMovie.com "The '99 Seattle protests...were a highly organized series of nonviolent actions by a diverse array of public interests -- labor unions, religious groups, student organizations, anarchists, environmentalists and national and international nonprofit organizations -- all of whom shared a common enemy, the WTO.. [The protesters were] a pinnacle moment in the history of social action." Among the lasting images of the Seattle WTO protests were activists dressed as sea turtles, protesting the WTO's ruling that the US cannot exclude shrimp caught with methods that endanger sea turtles. The slogan "Teamsters and turtles together at last" has come to symbolize the critical coalescence of diverse forces that made the protests such an overwhelming success. Over the last 10 years, public opposition has grown to the WTO and free trade agreements like NAFTA. Now is a critical time to take action against free trade agreements that undermine animal and environmental protection! Read on to find out what you can do.


Vancouver 2010 Olympics: A Critical Opportunity


In the lead-up to the 2010 Winter Olympics will be held in Vancouver, Canada will be under unprecedented international scrutiny-- making this a perfect time expose opportunity to expose Canada's latest attempt to undermine animal protection and bring the world's attention once again to the horrors of the Canadian seal hunt.




WHAT YOU CAN DO:

 Write to President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil and Prime Minister Singh and ask them to announce that India will pull out of the WTO during its meeting in Geneva beginning on November 30th. Use the webform at <http://helpline.rb.nic.in/GrievanceNew.aspx> to write to the President and at <http://pmindia.nic.in/write.htm> to write to the Prime Minister.

 Volunteer or intern with Global Justice for Animals and the Environment. We need your help to campaign against trade policies that harm animals and the planet! Learn more about volunteer opportunities at <http://freetradekillsanimals.org/?page=VolIntern> or by calling our Bangalore office at 98447 47771.

 Donate to Global Justice for Animals. Make checks out to "Wetlands" and write "GJAE" in the note. Donations of supplies are also welcome. Contact us for details.

 Contact the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, Stockwell Day, Canada's International Trade Minister, and Gail Shea, Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to let them know that you won't be visiting Vancouver for the 2010 Olympics and will boycott Canada tourism until the commercial seal hunt is ended for good. Also let them know that you will boycott Canadian maple syrup and seafood products. (Learn what to boycott at <http://snipurl.com/seafoodboycott>.)

- Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Office of the Prime Minister, 80 Wellington Street, Ottawa K1A 0A2

Phone: (613) 992-4211 Fax: 613-941-6900 Email:


pm@pm.gc.ca

- The Honourable Stockwell Day, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 Phone: 613.995.1702 Fax: 613.995.1154


Email: DayS@parl.gc.ca

- The Honorable Gail Shea, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6 Telephone: 613.992.9223, Fax: 613.992.1974

Email: SheaG@parl.gc.ca

 Write to the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee and demand that it help end the seal slaughter.

Use this webform: <http://snipurl.com/olympicsboycott>.

 Use this webform to tell Canada's leaders you'll be boycotting their maple syrup: <http://snipurl.com/BoycottSyrup>, and ask restaurants to fill out this pledge form (<http://snipurl.com/pledgesyrup>) committing to not use it.

Global Justice for Animals and the Environment

Email: india@freetradekillsanimals.org

ph.no 98447 47771

Website: www.freetradekillsanimals.org