

TACTICS RUN GAMUT FROM CONTAMINATION SCARES TO BOMBS

U.K.'s animal rights groups literally on warpath

By JESSICA BALDWIN

LONDON (AP) From contamination scares to bomb attacks, Britain's animal liberation groups are on the warpath, stirring strong emotions in a country where animal-loving is as traditional as blood sports.

Protesters of fox hunts claimed a major victory this month with the release of a secretly taped video showing a trapped fox cub being thrown to baying hounds and torn apart.

The hunt involved, the Quorn, is one that Prince Charles occasionally joins and ranks among the oldest and most prestigious in Britain.

Five top officials of the Quorn resigned, saying the blatant cruelty was against hunt rules which stipulate that a fox at the end of a hunt should be shot in the head and then fed to the hounds.

But the sport, a favorite of the English landed gentry for more than two centuries, goes on.

It is all part of what John Bryant, spokesman for the League Against Cruel Sports, calls "the British tradition of killing things for entertainment."

"Wherever there is hunting with animals you'll find the British took them there," Bryant said in an interview. "When the British first went to Australia they hunted Aborigines with dogs."

Bryant and other protesters say they are embarrassed by militant groups whose targets are scientists, companies and products linked to animal experiments.

"They are terrorists... they have betrayed a great humanitarian movement," said Bryant.

Fake warning

In a publicity-seeking strike this month, the Animal Liberation Group put out a scare that it had contaminated a popular health drink, Lucozade. It is produced by a pharmaceutical company, Smith-Kline Beecham, which tests some drugs on laboratory animals.

The warning was a fake but some 2 million bottles of Lucozade were pulled from supermarket shelves.



A SALES CLERK REMOVES a popular health drink from a London store recently after a radical animal rights group reported they had contaminated the drink. The claim proved false and the beverage was placed back on shelves. AP PHOTO

owned by scientists. A toddler in his stroller was injured.

"Just because humans have power over animals, it doesn't mean we can do anything we want with them — like the Nazis had powers over people in the concentration camps," said Animal Liberation Front spokesman Robin Webb.

Most Britons polled thought that animals should not suffer in laboratory tests, unless it was to save human lives, according to a survey conducted for Sunday's News of the World.

In the case of cosmetics, almost 94 percent were against

sorts of actions carried out by the Animal Liberation Front, the newspaper said. Sixteen percent of the 523 people questioned for the poll backed raids on laboratories and attacks on the property of firms and scientists involved in testing on animals.

The survey was conducted by Continental Research, which interviewed a representative sample of the national population by telephone. The margin of error was 4 percent.

Restrictions sought

A Gallup poll commissioned by London's Daily Telegraph last year found that one in two

further restricted, and four-fifths think battery farming, a technique that uses an arrangement of restrictive compartments for rearing animals such as hens intensively, is cruel.

But the sentiment doesn't depress sales of eggs or drugs manufactured by companies involved in testing. And for generations, there has been widespread enthusiasm for sports which critics consider cruel.

While the Victorian gentry hunted, organized rat fights drew street crowds in the urban slums.

Illegal cockfighting and dogfights, primarily with pit