



American Gamefowl Defense Network

An Organization Dedicated To Legalizing Cockfighting In America

AGDN POLICY PAPER-January 19, 2014 "Regulated Cockfighting Would Generate Millions."

Consumed by the legal and moral issues related to cockfighting, a critical discussion is often overlooked by those involved in this debate. From a purely economic perspective, the illegality of cockfighting is short-sighted and a policy that can not be justified when analyzed under the most basic cost-benefit analysis criteria. Indeed, legal and regulated cockfighting would be a multimillion dollar business in every state that it existed, an important consideration during an economic recession.

Indeed, the illegality of cockfighting costs state governments millions in potential revenue. First, the revenue generated in countries where cockfighting is legal is staggering. The vast potential economic benefits of a regulated cockfighting industry are clearly demonstrated by countries that regulate the sport internationally, from Asia to Europe to the Americas. Lynn Marrow, Director of the Local Records Preservation Program at the Missouri State Archives, explains:

*"Those not acquainted with the economics of cock-fighting may find this last rationale a bit strange. However, the sport is no longer one in which faithful adherents of an archaic custom congregate. It is very big business in the Philippines, where thousands of American-strain gamecocks compete, some in Manila's 10,000-seat arena. In Europe, one survey reported thirty-two legitimate arenas in northern France near the Belgian border, where the sport has thrived for decades. In the American territory of Puerto Rico, the island's Department of Recreation promotes the contest on television for natives and tourists--600 arenas sponsor competition annually. In December 1993 the first Gamefowl Congress of the World was held in Mexico with representatives from eighteen countries in attendance." (See Lynn Marrow, Director of the Local Records Preservation Program at the Missouri State Archives, *History They Don't Teach You, A Tradition of Cockfighting*, White River Historical Quarterly, Fall 1995)*

There is every reason to believe that the revenue generation from cockfighting internationally would translate into much needed economic stimulation in the United States. For example, in Kentucky "banning the sport" has taken "millions of dollars from local economies." Because many have either retired from cockfighting or been driven underground, "reliable estimates for money that changes hands" is simply not available. "Nationally, observers can only assert that cockfighting has become a multimillion-dollar underground industry." With everything considered, even a small look into the gamefowl industry reveals this potential to generate public revenue. In two Louisiana parishes alone, cockfighting generates "\$6.5 million annually in revenues."

Independent of revenue potential and the constitutional implications of unfairly targeting cockfighting when it is perfectly legal for the state and hunters to exterminate 100's of millions of birds, fish and animals annually, "other advocates see the time and money spent on anti-cockfighting as hypocritical when viewed in the greater arena of animal abuse." The US Department of Agriculture's Animal Damage Control program spends "\$30 million in federal funds and \$15 million in state monies" annually "to kill mammals and birds considered predators or pests." More specifically, there are documented cases of gamefowl seizures and the state sponsored euthanizing of hundreds of birds at a time.

In summary, the illegality of cockfighting costs local and state governments millions of dollars in potential revenue in two ways. First, the cost of not regulating an internationally proven source of revenue, including everything from breeding to organized and televised competition. This includes the lost tax revenue from driving the sport underground. Second, the cost of status quo anti-cockfighting enforcement policies including the extermination of seized gamefowl. Finally, spending money on anti-cockfighting enforcement is highly hypocritical when taken in context of global policies on animal abuse and termination. The economic costs of illegality certainly outweigh the economic benefits.