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Rt. 2, Box 813
Hot Springs, Arkansas
December 6, 1974

I. Q. ZOO

From a talk delivered to the International Association of
Amusement Parks & Attractions November, 1974

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We at Animal Behavior Enterprises believe that the Zoological Park of the future will display not only animals but also animal behavior -- that is, what an animal does to "earn its living" in the natural state. Some of the more progressive zoos have already made timorous efforts towards developing a few "active" exhibits, generally featuring some species of primates. Other zoos are considering the idea.

The I. Q. Zoo, which has been in operation at Hot Springs, Arkansas, since 1955, is an active zoo. In its nearly 20 years of existence, the I. Q. Zoo has exhibited such diverse animals as woodchucks, raccoons, domestic cats, barnyard fowl, goats, pigs, and others. While the small size of our I. Q. Zoo restricts the use of naturalistic displays and settings, the animals do perform natural behaviors. When a chicken "dances," as you will see a bit later in the film, the audience is amused. But the visitors are also informed that the "jig" performed by the little hen is simply one of the ways she would get her food if she were in the wild or in a barnyard -- namely, her natural scratch pattern.

This theme of entertaining while educating is followed through most of the displays at the I. Q. Zoo. A chicken seems to be playing basketball, but is really displaying the way a hen catches insects inmid-air. A duck plays a piano, but the behavior is "dabbling" for food. In each display, the animals are shown perceiving and interacting with the environment, just as they would if they were in the wild. We have simply conditioned the animal, using safe, humane, scientifically established techniques, to respond on cue for the convenience of the human visitor. We have maximized the exposure of the behaving animal to the public -- something is going on all the time.

Animals in action -- that is what we like to call it. Whether the animal is a chicken and the behavior is a scratch or the animal is an Indian elephant and the behavior is pulling down a simulated tree, the principle is the same. An animal in nature interacts with the environment.

The I. Q. Zoo concept is flexible in format and scope. Our I. Q. Zoo is indoors and very small -- the show and service areas total less than 2,500 square feet. We have accommodated

almost 100,000 visitors in a year, most of them in the summer months. Small size means, of course, that an I. Q. Zoo can be centrally located in urban areas, a possible advantage in these days of energy shortages. Urban locations such as shopping malls, downtown buildings already in existence but not being used for other purposes, existing amusement complexes such as theatre and other entertainment areas, city parks, etc., are all possibilities.

The film you will be seeing here today deals exclusively with the idea of a compact I. Q. Zoo, featuring small domestic and wild animals. But I would like to emphasize that the I. Q. Zoo concept is expandable to include displays covering many acres and featuring wild animals of practically any species. The drive-through wild animal park currently so popular could readily make use of such displays, for the educational and entertainment advantage to the public, and for the benefit of the animal, for it is already well established that an active animal is a healthier animal.

The basic behavioral conditioning techniques are humane and safe when properly applied. There are few risks to the animal. The idea of conditioning wild animals has been greeted with some disfavor by some zoological parks. We feel that the reluctance to research the application of modern behavioral techniques is due to (1) lack of understanding of the technology and its safety, and (2) simple inertia -- it just isn't done that way.

It might be suggested that a large Zoological park consider exploring the possibility of a naturalistic exhibit by attempting displays on a smaller scale using readily available small wild animals -- for instance, displays featuring tree squirrels jumping from tree to tree, or ground squirrels burrowing or digging for nuts or other tidbits; raccoons stealing eggs from a nest, or even a coatimundi swinging from vines. We feel that any of these exhibits would have great public interest and could prove the worth of a naturalistic behavior display.

ABE has pioneered the behavioral techniques currently used throughout the amusement industry, and we plan to be in the forefront of the new wave of educational animal exhibits featuring animals in action.