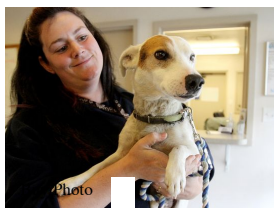


51 animals seized in sheriff's search



Spenser Hickey, Reporter

6:26 a.m. EDT October 29, 2015



(Photo: James Miller/The Marion Star)

PLEASANT TOWNSHIP - Animal neglect charges may be forthcoming after 51 animals were removed Tuesday morning from 662 and 674 Somerlot-Hoffman Road W, according to Marion City Law Director Mark Russell.

Russell said his office has jurisdiction over countywide misdemeanor charges, including animal neglect, and he said a misdemeanor charge or charges likely will be filed.

Chief Deputy Al Hayden, of the Marion County Sheriff's Office, said 12 chickens, 10 horses, nine sheep, nine cats, five dogs, three hogs, two pot-bellied pigs and a goat were removed. Hayden said he was told by a veterinarian that some were underweight and had been kept in unsanitary conditions.

Russell and Hayden said there was no resistance from the property owners, Brad and Tricia Seiter, and execution of a search warrant around 9:45 a.m. went smoothly, Russell said. Candy Bigler, of the Marion Area Humane Society, said about 15 volunteers, plus Humane Society of the United States staffers and sheriff's deputies, gathered at 9 a.m. and worked until 9 p.m. to remove all the animals, which had to be transported in trailers to various foster locations for care.

The owners had been under the supervision of the Ohio Department of Agriculture in the past as a result of complaints about the conditions of horses kept on the property.

"We thought the conditions were corrected. But a tip we received in September resulted in a visit to the property. We thought it was a situation taken care of. We found it was not," said Bigler, who called the condition of some of the horses "close to death."

The dogs and cats were not in imminent danger, Bigler said.

"They were not too bad, just a little undernourished and undersocialized. Under Ohio law, owners are to provide adequate food and access to water. The dogs had neither," she said.

Hayden said the investigation and removal were a "team effort" involving additional participation from the Humane Society of the United States and regional groups in Marion and Delaware counties, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Marion County dog warden and volunteers who aided in removing the animals.

"We applaud the Marion County Sheriff's Office, the Marion Area Humane Society and a team of dedicated volunteers for coming to the aid of these animals," said Corey Roscoe, state director for the Humane Society of the United States, in a press statement. "The conditions these animals were found in demonstrates the need for stronger animal cruelty laws in Ohio."

Hayden said the investigation began around early September after the Marion Area Humane Society passed on information it had received anonymously through tips. As the sheriff's office investigated and found more signs of neglect, Hayden said, officials decided to act to prevent additional harm being done.

Bigler said the owners didn't agree to surrender the animals, so they were seized under the authority of a search warrant. The owners didn't interfere with the action.

Bigler said she was grateful of the support on the sheriff's office and her counterparts in Delaware County for their help. Marion County lacks a dedicated humane enforcement officer, and nine trailers were needed to remove the animals.

The Marion Area Humane Society is fostering some of the animals during the investigation and said that donations of dog food, cat food, kitty litter, hay, grain and bedding are always welcome at the shelter.

"When you've done this job for a while, it's hard to shock you," she said. "But it's still disheartening when you find an animal in need. Basically, she had more than she could handle, in my opinion. It's just sad."

shickey@marionstar.com

740-244-9940

Twitter: @SpenserHickey

Read or Share this story: <http://ohne.ws/1NaqTLB>

MORE STORIES

[Ashley Furniture to honor veterans](/story/news/local/2015/10/29/ashley-furniture-honor-veterans/74795042/)
[\(/story/news/local/2015/10/29/ashley-furniture-honor-veterans/74795042/\)](/story/news/local/2015/10/29/ashley-furniture-honor-veterans/74795042/)

Oct. 29, 2015, 10:06 a.m.

[Marion County Auditor to hold Top Dog Contest](/story/news/local/2015/10/29/marion-county-auditor-hold-top-dog-contest/74794624/)
[\(/story/news/local/2015/10/29/marion-county-auditor-hold-top-dog-contest/74794624/\)](/story/news/local/2015/10/29/marion-county-auditor-hold-top-dog-contest/74794624/)

Oct. 29, 2015, 9:55 a.m.

[Hot water in toilet burns child](/story/news/2015/10/28/toilet-burns-child-marion/74752922/)
[\(/story/news/2015/10/28/toilet-burns-child-marion/74752922/\)](/story/news/2015/10/28/toilet-burns-child-marion/74752922/)

Oct. 28, 2015, 4:51 p.m.