

## Charges filed against owners of animals impounded due to alleged neglect

Written by Marty Randall

Wednesday, 13 August 2014 06:38 -

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Charges have been filed against the owners of several animals allegedly found neglected and in poor health on July 22 and July 24 by officers with the Scott County Sheriff's Department and the State Veterinarian's Office.

On July 21, a concerned neighbor contacted the Scott County Animal Shelter about a number of pets at a home on North Jack Morgan Road. After shelter staff checked the residence that day, a search warrant was obtained.

Two officers, Deputy Rodney Rudder and Reserve Deputy Bobby Thompson and a state veterinarian went to the residence with shelter staff and members of the Jennings Township Volunteer Fire Department on July 22. The firemen ventilated the home because of the overwhelming smell that caused workers to nearly become ill.

Two American Eskimo puppies and a parrot were found in the home without water or food. Outside, three dogs of the same breed were found alive in a kennel. A fourth dog was dead. Other dogs of the same breed and several cats were roaming loose around the home, it was reported.

The dogs and the bird were taken to the animal shelter in Scottsburg. Family members of the owner, reported to be an elderly man in poor health, told officers at that time that they planned to capture the roaming animals and bring them to the shelter as well. Shelter staff were told that a person was supposed to be taking care of the pets while the owner was hospitalized.

On July 24, shelter staff accompanied Sheriff Dan McClain and a state veterinarian to an area at the corner of North Jack Morgan Road and East Oard Spring Road commonly known as "Easy Living."

There, they found two horses and a donkey tethered by rope to a pole and without food or water. They also discovered two cats in pet crates and three young German Shepherds, two females and a male, in a kennel as well as 36 caged rabbits which also appeared malnourished.

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All of these animals were removed at the state veterinarian's order from the property, allegedly owned by a man who occasionally visited. The rabbits, horses and mule are being fostered by a concerned resident of the area. The cats and dogs were transported to the shelter in Scottsburg.

Some animals, chickens, ducks and other dogs and cats, were left at the site because they appeared to be in good health despite living conditions.

On July 31, the County Prosecutor's Office filed two counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty against Bobby Hampton, 74, and four counts against Hargus Combs, 49, Scottsburg. Hampton is the alleged owner of the parrot and dogs found at the residence on North Jack Morgan Road. Combs was identified as the owner of the donkey, horses, cats, dogs and rabbits.

Hampton's initial hearing in Scott Superior Court is scheduled for August 11. A summons was issued advising him to appear.

In Combs' case, his initial hearing had yet to be scheduled. An arrest warrant was issued for him.