

Horse Crime of the Year

By Cindy Hale

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

I don't often dwell on morbid stories about animal abuse for fear of sensationalizing such horrid cases. The last thing I want to do is give a sick minded individual some form of notoriety. But this latest one about a misfortunate horse just really got to me.

Last week a man that lives at the far reaches of my county was arrested and charged with animal neglect and abuse. He resided on a windswept, barren plot of land far off the main paved road. A pack of his (barely) civilized dogs roamed the acreage, along with an assortment of other farm animals. Add a couple of ramshackle dwellings and you can probably envision the scene. Neighbors who had a view of the property had made several phone calls to animal control authorities and, apparently the sheriff, but not much had been done until this final incident.

According to reports, the man had beaten his horse to death by repeatedly whacking it in the head with a sledgehammer. He then cut off the horse's head with a chain saw, with the intent of feeding it to his pack of canines. No, I'm not kidding.

When investigators arrived on the scene, the man claimed that the horse had been attacked and mauled by his dogs and he took steps to euthanize the horse to prevent its suffering. That whole horse-head-in-the-dog-pen thing was just a misunderstanding. Fortunately, the authorities didn't buy it, especially when an inspection of the horse's carcass revealed that it had not been bitten by the dogs. Its only injuries were those that led to its death, caused by the effects of the sledge hammer.

Once this guy was hauled off to jail, animal welfare groups swooped onto the scene and confiscated the other animals. That led to a spanking of sorts from law enforcement, who said something along the lines that no one should just come on someone else's land and take their property. That "property" would be the animals who may or may not have been next in line for the sledge hammer.

I'm sharing this tale because it's just so incomprehensible to me, as I'm sure it is to horse lovers everywhere. Not a week goes by that I don't witness or hear about some misguided individual who is doing something questionable to or with their horse. But this saga wins the dubious honor of being the Heinous Horse Crime of the Year. And it's only the end of April.

When I went outside to feed Joey his breakfast—he was snuggled in his daysheet to keep him cozy during our chilly spring night—I gave him an extra pat on the nose. He so depends on me for everything: To keep him fed, to look after his welfare, to give him enough exercise yet not over-work him, to make sure he's kept up to date on his vet and hoof care. He trusts me. How could anyone betray such devotion?

[<< Previous Entry](#)

[Back to Life with Horses](#)