

# Connecticut Weekly AGRICULTURAL REPORT

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Connecticut Department of Agriculture  
July 16, 2014



**These emaciated Mustangs were seized from their Fairfield County owner last week and are being cared for at the Dept. of Agriculture's large-animal rehabilitation facility in Niantic.**

## INVESTIGATING HORSE-NEGLECT CASES A COMPLICATED, SENSITIVE TASK

*By Steve Jensen, Office of DoAg Cmsr. Steven K. Reviczky*

Photographs of emaciated horses seized from their owners in animal-neglect cases naturally provoke revulsion and scorn when they reach the public through news coverage.

But what many observers are likely left wondering is how an owner could allow a horse to reach such a deteriorated condition. Every case has its own unique circumstances, but there is often a common thread to the roots of neglect: economics.

"Horses are not cheap – they cost a lot to take care of," said Dept. of Agriculture (DoAg) Animal Control Officer Nancy Jarvis. "And a lot of our cases happen because the owners don't have the money to care for their animals the way they should."

Jarvis was the lead investigator on a recent neglect case in Fairfield County that drew widespread media attention, including photographs of two extremely underweight horses that graphically showed their protruding ribs, hips and spinal bones.

There was some hay in the horses' unkempt barn, but not nearly enough to sustain them.

DoAg officers have seen a spike in such cases in recent weeks, during which they have seized seven horses, two donkeys and a mule. Each case involved varying degrees of a lack of food and poor general care of the animals.

"It's unusual to see this happening at this time of year," said Ray Connors, DoAg's Supervising Animal Control Officer.

"Hay is plentiful and there's plenty of grass in the pastures. These cases are what we expect to see in mid-winter."

A good-sized horse needs perhaps five or six pounds of grain and hay per day. And that is only the beginning of the expense of keeping such a large animal.

Vaccines can easily run to \$500 a year. Their hooves need regular attention and they should be wormed several times a year. Because their teeth grow continuously until they reach an advanced age, they need to be "floated" or filed down at least once a year.

"If they're not floated the teeth get pointed and sharp so the horse is in pain when it chews," Jarvis said.

As in many investigations, the Fairfield County seizure only came after the owner had been previously advised to be more diligent about feeding the horses, and at times had been successful in bringing the animals up to a healthier weight.

"We normally don't just go in and take the horses immediately," Connors said. "We usually try to work with the owners to do what's necessary to get the horse back to health."

But when DoAg and the local police were shown photographs of the horses taken recently by a delivery person with a cell-phone, it was clear that intervention was needed.

**(Continued on Page 3)**

**NEW HOLLAND, PA, HOG AUCTION**

Sold by actual weights; prices quoted by hundred wt.

		Low	High
49-54	200-300 lbs	90.00	96.00
	300-400 lbs	80.00	83.00
54-58	200-300 lbs	97.00	104.00
	300-400 lbs	92.00	96.00
Sows,US1-3	300-500 lbs	70.00	75.00
	500-700 lbs	74.00	76.50
Boars	400-720 lbs	40.50	41.00

**PA GRADED FEEDER PIGS**

Lancaster, PA, per cwt. June 18

		Low	High
GR US 1	WT 20-40	310.00	360.00
	WT 50-75	235.00	250.00
	WT 80-100	175.00	175.00
GR US 2	WT 20-50	285.00	330.00

**MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION**

Middlefield, CT, July 14, 2014

	Low	High
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	65.00	85.00
61-75 lbs.	120.00	140.00
76-90 lbs.	190.00	195.00
91-105 lbs.	200.00	205.00
106 lbs. & up	210.00	215.00
Farm Calves	220.00	225.00
Starter Calves	75.00	80.00
Veal Calves	160.00	220.00
Open Heifers	100.00	137.50
Beef Steers	130.00	151.00
Beef Heifers	125.00	132.00
Feeder Steers	n/a	n/a
Stock Bulls	117.00	140.00
Beef Bulls	123.00	137.00
Boars	12.00	20.00
Sows	n/a	n/a
Butcher Hogs	1 at	70.00
Goats each	40.00	380.00
Kid Goats	60.00	140.00
Canners	up to	114.00
Cutters	115.00	119.00
Utility Grade Cows	120.00	125.00
Replacement Heifers	n/a	n/a
Replacement Cows	n/a	n/a
Rabbits each	5.00	22.00
Chickens each	3.00	15.00
Ducks each	5.00	13.00
Feeder Pigs	5 at	95.00
Lambs	50.00	180.00
Sheep	100.00	220.00

**EASTERN, PA HAY**

average price per ton

	PREMIUM	GOOD
ALFALFA	205.00-245.00	170.00-170.00
MIXED	205.00-480.00	150.00-195.00
TIMOTHY	195.00-300.00	140.00-295.00
STRAW		135.00-180.00

**WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES  
NEW ENGLAND GROWN**

	LOW	HIGH
BLUEBERRIES CLAM SHELL	24.00	24.00
BLUEBERRIES PULP/NET	30.00	30.00
RHUBARB,20LB	35.00	35.00
ALFALFA SPRTS 5 IB	14.00	14.00
ARUGULA,4LB	12.00	12.00
BASIL1/2BU 12'S	15.00	15.00
BEAN SPRTS 10IB FILM	6.00	6.00
BEETS CARTON 12'S	15.00	18.00
CILANTRO 1/2 BU 12'S	15.00	15.00
CUCUMBERS,SELECT,1 1/9BU	24.00	26.00
CORN,5DZ	18.00	18.00
CABBAGE, GREEN,50IB	12.00	13.00
CABBAGE, RED 50IB	14.00	14.00
CABBAGE, SAVOY 50IB	14.00	14.00
COLLARD	12.00	12.00
SQUASH, YELLOW,FCY,1/2BU	12.00	14.00
SQUASH, YELLOW,MED,1/2BU	7.00	8.00
SQUASH, GREEN,FCY,1/2BU	10.00	12.00
SQUASH, GREEN,MED,1/2BU	7.00	8.00
BEAN GREEN,BU	26.00	30.00
BEAN POLE, BU	30.00	30.00
BEAN WAX, BU	35.00	35.00
DILL,24'S	18.00	18.00
MINT,12'S	10.00	12.00
PARSNIPS ,25LBS	23.00	23.00
PARSNIPS 18-1IB	23.00	23.00
RADISHES 1/2BU	18.00	18.00
KALE,12'S	12.00	12.00
SWISS CHARD,12'S	18.00	18.00
TOMATOES GRNHSE 12 IB	20.00	20.00

**WHOLESALE CUT FLOWERS  
NEW ENGLAND GROWN**

CORNFLOWER,BNCHD 25	7.50	7.50
GERBERA,PER STEM	1.20	1.30
LILIES,PER BNCH,ASIATIC	12.00	12.50
GARDENIA,PER STEM	5.50	5.50
LISIANTHUS,BNCHD 10	16.50	16.50
PEONY,PER STEM,SMI-DBLE	2.00	2.75
SNAPDRGON,BNCHD 10	13.50	13.50
GOMPHRENA,PER BNCH	8.50	8.50
LARKSPUR,BNCHD 10	8.50	9.50

**WHOLESALE BROILER/FRYER PARTS  
NORTHEAST, PER LB.**

	Low	High
BREAST-B/S	2.20	2.20
TENDERLOINS	2.35	2.40
LEGS	.66	.67
LEG QUARTERS	.49	.50
THIGHS	.74	.75
B/S THIGHS	1.36	1.37
WINGS	1.40	1.41
LIVER,5LB TUBS	.55	.60
GIZZARDS	.75	.80

**PA LIVESTOCK SUMMARY**

Average Dressing

	Low	High
SLAUGHTER COWS:		
breakers 75-80% lean	100.00	104.75
boners 80-85% lean	96.25	100.75
lean 85-90% lean	92.75	97.25
CALVES graded bull		
No 1 95-120	251.25	294.75
No 2 95-120lbs	225.75	259.50
No 3 80-120lbs	170.75	224.25
SLAUGHTER HEIFERS		
HiCh/Prm3-4	148.00	153.50
Ch2-3	143.00	147.00
Sel1-2	137.50	141.75
SLAUGHTER STEERS.		
HiCh/prm3-4	150.25	154.50
Ch2-3	146.50	149.75
Sel	143.00	145.75
SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS		
HiCh/prm2-3	132.50	135.00
Ch2-3	127.00	130.00
Sel2-3	122.50	125.75
VEALERS	41.50	77.75
SLAUGHTER LAMBS: ch/pr 2-3		
40-60lbs	190.00	194.00
50-60lb	182.00	208.00
60-80lbs	n/a	
80-110lbs	181.00	200.00
SLAUGHTER EWES: good 2-3		
80-120 lbs	62.00	74.00
120-160lbs	54.00	62.00
Bucks		
150-200lbs	65.00	82.00
200-250lbs	54.00	74.00
SLAUGHTER GOATS: Sel.1, by head, est.		
20-40lb	n/a	
40-60lb	132.00	152.00
60-80lb	174.00	205.00
80-100lb	180.00	195.00
Nannies/Does: 100-110lbs	182.00	202.00
130-160lbs	180.00	212.00
Bucks/Billies: 130-150lbs	225.00	285.00
150-190lbs	225.00	290.00

**NORTHEAST EGG PRICES USDA**

Per doz. Grade A and Grade A white in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.26	1.35
LARGE	1.22	1.26
MEDIUM	.91	.93

**NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS**

Per doz. Grade A brown egg in carton delivered store door. (Range)

XTRA LARGE	1.57	1.67
LARGE	1.50	1.62
MEDIUM	1.27	1.36

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**DoAg Animal Control Officer Nancy Jarvis leads one of two horses seized in Fairfield County last week to a trailer that took them to the agency's rehabilitation facility in Niantic.**

## INVESTIGATING HORSE-NEGLECT CASES

## A COMPLICATED, SENSITIVE TASK

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The horses were found in a hard dirt paddock with little hay available and water buckets that were filled with algae and floating pieces of wood.

Their stalls in an adjacent barn were packed with several inches of manure. Connors described them as being "basically skeletons with skin."

Said Jarvis: "Those horses were in imminent danger. I just wish I could have gotten access to them sooner."

But achieving that access can be more complicated than it may seem. Even if a complaint of suspected neglect has been filed, an owner can refuse to allow an animal-control officer or a police officer to inspect their property without a court-ordered search warrant.

Gathering enough evidence for a search-and-seizure warrant, however, is difficult without a first-hand visit.

"We can't just open a barn door and walk in like some people may think," said Connors.

Once a horse is seized, it is taken to DoAg's Large Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Facility in Niantic, where they are examined by a veterinarian. The results of that exam often determine whether charges of animal neglect or cruelty are filed against the owner.

The relevant section of state criminal statutes allows charges to be brought against an owner who "...fails to supply any such animal with wholesome air, food and water."

The veterinarian's exam is crucial to determine if the horse has truly been neglected, or if it is underweight because of other factors such as a disease that is causing a lack of nutrient absorption.

For a first offense, the maximum penalty upon conviction is one year in prison and/or a \$1,000 fine. Subsequent offenses are considered a felony that carries up to five years in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.

Owners who have their animals seized may also appeal in Superior Court to get them back, and it is not uncommon for them to do so. Horses that are put in the permanent custody of DoAg may be adopted through its Second Chance program or sold at UConn's annual spring horse auction.

The two horses recently seized in Fairfield County, named Chinook and Cheyenne, are still in fragile health as their daily feed is slowly increased at DoAg's Niantic facility. They are each being given slightly less than a pound of grain per day, along with a small amount of hay.

"If you feed them too much too soon you can kill them," Jarvis said. "They have a long way to go, but so far so good."

Jarvis is hoping they achieve the turnaround that a former resident of the Niantic facility, Blackie, did after being seized in 2011 from a farm in Easton. DoAg took five of the more than 100 horses living at the farm.

Part of the evidence in the case was a video shot by a private citizen visiting the farm that showed an emaciated Blackie limping and searching for food in his paddock. He had such difficulty breathing that his nostrils had become grotesquely enlarged.

The horse's owner was charged with animal cruelty and was eventually placed in a court program for first-time offenders.

DoAg Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky said the case is an example of how citizens are an invaluable tool in making the agency aware of cases of suspected abuse.

"The public is unquestionably our best eyes and ears in these situations," Reviczky said. "Anyone who suspects an animal is being mistreated should never hesitate to call us."

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**INVESTIGATING HORSE-NEGLECT CASES  
A COMPLICATED, SENSITIVE TASK  
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Blackie not only fully recovered in Niantic but was later adopted by a woman in New Jersey, where Jarvis said he is thriving.

"I wish every one of these cases could turn out like that," Jarvis said. "She's given that horse absolutely everything he needs."

**Cases of suspected animal neglect  
can be reported to the Dept. of Agriculture's  
Animal Control Division at 860-713-2506**



**Blackie, a gelding Quarter Horse, was seized from an Easton farm in 2011 (above) after a complaint from a visitor to the farm who provided DoAg animal control officers with a video that showed the horse underweight and having trouble walking and breathing through inflamed nostrils.**

**Blackie was taken to DoAg's large animal rehabilitation facility in Niantic (left) where he recovered before being adopted and moved to New Jersey.**

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**Print subscriptions expire Dec. 31, 2015.**

**VOL. XCIV, No. 28, July 16, 2014**

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