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York Police And OSPCA Bust Alleged Cock Fighting Ring

Wednesday February 18, 2009
CityNews.ca Staff

The Ontario SPCA and York Regional Police have broken up an alleged cock-fighting ring at a farm in East Gwillimbury, seizing 74 fighting roosters, which were subsequently euthanized, and charging 70 people.

"On the heels of the Michael Vick dog fighting case, it is disappointing to continue to see examples of blood sport operations. It is a truly heinous crime, involving unimaginable cruelty," says Chief Inspector for the Ontario SPCA, Hugh Coghill.

"It can be hoped that similar crackdowns will help reduce the amount of illegal activity taking place and help eliminate this vicious practice."

Police were tipped off about suspicious activity on Saturday, February 14th. Upon arrival the next day, they allege they found evidence of cock fighting, including several dead and live roosters.

"This animal is dying a horrific death. A violent and lingering death, and even the winner usually dies of its injuries," explains Kristin Williams, OSPCA.

"This is not an uncommon occurrence. We have seen a dozen cases in the last ten years involving dogfighting or cock-fighting."

Everyone in attendance was arrested, but the alleged organizers are facing the most serious charges. They have been identified as Danilo Patawaran, 52, and Deanna Patawaran, 46, both of East Gwillimbury.

The suspects are facing numerous charges including Injuring or Endangering Animals, and Keeping a Betting House.

"I was disturbed and disgusted by it. I have been in policing for 25 years and I have never come across anything similar," adds Det. Sgt. Dieter Boenheim.

File Photo, RAUL ARBOLEDA, Getty Images.

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