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FARM PROBE: Autopsies scheduled for some Carcasses removed

Nicole O'reilly
Sun Media

April 15, 2008

PRINCETON -- An anonymous call weeks ago to an animal-welfare agency, about the farm where dozens of dead cattle were found last week, was unclear, the agency says.

More than 50 cows were found dead, and at least 60 more in poor condition, when investigators descended on the Princeton-area farm of John Beulenkamp last Friday.

But a spokesperson for the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) said yesterday the initial tip to the agency was vague.

"The society did receive an anonymous call three weeks ago, but there was not enough information," said Kristin Williams of the OSPCA.

"It was not even enough



Farmer John Beulenkamp watches the carcass of one of his dead cows being loaded onto a truck yesterday morning at his Princeton-area farm. (ELLIOT FERGUSON/Sun



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information to locate the property, let alone obtain a (search) warrant."

Media)

A more detailed tip, which led officers to the site, came "shortly before" they arrived at the farm Friday, she said.

The society did receive an anonymous call three weeks ago . . . It was not even enough information to locate the property, let alone obtain a (search) warrant." -- Kristin Williams of the OSPCA.

Some neighbours had complained the OSPCA was late to act, after learning of the discovery of carcasses and other cows in poor shape. Animal bones were also found.

It's unclear how many cows died over the last three weeks.

The initial search was done by an OSPCA officer and a representative of Ontario's Agriculture Ministry.

Oxford Community police were later called for help.

Mike Draperture, a ministry investigator, was back on the farm along Oxford Road 2 yesterday to help with the removal of cattle carcasses.

Beulenkamp was briefly visible, watching the dead animals being winched into a dump truck belonging to Atwood Pet Food Ltd., a licensed deadstock operator.

Williams said the OSPCA has also been at the site regularly since Friday, including to deliver fresh hay to cattle.

The visits have also been to ensure Beulenkamp makes requested changes. The conditions imposed by the OSPCA include proper nutrition and sanitation for the cows.

Beulenkamp has said the cattle deaths were the result of bloody scours, not neglect.

Officials are awaiting a veterinarian's report to determine whether the cattle died of malnourishment or disease.

The OSPCA wants an animal autopsy done on some carcasses, Williams said.

Beulenkamp hasn't been charged in the animal deaths, nor for not disposing of the carcasses within 48 hours.

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On the farm is a burnt farmhouse and deteriorating old barns and equipment.


John Van Dorp of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture drove by the site on the weekend to check it out.

The beef industry, like many agricultural sectors, is facing hard times, he said.

But that's no excuse to allow dozens of animals to die. "Disease is always an expensive thing to deal with," he said.

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Walk on beach turns into tragedy (Aug. 11, 2009)
A Huron County woman and her constant canine companion are dead after being struck by lightning

The World Outdoors

Giant moths sport spectacular colours (Aug. 8, 2009)
Late July and into August is the time the giant moths begin to hatch from their cocoons that have overwintered from the year before.

Wonderful sounds, sights at the cottage (Jul. 25, 2009)
It was pleasant to hear our summer resident song sparrow singing its heart out at our Grand Bend cottage last week.

Hope growing for Kirtlands (Jul. 18, 2009)
There is the possibility of great news for a very endangered bird that nested two years ago out of its normal range -- outside the west boundary

Pets and animals

Local rescue efforts feted (Aug. 10, 2009)
A volunteer group in London-St. Thomas that rescues dogs from pounds, puppy mills and elsewhere has been saluted for its efforts by animal lovers.

Chatham shelter overrun with dogs (Aug. 8, 2009)
CHATHAM -- The local Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has many dogs needing a loving home this summer.

Coyotes an 'invasive species' that must be removed, councillor argues (Aug. 1, 2009)
SARNIA -- A city councillor says the cat-killing coyotes that have moved into Sarnia are an "invasive