



**SD ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD**

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**ANIMAL WELFARE INVESTIGATION REPORT**

Case # 20160908

Date of Complaint: 9/8/2016 Complaint Rec'd By: Reenders Time Rec'd: 1:27pm

Complaint Filed By: Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: PO Box 492, Dupree, SD 57623  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Accused Party: Name: Karen Sussman (ISPMB)  
Address: PO Box 55, Lantry, SL  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ cell \_\_\_\_\_

Location: About 7 miles east of Dupree south side of Hwy 212  
Species: Equine

Nature of Complaint: Inadequate feed. Horses have had no hay for 1 month and many are thin.

Assigned To: AIB Agent Name: Dr. Marc Hammrich

Date & Time Assigned: 9/8/2016 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

County Sheriff: Name Dewey - Les Mayor Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Findings & Actions Taken:

9/14/16 Sheriff Mayor and I, Dr. Marc Hammrich, arrived at approximately 11:00 am for an unannounced inspection of the facilities. We immediately contacted Karen Sussman at her residence and informed her of the complaint of inadequate feed and no hay at the facility. Ms. Sussman acknowledged that they were having problems with donations and were struggling, but she said that the horses were getting fed. Karen agreed to show us around the premises.

Large group east of house - 150 + head in a drylot pen. Immediately apparent was the lack of feed in the pen and the majority of the horses nosing through the dried manure looking for remaining hay to eat from the last feeding which was scant to non-existent. Several horses had excessively long hooves in need of trimming. A quick survey of this group showed a number of very thin and thin animals (Body Condition Score 2/3) that were in need of additional care. (Using the Heineke Body Condition Score scale, horses are scored from 1 to 9 with a score of 1 being emaciated and a score of 9 being morbidly obese.) One very thin, weak foal had a difficult time standing. Karen said that

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4TH CIRCUIT CLERK OF COURT

By \_\_\_\_\_

the foal had been grafted onto another mare but she agreed that it needed additional care soon. Ms. Sussman pointed out that last year's manure had been removed from the pens since my last visit in March. Another concern for this group is that the numbers in this "herd" continue to grow by natural breeding but space is limited and is not being adjusted accordingly.

"Katnip" group north of road - this similar sized group of horses was also without feed and many appeared very hungry as well searching the ground for feed and in some cases eating manure. Also observed were a number of thin/very thin horses in the group. Many of this year's foals have rough hair coats and appear thin and poor-doing. Several horses again were identified with long hooves in need of trimming. The pasture ground they are kept in is near black from overgrazing and lack of rain. Drinking water is adequate. The tree line in the pasture appears mostly dead from overuse of the area and provides minimal shelter from the elements.

"White Sands" group south of the buildings - reportedly a larger group of horses (approx. 200) kept in a small pasture. On inspection, the horses were eating on approximately 2 large round bales of alfalfa/grass hay that had been rolled out for them this morning. Many more animals in this group are thin/very thin with 4 identified as emaciated (BCS 1) on the walk through. The horses were crowding the water tank which does not appear to be of sufficient size or working condition to handle the demand for peak usage for the group.

"Gila" group a couple miles south of premises - the grass in this pasture had been grazed down severely and was also home to a very large prairie dog town. No supplemental feed was present and the horses were constantly moving in search of grass. The body condition of the horses in this group was better than the previous groups but still had several in the 2/3 range. One decomposed adult horse carcass was observed as well as one adult male with a penile injury that had not received adequate veterinary care. Karen said that they normally began supplementing this herd around Sept. 1st, but this had not been started yet. Also observed was a burial pit that contained 25 + carcasses. These were in various stages of decomposition reportedly accumulating over the last several years with some newer carcasses present (4-5 hd). Proper carcass disposal methods were not being followed and Ms. Sussman was advised of this.

Also observed during the inspection were several smaller groups of horses (5-20 hd) that had been sorted from the other herds in the past because of injuries, social problems, and/or for adoption purposes. These groups had adequate feed, water, and shelter. Some contained thinner horses that had been sorted for extra feeding. Several also had long hooves that needed attention. A hospital pen was maintained in the barn with horses receiving grain and extra shelter.

Overall, a large number of horses were observed in a short period of time and it was impossible to get an exact number and body condition of each individual animal on this visit. However, the overall condition of the herd has declined significantly since my last visit in March. Many healthy, well-conditioned animals observed in March are now in the very thin to thin category, with most of those being present in the "White Sands" herd. It appears that overall 10% or more of the observed horses in the larger herds are body condition score 1-3 (emaciated to thin) and are at risk for not surviving the winter season as currently managed. Only 2 large round extra bales of feed were present upon arrival. Karen had procured enough feed for the day's needs but she reported at that point, she did not have funds to purchase tomorrow's feed let alone future needs. She was confident that funds would be available for tomorrow's hay. Based on the decline of body condition of many in the herd, it appears that inadequate feed was available

frequently in the recent past. Thin horses were not being pulled from the herds in sufficient numbers for needed extra care and supplementation.

According to SDCL 40-1-2.3, neglect is defined as the failure to provide food, water, protection from the elements, adequate sanitation, adequate facilities or care generally considered to be standard and accepted for an animal's health and well being ... Many criteria of neglect have been identified. As reported earlier, adequate feed does not appear to have been available in the past and assurances for the future are in doubt. A prudent owner would put in hay reserves in anticipation of the winter season, but funds apparently are not available to do this at this time. Weather events can and do occur frequently in the early winter months which would prevent all feed delivery options and that could result in a critical situation and jeopardize the well-being of the entire herd. Hay procurement needs to be completed immediately. Many animals are not receiving adequate hoof care. Ownership does not appear to have the means, money, labor, and facilities to support and manage a population of animals this size and does not appear to have adequate plans to assure the future of this herd. Based on my findings as outlined in this report, it is my determination that animal neglect is present at this facility.

Before leaving the site, Sheriff Mayor agreed to stop back daily at the facility to confirm that feed was available for the horses until further arrangements were made.

- Neglect
- Inhumane
- Adequate

Signature: Marc A. Hammrich, DVM

Date: 9/15/16

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Date Case Closed: \_\_\_\_\_