



St. Clair County Animal Control

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FROM: St. Clair County Animal Control

DATE: November 22, 2024 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Director Melissa Miller 810-984-3155 or animalcontrol@stclaircounty.org

Executive Director of Farm Animal Rescue Mission (FARM) Charged with felony abandonment /cruelty/neglect of more than 25 animals.

Cottrellville Township, St. Clair County–

On November 16, 2024, a warrant for the arrest of Dustin Roberts, age 40, Executive Director of Farm Animal Rescue Mission, was issued for felony abandonment, cruelty and neglect of more than 25 animals.

On April 8, Roberts surrendered over 84 animals into the care of St. Clair County Animal Control (SCCAC) when presented with a search warrant. Roberts was the subject of an alleged cruelty-neglect and abandonment investigation regarding the animals in FARM's care.

Complaints regarding intermittent care of the animals at Farm Animal Rescue Mission Sanctuary began an investigation on March 22, 2024. Findings from on-site observations on April 5, 2024 discovered approximately 23 pot-belly pigs, 4 market hogs, 8 sheep, 19 goats, 2 zebu cows and over 30 free-range fowl in inadequate conditions; many of the paddocks with deep mud and no food or potable water available for the animals.

A search warrant was executed April 8, 2024. SCCAC was accompanied by Dr. Shirlene Cece, Director of Veterinary Forensics at Michigan Humane and an Animal Cruelty Investigator from Michigan Humane. It was determined by both St. Clair County Animal Control Officers and the Michigan Humane team that the conditions and lack of care met the criteria to be inadequate for livestock and other farm animals.

"We are so thankful for the collaboration with Michigan Humane and subsequent assistance from Abraham Ranch and Barn Sanctuary for their support and species specialists to aid these animals," says Director Melissa Miller of St. Clair County Animal Control. "Paws For The Cause Feral Cat Rescue volunteers were invaluable in ensuring daily care, treatment, socialization, enrichment, and transportation of these animals to their new homes during this seven month endeavor."

An additional veterinarian and handling team led by SCCAC assessed the animals on April 9, 2024 for the purpose of diagnostics, treatment and re-feeding plans, hoof-care and additional assessment plans. "Due to lack of records, we had to ensure animals were tested for contagions and were healthy prior to being placed," Miller said. She went on to say, "This was a massive undertaking due to the number of species and advanced medical concerns requiring both sheltering-in-place and emergency vetting at Michigan State University Veterinary Medical Center. The lack of care is especially concerning, as Mr. Robert's non-profit was supposed to be a dedicated, life-long sanctuary for special needs farm animals."

St. Clair County Animal Control urges anyone aware of animal collecting, cruelty, or neglect to report the conditions to [810.984.3155](tel:810.984.3155) or animalcontrol@stclaircounty.org