



Rock County Attorney Declines to Prosecute Christensen Farms with Animal Cruelty Following Last Chance for Animals' Investigation

Decision highlights need for law enforcement training in animal cruelty cases

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN, October 7, 2015 – The Rock County Attorney's office declined to charge Christensen Farms management and employees with cruelty to animals following a Last Chance for Animals (LCA) undercover investigation. The investigation documented workers dragging, slapping, kicking, and stabbing downed sows with pens; workers improperly euthanizing injured sows and piglets; and management neglecting pigs suffering from debilitating illness and injuries for periods as long as ten weeks. Christensen Farms is the fourth largest pork producer in the nation and major retailers, including Walmart, sell its products across the U.S.

Following the investigation, LCA submitted a criminal complaint to the Rock County Sheriff's Office detailing 18 incidents of animal cruelty, 17 incidents of animal mistreatment by neglect and one incident of animal mistreatment by deprivation.

After receiving LCA's complaint, the Sheriff's Office contacted the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, who declined to provide the Office with a veterinarian to inspect the farm, and informed the company that they were under investigation.

"When Christensen Farms was tipped off, they immediately cleaned house and killed every sick and neglected sow in their barn," said Adam Wilson, director of investigations for LCA. "The Rock County Attorney's decision highlights the need for law enforcement training in animal cruelty cases, as well as the need to appoint special prosecutors."

An animal cruelty conviction for farm animal abuse in Minnesota carries a maximum penalty of 90 days imprisonment and/or a \$1,000 fine for a first offense. Felony provisions are limited to pets and service animals.

"The continual deprioritization of animal cruelty cases by law enforcement is detrimental to animal protection," said Zeynep Graves, Investigative Legal Counsel for LCA. "Rock County Attorney's failure to enforce the only laws that protect animals on farms does great disservice to the animals and the citizens of Minnesota."

For more information about the investigation, including broadcast-quality high definition photos and video, visit www.factoryfarm360.org.

Last Chance for Animals (LCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating animal exploitation through education, investigations, legislation, and public awareness campaigns. Since its formation in 1984, LCA has succeeded as one of the nation's pioneer animal advocacy organizations. Working internationally, LCA's Sam Simon Special Investigations Unit documents abuse in research labs, puppy mills, factory farms, and the entertainment industry, and works with prosecutors to enforce animal cruelty laws. LCA's educational and public outreach programs have empowered the public to make positive changes for the animals in their own communities. For more information please visit <http://www.lcanimal.org/>.

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