



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Todd P. Haymore
Commissioner

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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December 16, 2009

Officer Sandy Solar
Nelson County Animal Control
P.O. Box 277
Lovingston, VA 22949

Dear Officer Solar,

This letter is a summary of my professional observations regarding the animals belonging to Mr. Ralph Glatt, owner of Black Eagle Farm, located at 596 Martin Ln. Piney River, Virginia on December 16, 2009. This site visit was conducted in response to your request for assistance with an inspection of this facility following receipt of numerous complaints regarding this facility by yourself as well as our office.

We arrived on the premises at approximately 10:30 AM present at that time were you, your supervisor Ray Uttaro, Mr. Ralph Glatt, the farm manager John Dobbs, an intern, farm assistant, and myself. At the time of our inspection there were approximately 10 adult Great Pyrenees and two puppies present on the property, as well as approximately 25,000 laying hens, 25 goats, a few sheep, 100 pigs, and a herd of approximately 85 cows. During the inspection we were unable to locate 3 of the working dogs. One dog, which was of concern, based on pictures submitted by a complainant was one of these dogs. This grey and white Great Pyrenees is to be located and confined as soon as possible so that animal control can observe the animal in order to determine if more immediate intervention is needed for this dog.

Inspection of the companion animals (Great Pyrenees) and the environment in which they were housed revealed that Mr. Glatt was not providing all the companion animals in his care with the required provisions of Sections 3.2-6503 of the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Care laws. Specifically, the following violations were observed:

Adequate Feed

Adequate feed means "access to and the provision of food that is of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain each animal in good health; is accessible to

each animal; is prepared so as to permit ease of consumption for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal; is provided in a clean and sanitary manner; is placed so as to minimize contamination by excrement and pests; and is provided at suitable intervals for the species, age, and condition of the animal, but at least once daily, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species.”

Adequate feed was not being provided for the 7 adult working or guardian dogs as they were being fed a diet of raw pork or raw beef. Feeding raw meat does not providing the food in a clean or sanitary manner as it could contain pathogenic (bacterial) contaminants. This diet is also unbalanced and therefore not of sufficient nutritive value to maintain each dog in good health. As I was unable to perform a physical exam on any of the working dogs due to the fact that they were not socialized it is my recommendation that the farm works with a licensed veterinarian to sedate the dogs so that each dog can have a through physical examination completed as well as any treatments recommended by the veterinarian. The farm should also work with their veterinarian to assess the dog's diet and place them on the most appropriate diet for their needs as determined by the veterinarian.

Adequate feed was not being provided for some the owner's personal pets as well. One adult female was found to be underweight and Body Conditioned Scored (BCS) at a 3/9 while her two offspring, contained within the same enclosure, were each found to be slightly thin and BCS at a 4/9. The ideal BCS is 5 out of 9. A BCS of 1 out of 9 is indicative of a severely emaciated animal, while a BCS of 9 is indicative of a severely obese animal. A low BCS is most commonly associated with anorexia (resulting from either an underlying disease process or lack of total feed provided) or malnutrition both of which are a direct and immediate treat to the health and life of the animal. Malnutrition means a lack of proper nutrition; inadequate or unbalanced nutrition. Similar metabolic changes occur with malnutrition as in starvation. These include: ketosis, loss of body weight and muscle, lowered metabolic rate, fall in body temperature, reduced heart rate, reduced respiration rate, reduced sexual activity, and increased risk of infection or infectious disease.

The owner reported that the older female was thinner because the other two dogs prevented her from readily gaining access to the feed. Therefore, she would need to be separated when fed as the Code of Virginia requires that the food is accessible to each animal within the enclosure and is provided in sufficient quantity to maintain each animal in good health. I would also recommend that these dogs to be fully evaluated by a licensed veterinarian, as underlying disease processes can also lead to weight loss. Any treatments recommended by the veterinarian should be performed. The veterinarian should also assess the appropriateness of these dogs's diet as well.

Veterinary Care

It appears that veterinary care was not being provided as needed in order to prevent suffering, impairment of health, disease progression, or disease transmission as some of the dogs were thin and none of the dogs had a current and valid rabies vaccine.

Inspection of the agricultural animals and the environment in which they were housed revealed that Mr. Glatt was not providing all the agricultural animals in his care with the required provisions of Sections 3.2-6570 of the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Care laws. Specifically, the following violations were observed:

Necessary Feed

It appears that the flock of 25,000 free-range laying hens was not being provided with necessary feed as a few birds from each house were found to be extremely thin to emaciated as determined by palpating of the protuberance of the birds keel bone and size of their breast muscles. It was reported by you that the birds were without food for 7 days at the beginning of November and again without food for 5 days at the beginning of December. The farm manager also stated during the inspection that the birds underwent a forced molting 5 weeks ago and at this time they were without food for 2 weeks. Currently, the hens were being fed a diet of cracked corn mixed with a complete feed as they were being slowly weaned over from cracked corn to a complete feed. The hens were not currently laying but a few of the eggs being produced appeared to be of adequate quality, however, a few rough shells were noted. It appeared that mortality rate was higher than reported as in one small area of one house I observed at least 8 carcasses and only 1 deceased chicken was recorded for that day. Accuracy of records was discussed and the barn manager was to discuss these concerns with the workers in order to ensure accurate recording.

It was also noted at the time of our inspection that the goats and sheep only had access to moldy hay. The barn manager stated that it would be addressed that day and that they hay would be replaced within the enclosure.

Emergency Veterinary Treatment

Emergency veterinary treatment "means veterinary treatment to stabilize a life-threatening condition, alleviate suffering, prevent further disease transmission, or prevent further disease progression." Veterinary treatment "means treatment by or on the order of a duly licensed veterinarian."

It appeared that not all of the animals were being provided with emergency veterinary treatment as the farm did not have a current working relationship with a licensed agricultural veterinarian. A few of the goats and one ewe were observed to be noticeably lame and required emergency veterinary treatment. One buck was found to be emaciated and required emergency veterinary treatment. It was reported that this goat was not responding to treatment and would be humanely euthanized that day.

My current recommendations are as follows:

- 1.) Mr. Glatt should immediately provide adequate feed for all the companion animals in his charge.
- 2.) Mr. Glatt should provide veterinary care as needed for all the companion animals in his charge and have his dogs evaluated and treated as deemed necessary by a licensed veterinarian within 1-2 weeks.
- 3.) Mr. Glatt should have his laying flock evaluated and placed on a re-feeding program by a licensed veterinarian within 3 days.
- 4.) Mr. Glatt should immediately provide necessary food and emergency veterinary care as needed for all animals in his charge.
- 5.) Mr. Glatt should keep records of all feed and provide them as requested to animal control.
- 6.) Animal control should continue to perform unannounced inspections to ensure that adequate and necessary care is being provided to these animals on a routine basis.

This concludes my initial assessment of the animals belonging to Mr. Glatt. If you have any questions regarding our findings and recommendations, or require additional assistance, please feel free to contact the Office of Animal Care and Health Policies.

Sincerely,



Rachel M. Touroo, DVM
Staff Veterinarian for Animal Care
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services