

St. Lucie County Makes Headlines for Animal Cruelty

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Fort Pierce has made headlines for one of the most severe cases of animal cruelty in years. St. Lucie County animal control officers on Monday were investigating the health of over 100 animals at the Sanctuary Animal Refuge in Western St. Lucie County.

Officials were called to the property after an argument erupted between Palena Dorsey, the owner of Sanctuary Animal Refuge, and Jay Apicella, executive director of the Dogs & Cats Forever shelter in Fort Pierce.

When deputies arrived to mitigate the argument between Apicella and Dorsey, they immediately called animal control officials when they witnessed the conditions the animals were kept in. Apicella was able to rescue ten dogs from the property.

According to an article in WPTV News, about 35 cats and nearly 160 dogs – including a pack of wolves – were found at the refuge. There were no litter boxes and only small amounts of food and water. Dorsey had left the care of all of the animals to only two employees.

“This is absolutely the worst case of hoarding and neglect of dogs and cats we’ve seen in the longest time,” said David Robertson, operations manager with the Humane Society of St. Lucie County.

Investigators are hoping to transfer the animals to other care facilities today and the owner is expected to meet with Saint Lucie Animal Control soon.

Palm Beach County Ordinance

Palm Beach County commissioners have passed a county ordinance that changes the regulations regarding

the care of animals. Dogs can no longer be left tied up or put in pens smaller than 80 square feet when left out doors. Pet stores must now disclose the medical histories and birthplaces of individual animals. Guard dogs now must be licensed and stored in cages of a certain size.

Because of these new regulations, several [animal cruelty cases](#) have been appearing more and more prevalently in the news.

Animal Cruelty Defense

If you have been [charged with animal cruelty](#) due to the new regulations passed, you need to speak with a criminal defense lawyer immediately. The only way to avoid serious consequences related to your charges is to consult a [criminal defense lawyer](#). Criminal defense lawyers have a clearer understanding of the legislation that has been passed recently and can help you build a strong case for yourself.

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