

Columbia County Sheriff's deputies today executed a search warrant on properties controlled by a South Columbia County rancher under suspicion of Animal Neglect. Dozens of cattle were seized as part of a joint operation conducted by the Sheriff's Office and the Oregon Humane Society. The exact number of animals seized is yet to be determined.

Deputies served the search warrant on William F. Holdner, 86, Warren, who was convicted in March of pollution charges stemming from his cattle ranching operation. Humane Society agents also cited Holdner for Animal Neglect last November.

"We have an ongoing understanding with the Oregon Humane Society whose agents handle most of the animal abuse complaints in Columbia County that are not associated with dogs. In this case, Humane Society agents enlisted our help in investigating these crimes and executing the search warrant," said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson. "Our efforts were greatly helped by the knowledgeable OHS staff, who provided the expertise necessary to develop the probable cause for this warrant, who, as well, assisted us in identifying the cattle requiring immediate intervention."

In addition to the help of the Humane Society, the Sheriff's Office also received the assistance of the Oregon State Police, and the Scappoose and Vernonia Police Departments in executing the warrant. The Sheriff's Office also relied on a number of volunteers in gathering the cattle and transporting them to an offsite location designed to provide for their care.

The search warrant was a collaborative effort between the Sheriff's Office, the Oregon Humane Society(OHS), the Columbia County District Attorney's Office and the Board of County Commissioners--the latter of which needed to take action on behalf of the county to address the care and feeding of the cattle for a protracted amount of time.

Through an agreement with the OHS, the cost of the care for the herd will be reimbursed through OHS funding. The Sheriff's Office developed probable cause of animal neglect after reviewing the OHS investigation. The warrant was served on Mr. Holdner at his residence in Warren (32456 Viewcrest Drive) just after 7:00 a.m. Subsequent locations where the warrant was executed included the following addresses in Scappoose: 34109 Johnson Landing Road and 30754 Dutch Canyon Road. The Sheriff's Office and its partner agencies provided security at the locations where the animals were seized and relied on the knowledge of veterinarians in identifying which animals to seize.

Those animals showing clear signs of neglect according to the veterinarians were seized and transported to a location identified earlier in the week where the animals could be cared for and nursed back to health.