



Starving Horses Found In SW Miami-Dade

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Eleven starving horses, found in SW Miami-Dade, have been taken to the South Florida SPCA farm in Hialeah. (Source: CBS4)

SW MIAMI-DADE (CBSMiami) – Nearly a dozen emaciated horses, found in southwest Miami-Dade Sunday afternoon, have been taken to the South Florida Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) farm in Hialeah.

The SPCA credits a call from “an alert citizen” and said without the call, the situation could have even been worse.

Richard Couto of the Animal Recovery Mission is calling the criminals in this case “monsters.”

“Monsters,” he said. “The people that did this are lower than pond scum. They are nasty, nasty people who belong in prison. And there is such a thing as karma. The people who did this will be found and prosecuted.” The eleven horses were found in the same area where dozens of horses have been found emaciated or slaughtered in recent months.

In addition to those rescued, the SPCA found seven dead horses which appear to have died of starvation and dehydration. One of the dead horses was a former race horse. Farm shelter workers say the horses in their care present some special challenges.

“A couple of the horses appear to be pregnant, two of them appear to be pretty far along,” said Laurie Waggoner from the SPCA. “When they haven’t had grain and they haven’t had hay, it can be pretty tricky to start re-feeding them.”

The SPCA said all of the horses that were rescued need veterinary care. They not only suffer from severe malnutrition but are lame as well. One mare is due to deliver “any day,” according to the SPCA.

Waggoner said one of the surviving horses is an older gelding. “He appears to be a thoroughbred although he is not tattooed. He looks like he might have been a thoroughbred in his younger days. They really don’t get any skinnier than this. This horse would have been dead any day because there is absolutely nothing left.”

She explained there was also a former race horse.

“This is Moon’s Treasure, he’s a former race horse. He raced just last June and last July at Calder Race Course and ended up in this condition so soon after, less than a year after, he’s in terrible, terrible condition.”

On Monday afternoon, Celia Fawkes, the Vice President of Florida TRAC which is the Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Adoptive Care program, stepped forward to care for Moon’s Treasure. She took him to her farm in Broward.

“I hate it,” she said of the animal abuse. She told CBS4’s Peter D’Oench, “It’s one reason why this program was created so people don’t do this type of thing.”

Waggoner said with the seven dead horses found on the property, this is one of the worst situations she’s ever seen and she wants to know who’s responsible.

“It would be great if we had any idea who did this, who owned the horses.”

The SPCA says it also rescued a boxer-mix dog with multiple wounds around the head and chest area. Investigators believe that the dog was being used as a “bait dog” for illegal dog fighting operations. The dog was unable to stand and was taken to Miami-Dade Animal Services for treatment.

The Miami-Dade Police Department's Agriculture Patrol is investigating.

The SPCA says it has more than 70 horses at its rescue ranch and is in "desperate need of donations from the community to offset the cost of their care."