

## Man faces felony charges after 304 animals rescued from goat farm



Hundreds of starving farm animals were rescued from a goat farm in Sunrise more than six weeks ago. Their caretaker, Kalito Jones, was arrested Sunday and charged with 17 counts of aggravated animal cruelty and seven counts of unlawful confinement of an animal.

Hundreds of starving farm animals — some trapped in their pens and near death or already dead — were rescued from a goat farm in Sunrise more than six weeks ago.

Their caretaker, Kalito Jones, was arrested Sunday and charged with 17 counts of aggravated animal cruelty and seven counts of unlawful confinement of an animal.

Jones, 61, told police he checked on more than 300 animals at the farm every day, tending to goats, cows, lambs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, peacocks and a pony.

But police and volunteers with the nonprofit group Animal Recovery Mission found dozens of animals starving and trapped in pens when they visited the property on June 28, records show.

Goats, cows and chickens were trapped in seven pens with no food or water.

One goat had died in its cage. Another goat was lying dead on a fire pit, its body partially burned. A sheep was also found dead.

In all, 17 animals — one lamb, one sheep, seven goats and eight chickens — were euthanized or died as a result of not receiving proper care, police say.

Jones, of Lehigh Acres, told police he's been the caretaker at the farm for the past seven years and checked on the animals three times a day.

He made his first appearance in court Monday morning.

His bond was set at \$255,000.

Police say they are looking for a second suspect who owned some of the animals at the farm, located within an industrial area in western Sunrise.

In late June, volunteers with the Animal Recovery Mission spent two days removing 304 animals from the farm at 10895 NW 50th St. near Hiatus Road.

“Some of the animals are very sick,” said Richard Couto, founder and lead investigator with the Animal Recovery Mission. “We may lose more.”

On June 27, the animal rescue group sent an undercover investigator to the farm after getting an anonymous tip about possible animal abuse.

The volunteer claimed he came to buy a goat. During his tour of the farm, he took photos and video of the starving animals, some so ill and malnourished they were unable to walk.

The next day, volunteers with the Animal Recovery Mission visited the farm along with police. Jones gave the rescuers consent to seize any animals that were in poor condition.

They ended up removing every single animal, including two dogs and nine puppies.

The farm animals are being treated at the rescue group's 100-acre sanctuary, where they will remain for the rest of their lives.

"The goats and sheep are in pasture and slowly learning to have a life of leisure," Couto said.

Homes have been found for seven puppies, but their parents and two siblings are still awaiting adoption at the Greater Humane Society of Miami.