

YORK REGION

Animal cruelty charges laid against owner of ponies

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

An East Gwillimbury woman faces cruelty charges after an Ontario Humane Society inspector found three ponies on her farm in severe pain with badly neglected hooves.

The hooves hadn't been trimmed for nine months to a year, according to Insp. Martin Cole, adding the \$20 procedure should be carried out every six to eight weeks.

"They (the ponies) had to shuffle around, arching their backs to shift their weight away from their feet," he said. "It's

just one of the worst cases of feet I've ever seen on an equine." In fact, the bone damage is so severe, the ponies may have to be destroyed.

Cole said a vet is trying to determine if the horses have foundered, a condition that damages and deforms the hooves and makes walking or standing excruciating.

"If they can't live a normal, comfortable life, at least walk around without pain, unfortunately the only option is to euthanize," Cole said. "But that's a bridge we don't have to cross yet."

A blacksmith is trimming the hooves every two weeks trying to reshape them to give the horses relief.

While it is normal to take one-eighth of an inch off when trimming hooves, the first time the blacksmith treated the ponies he sawed off between eight and 10 inches.

The humane society received an anonymous tip about the ponies, which range in age from seven to nine years old, on

June 30. After visiting the farm the same day, Cole ordered the woman to have the horses' hooves treated by July 7.

On July 6, he, a vet and a blacksmith returned to the farm and began what will be a six-month process of trimming the hooves. Cole said their feet may never be completely normal.

"As a horse specialist with 18 years of experience investigating cruelty reports, I have never seen such badly deformed feet," he said, adding the ponies will remain on the farm during the court proceedings.

Other than their hooves, Cole said the ponies appear healthy and were free to roam the 200-acre farm. Other animals on the farm, including goats and sheep, were well cared for.

The woman offered no explanation why she had failed to care for the ponies' hooves.

Charged is Tina Sobie, who will appear at the Newmarket courthouse July 27.



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Woodbridge man's arms crushed in accident

BY CHRISTOPHER DOURIS
Staff Writer

A Woodbridge man's arms were crushed Wednesday when he was trapped by a dry-cleaning machine that squeezes fabric softener out of clothing.

The Labour Ministry is investigating the incident at Rainbow Driers and Furnishers on Doney Crescent, in the Keele Street and Hwy. 407 area.

York Regional Police spokesperson Sgt. John Sheldon said fire, ambulance and police services were called to area and found a 55-year-old employee with both of his arms caught in a machine that rinses, dries and packages clothing.

His arms had been crushed from the wrist to the elbow.

The victim, who has not been identified, has worked for the company since January and has 10 to 15 years experience working with the equipment.

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