



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Brooksville Woman Charged with Animal Cruelty

Date: September 5, 2017

Earlier today, Animal Enforcement and District One deputies served a search warrant at 8062 B.W. Stevenson Road in Brooksville.

On 08-21-17, Animal Enforcement officer (AEO) Mandy Rowe initiated an animal cruelty investigation at this address after receiving complaints that horses located on the property were in very poor condition.

When AEO Rowe arrived on scene, she observed that all four horses were kept in a small pen on the property. After observing the horses closely, AEO Rowe determined that all of the horses were extremely malnourished and had extensive rain rot.

The owner of the horses, **Tabitha V. Rooks W/F DOB/11-02-83**, stated that her veterinarian was coming out the following week to assist her with a system to care for the animals. Through investigation AEO Rowe learned that on the date of the vet appointment, 08-28-17, Ms. Rooks cancelled the appointment without rescheduling for a later date.

On 09-05-17 at approximately 9:15 a.m., the HCSO responded back to the residence with a search warrant and a veterinarian.

The veterinarian used the Henneke Body Condition Scoring (BCS) to evaluate the horses. The BCS is a universal scoring system to rate the body fat on a horse. Ideal scores are between 4 and 6. The horses on the property scored 1, 1, 2, and 3. A score of 1 means that the horse is in poor condition, being extremely emaciated and having no fatty tissue.

All four horses were taken into custody in an attempt to rehabilitate them. One of the horses was in such poor condition that there was discussion of euthanizing the animal.

Deputy Steven George charged Rooks with four counts of Animal Cruelty. Additionally, AEO Rowe cited Rooks with several violations and will be following up with the care of the horses.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.