

## Officials meet Farm Owner

Contributed by Administrator  
Thursday, 02 July 2009  
Last Updated Monday, 27 July 2009

State and local officials again gathered at Gedalia's Company farm on the Lycette Road to assess the conditions and look for improvements on Tuesday, June 30th. With even the most basic of farm management practices being completely ignored since the beginning; so many things have gone wrong with the farm it is hard to know where to start.

Don Hoenig, VMD, State Veterinarian, Director with his assistant veterinarian, a State Humane Agent and a Veterinarian from the Animal Welfare Board, Amity ACO Hamilton, Galen York of York's Slaughterhouse, farm owner Lee Feigon, and other helpers were on hand. Also present to give guidance and advice was Lou Harris of Abraham's Goat Farm.

One wooden feeder, setting uncovered outside, is hardly adequate for over 500 goats, pouring grain on the ground is not only wasteful but expensive. Farm owner Feigon has repeatedly expressed his belief that all the goats should need is browse. The conditions inside the barn are, at best, dirty. On both sides of the barn, the floor is packed with moist manure caked hay, while the center is nearly ankle deep in urine and mud in places. Goats hop from manure island to manure island to maneuver around the barn. Broken metal stakes peek a few inches out of the manure here and there. The back of the barn is still over three feet deep with the manure and hay the goats have stood in all winter.

Despite repeated warnings to remove loose wire from the pens, State officials were not pleased to see a bunch of wire still tangled up and half buried under hay in the pasture. While pulling up the wire, they found a dead kid wrapped up in the hay and wire pile. Of the goats that came in from Texas, reports are that not one single kid born has survived. With no separation, there is no way of knowing when the does were bred, it is hard to tell who is pregnant. Does close to delivery should be separated from the general population and put in a dry comfortable pen. Once they have birthed, the doe and newborn should be placed in a small quiet pen to bond. Dropping a baby on the hard, wet, cold, muddy ground with hundreds of other does walking around is not ideal conditions. Some of Feigon's previous workers had attended a seminar on goat and sheep health, hosted by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension at Highmoor Farm in Monmouth, yet it appears none of the basic education gained was put to work in Amity.

Creating separation pens for different sized goats, isolation areas for the sick, and quarantine areas have been requested by the State Vets as far back as last October. Yesterday, the one pen that had contained the sick and blind goats was wide open and the other pen contained two dogs, tied with cable to the wall, were lying on a dirt and manure covered floor. The third dog had escaped from the pen. While yet another was dog sitting on a manure pile, tied by a cable to a wall on the opposite side of the barn.

The officials stressed to Feigon the most important thing to do is get the animals healthy and in better living conditions. The State still has not ruled out seizing the animals if the conditions do not improve.

The next evening workers did not have the money to license the farm dogs. Town Manager Frye gave them until Monday to get the dogs licensed or a summons would be issued to the farm.

Local residents are grumbling at the slowness of the case. "If it was any one of us, we'd already be in court because none of us have the money for lawyers," has been heard repeatedly.

7/2/09

"May I speak with Officer Hamilton?"

Amity's Animal Control Officer has begun receiving phone calls from out of town now concerning Gedalia's Company. Several complaints to the Houlton Humane Society prompted them to call asking about the goat farm on July 1st. Hamilton assured them the State was working on the case. Hamilton recommended that if the Humane Society has more complaints to forward them to the Animal Welfare Board; but if it concerns loose goats, then have the person call him.

At about 11:30 am this morning, a call came in asking for "Officer Hamilton".

"When they asked for Officer Hamilton I knew it had to be somebody from away," ACO Hamilton chuckled, "I didn't expect People For the Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA) to be on the other end." Hamilton declined to answer questions and referred them to the Animal Welfare Board as they are spearheading the Animal Cruelty investigation