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Rescue Groups Claim Dozens of Animals Abandoned in Donalds

By Dianne Derby

Dozens of animals left to die. That's what an Upstate animal rescue group and humane society said happened on a farm at a residential group care organization for children.

Joe Mann has been rescuing animals since he was a little boy. He's devoted his life savings to his ranch, [Big Oaks Rescue Farm](#) in Greenwood.

"I've spent close to \$400,000 out here," said Mann.

Mann claimed on August 10th he learned of dozens of animals had been abandoned at a private residential group care organization for children. That facility closed in June, according to the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Mann said the owner of the animals is Narvin Lichfield. He said in August Lichfield told him he could take home two colts, and seven horses.

"He was the first one I had permission to remove from Narvin Lichfield," said Mann.

Mann said he also rescued more than 50 sheep who were in bad shape.

"There is nothing but bone," said Mann as he rubbed his hand over the back of one of the sheep. "When we found them three couldn't even run."

We weren't able to get permission from the owner to step on the property, but Mann said it is a virtual graveyard.

"Nobody was left to take care of them," Mann said.

"It looks like the elephant graveyard where they go off to die," said the Executive Director of the Greenwood Humane Society, Karen Pettay. "It looks like animals just dropped right there."

Pettay said she helped Mann search the property for any other survivors. Pettay claimed Lichfield even showed up and acted like nothing was wrong.

"It was as if he was looking at a healthy bunch of animals and didn't know what the problem was," said Pettay.

Mann and Pettay said pictures they took on the property tell an entirely different story. They say there are pictures of the carcasses of animals they believe recently have starved to death.

The most heartbreaking case, said Mann and Pettay, a colt that passed away just after being rescued.

"(The mare) had nothing to eat that would allow her to produce milk," Mann said.

"It's something we all stood back with tears in our eyes," Pettay said. "You saw her try to clean and wake it up and she started tapping it with her hoof."

The Abbeville County Sheriff's office said they have been visiting the property every week since June 30th following an unrelated report of stolen cattle. They claimed the animals appeared to have enough food and water.

Mann and Pettay aren't buying it.

"I was in shock at how these animals must have died," Pettay said. "It's a man made disaster."

We tried to contact Narvin Lichfield by phone and e-mail but he has not returned our calls.

According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, abandonment of animals is against the law. It is a misdemeanor crime with penalties of up to a \$500 fine or 30 days in jail or both.

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