

# Abused animals found at 2 farms

Five arrested in Westport raid

Police suspect commercial use

By Brian R. Ballou  
GLOBE STAFF

Incessant animal yelps and the putrid smell of burnt trash permeated the heavily wooded Westport neighborhood, prompting residents of Shannon Drive and Jillian Way to call police, authorities said.

Late last month, officials obtained search warrants for tenant farms at 465 and 449 American Legion Highway and found numerous malnourished dogs left to wallow in their feces, cattle suffering from open wounds in rat-infested shanties, several dead calves, and other indications of animal abuse.

Police arrested five tenants and issued criminal summonses to seven other people, including two property owners.

Early yesterday, tenants John Barreira, Stacy Ourique, Eddy DeAguiar, and Horacio Viveiros, all of Fall River, were charged in Fall River District Court with animal cruelty, and scheduled to return to court on Oct. 6 for a pretrial hearing.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Westport police Detective Jeff Majewski described the scene as deplorable. "In 21 years of police work, this is the worst case of animal abuse that I have ever seen, by far."

Most of the animals are being cared for by the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

Majewski said most of those arrested know one another and are members of the same church, which he did not specify.

He also said there are other issues involved in the investigation — including evidence suggesting that farm animals were killed at the site for commerce, a violation of state regulations.

"Between the first and second visits we made, several of the animals were removed and or killed for a church feast. We found a slaughterhouse in one of the lots along with a refrigerated trailer. The scale of this operation did not look like it was for personal use."

State agencies such as the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the Massachusetts Environmental Police are investigating.

"There were so many rats, a nonstop highway of them," Me-



JODI HILTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Makael Constance, 9, and his mother, Leslie-Ann Ogisde, shopped at a farmers' market yesterday. They are participating in a program aimed at making fresh food more affordable.

## Farmers' market coupons used to push healthy eating

By Patrick G. Lee  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

After declaring that his favorite new fruits and vegetables include peaches, apples, cucumbers, and zucchinis, 9-year-old Makael Constance of Dorchester hopped down from the podium and started munching on a pint of freshly picked raspberries.

It is a habit Makael has gotten into since July, when his family enrolled in the Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program, a mostly privately funded pilot project that aims to increase access to fresh foods by providing farmers' market coupons.

At a press conference outside the Codman Square Health Center in Dorchester yesterday, Makael provided a testimonial to the program's success in changing individual habits and making farmers' market goods more affordable.

But for some Boston-area markets that have already cut prices to compete with grocery stores, low participation numbers indicate that other challenges loom.

Dozens of Bay State families are taking part in the program, which is based in community health centers in Lawrence, Holyoke, and Boston. At-risk patients receive coupons from their doctor to subsidize fresh produce, or about \$100 for a family of four. The program also tracks participating families' health outcomes — such as blood pressure, weight, and body mass index — to quantify the health benefits of increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

"I have talked about eggplants more in the last four weeks than I could have ever imagined," said Dr. Suki Tepperberg, a family physician at the Codman Square

Health Center who works with Makael and his mother, Leslie-Ann Ogisde.

The coupons supplement ongoing efforts aimed at subsidizing fresh produce, such as the Boston Bounty Bucks initiative, which matches farmers' market purchases made using SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps, for up to \$10.

In some Boston neighborhoods, such as Mattapan and East Boston, the farmers' markets take place right next to their biggest competitors: supermarket chains. Market organizers said their prices are competitive with those in grocery stores, and they have joined with local groups to get residents out of corner stores that may have fewer healthy alternatives and into farmers' markets.

Yet Mattapan is struggling to gain a stream of regular shoppers at its Saturday morning market, while East Boston's Thursday afternoon market has become a vibrant community gathering.

Last year, the Mattapan market grossed the lowest SNAP revenue in Boston, with 39 transactions from July to October. East Boston drew nearly 200 food stamp purchases in the same period, more than any other site.

Even so, Mattapan market manager Jean-Martz Vital remains optimistic about this year's turnout, which he says started with around four or five customers in mid-July and has doubled or tripled customers every week since. But he is worried about the farmers. He senses skepticism among them about the financial viability of providing fresh produce to Mattapan residents, many of whom are of Haitian descent.

"A lot of Haitian restaurants

carry fried food, so they don't think the demand is here," Vital said. "They don't think that Haitians eat vegetables."

Three farmers participate in the Mattapan market, one more than in 2009. Last week, a potential fourth farmer backed out because he did not think it would be profitable, Vital said.

But the farmers Vital has worked with have always been enthusiastic about coming back, he said. Instead of trying to recruit more farmers, Vital will focus on boosting the number of residents who shop at the market this season, which he hopes will attract more farmers.

David Dumaresq, who is based in Dracut and runs Farmer Dave's stand in East Boston, said he tailors his offerings to the cultural preferences of those who frequent a particular market. Residents of the neighborhood, which hosts the largest Latino population in the city, tend to like pipiano squash, radishes, shell beans, and a Brazilian eggplant called jilo, he said.

For some, the appetite for fresh, local foods might just be hardwired into their DNA.

Carmen Inciso, 76, came to the United States nearly 50 years ago from Colombia, where she grew up on her dad's small farm.

Last year, she visited the East Boston farmers' market every week, and she plans to do the same this season. Inciso said the habits she formed growing up in Colombia fuel her desire to seek out the freshest produce.

"In Colombia, we cooked all day," she said. "We'd go to the farm and pick things we wanted to eat for lunch."

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## New England in brief

BOSTON

### Partners donates \$40m to cut care costs

Partners HealthCare plans to donate \$40 million to help reduce health care costs for small businesses — even though the Legislature did not pass a law requiring such contributions. Partners volunteered in April to contribute the money, as part of Senate President Therese Murray's proposal to require profitable hospitals to donate \$100 million this year. She estimated that the plan would reduce health insurance premiums for small businesses by about 2.5 percent. Hospitals, however, ended up dodging the requirement. The bill agreed to by the House and Senate, and signed this week by Governor Deval Patrick, makes the payments voluntary.

WORCESTER

### Teen held in attack on assistant teacher

A 16-year-old boy accused of attacking a staff member at a Central Massachusetts school for children with emotional and behavioral challenges has been ordered held without bail. The boy, who attended the Devereux School in Rutland, is charged with assault and battery and assault with intent to rape in the alleged June 9 attack. Prosecutors allege the boy punched the assistant teacher in the head, kicked her in the ribs, and tried to undo her pants. The woman suffered a concussion, bruised ribs, and two black eyes. A judge ordered the boy held without bail pending a dangerousness hearing, the Telegram & Gazette reported. A defense lawyer says the boy is in state custody while authorities try to find an appropriate facility for him. (AP)

NORTH HERO, V.T.

### Slaughterhouse faces cruelty charges

The co-owner of a now-closed Vermont slaughterhouse has pleaded not guilty to an animal cruelty charge accusing him of excessively shocking a calf. Frank Perretta, 51, of Grand Isle was arraigned yesterday, three days after he turned himself in. Bushway Packing Inc. was shut down Oct. 30 amid allegations stemming from an undercover video, obtained by the Humane Society of the United States, showing calves being kicked and poked with electric prods. A former worker at the slaughterhouse, Christopher Gaudette, 37, of Grand Isle, has also pleaded not guilty to animal cruelty charges. (AP)

CHATHAM

### Shark sighting prompts beaches to close

A great white shark was sighted in Chatham Harbor yesterday morning, causing the town to close all harbor beaches, said Stuart Smith, Chatham's harbor master. The 14-foot shark was clearly spotted near seals about 8:30 a.m. by two people in a boat northeast of Tern Island, Smith said. Catherine Williams, a spokeswoman from the Division of Marine Fisheries, said the sighting was unconfirmed.

ENFIELD, N.H.

### 72-year-old Main Street bridge closed

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation says the Main Street bridge over Mascoma Lake in Enfield has been closed. The state says the decision to close the Shaker Bridge follows an underwater inspection that found severe corrosion in steel supports. About 1,200 vehicles use the bridge every day. The 72-year-old bridge has been on the state's red list as being in need of replacement for years. Construction on a new \$9.2 million bridge is scheduled to begin in the spring and should be finished by the end of 2012. (AP)

CONCORD, N.H.

### Death penalty critics comment to panel

A former prison warden who carried out eight executions urged a New Hampshire commission studying the death penalty not to get into the business of executions. Ron McAndrew, a former warden in Florida and Texas, said he used to be a death penalty supporter until the ghosts of the men he executed perched at the foot of his bed and he felt himself going insane. A New York Law School professor told the panel to keep the death penalty but apply it to only the worst cases. Laura Bonk of Concord, whose mother was murdered in 1989, asked the panel to repeal the death penalty in honor of her mother, who opposed it and would have turned 69 yesterday. (AP)

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