

17 March, 2017, A HERD SAVED

Please think of us today, as our SPCA Inspector Mr. Noel Usore and volunteer Lynne James, are scheduled to appear in Rusape Magistrate's court, a town about 90km from Mutare. Whether the case will be heard today is unsure as our courts are unpredictable.

In November 2016, Mutare SPCA was called to rescue a herd of 38 cattle that were corralled in a small holding pen, and left with no food or water in a heat-wave where temperatures were reaching 40 degrees. They were dying a slow, horrific death. Some had become entangled in the barbed wire fencing in their effort to escape.



Due to strict stock theft laws in Zimbabwe, no one had had the courage to set these animals free to find water and food for themselves.

Their herdsman had apparently not received his wages for some time from the new farm owner, and had abandoned his charges in protest. These animals paid the price for what amounted to a labour dispute between an employee and the absentee farm owner.

Our SPCA team did their best to aid the worst affected animals, which were literally on their knees, by providing them with water and hay. Sadly we had to euthanize one cow – it was the most humane thing to do. We made a police report the same day, and these cattle were taken into our care, under police custody. The sudden responsibility of having to care for 38 head of cattle some 55 kilometres away presented us with some serious difficulties. A farmer in the district kindly stepped in on our behalf he has been caretaking the traumatised herd ever since, pending the outcome of the criminal cruelty case, set to start today.

Food was another huge challenge because grazing was almost non-existent at the time. However, in response to an urgent appeal that we put out to our local community for assistance in cash or kind, a local feed company, PROFEEDS, contacted us and trucked down a load of quality cattle feed! The little herd were now safe, secure, watered and fed. What a feeling!

The new farm owner returned from the UK and promptly challenged us in the civil court for removing her cattle. Sadly we had not managed to remove the entire herd, as the large handsome bull simply refused to get on 'that truck'! Only last week, **some 3 months later**, have we eventually secured a court order to be allowed to remove the remaining cattle so that they can join the others in a safer healthier environment.

So, please think of Noel and Lynne today as they stand up for the rights of these cattle against the extreme cruelty that they suffered, in a land where politics can supersede law.

Thank you for your time and your interest. We will keep you updated on this now happier herd.

