

## Speaking Out for Farm Animals

by Lucy Muller, Lu@warwick.net

“One must never turn his back on life.” *Eleanor Roosevelt*

This column is about speaking up, perseverance and not necessarily our immediate area, although I have heard of a man in Wurtsboro who sounds like the same kind of rotten apple as the one in Sloansville. Not all of these columns pertain to Cragsmoor or Ellenville, because it can be about anyone, anywhere. It's about the heart. It's about good vs. evil.

“On Friday, February 4, *Catskill Animal Sanctuary* rescued 20 horses from Palomino Palace in Sloansville, New York. The rescue resulted from weeks of pressuring law enforcement agencies, who had received numerous complaints about the horrific conditions of this breeding farm dating back to October, to act on behalf of the animals. The owner, Dawn Sitors, has been charged with 20 counts of animal cruelty.

The animals, most of whom are pregnant, are recuperating at *Catskill Animal Sanctuary*. Offered warm shelter, a nutritious, healthy, and consistent diet, fresh water, a deworming program, medical attention, and plenty of TLC, the debilitated animals are quickly gaining strength and responsiveness. A new barn was also built for their rescue, thanks to a dedicated building team and the generosity of Williams Lumber, who offered the materials for the 2,000 sq. ft. barn at pennies above their cost.

When *CAS* arrived at Sitors' farm in Sloansville, NY, at the request of the State Police, they were appalled at what they saw. The horses were 100 to 400 lbs. underweight and many appeared dehydrated. Numerous pens and stalls lacked any water whatsoever. Many animals lacked shelter, while others, coated with a thick mat of dried manure, appeared never to have been let out of their stalls. Many were pregnant, and most appeared riddled with parasites and covered with a contagious skin fungus called rain rot. All of the seized animals have disfigured hooves, worms, and diarrhea.

Forty horses remain on Sitors' property without proper shelter or nutrition, and more pressure is being applied to see to it these horses also have a chance at health and contentment.

Reports of dead horses behind the property, stalls without a drop of water, a horse unable to eat for reasons two vets don't understand – there has been untold suffering on Sitors' farm. While Sitors herself is certainly at fault, the situation was intensified because people did not speak out and police were reluctant to respond. We encourage anyone suspicious of neglect or cruelty to contact law enforcement and follow up aggressively to ensure their timely response. Whether a horse or dog, a cat or a chicken (pain, suffering and deprivation do not vary species to species), any animal deserves that.”

### How You Can Help: (from the *CAS* website)

**Monetary contributions:** Our feed expenses have doubled overnight. In addition, these animals need medical treatment, hoof care, worming, and nutritional supplements. If you'd like to contribute, note “Cricket Fund” on your check.

**Fostering:** If you already have at least one horse, are set up for quarantine, and are willing to foster a needy horse who may be in foal, please contact us immediately.

**Volunteering:** If you are physically fit, love animals, and can spare a half day any day of the week, we could certainly use your help. If you've volunteered before, call Julie at 336-8447.

**In-kind donations:** We would certainly appreciate donations of Nutrena horse feed (senior, crimped oats, and/or 12% sweet feed) or gift certificates for Accord Feeds and Needs, Red Hook Agway, or the BarnYard on Route 28 in Kingston.

Luckily in this country, we have many animal shelters for dogs and cats. But it wasn't until Laurie and Gene Bauston of The Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen and California, brought farm animal suffering to our attention, that farm shelters came about. Anyway, *CAS* was founded in 2001 by Kathy Stevens and her family. I have taken a special interest, because their newsletter was so heartfelt and had such a touching story about a horse that I checked into this great place.

**Catskill Animal Sanctuary, 316 Old Stage Road, Saugerties, NY 12477, 845-336-8447**  
<http://www.casanctuary.org>


From their website:

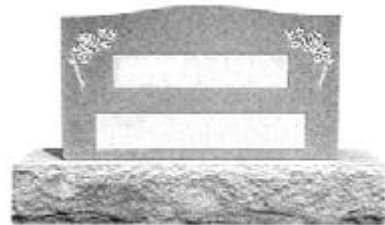
“So few speak out on behalf farm animals - animals that suffer no differently than dogs, cats, or humans. Rarely, if ever, do most of us even consider their plight. *Catskill Animal Sanctuary* serves as a refuge for these needy animals, and as a center to raise awareness of their mistreatment and its impact on all of us: animals, humans, and the environment.

In short, the mission of *CAS* is to:

- \* Provide a safe haven for abused, abandoned, and neglected horses and farm animals;
- \* To raise awareness of the treatment of these animals and its impact on all of us and our environment;
- \* To serve as an educational resource to schools, youth organizations, and other community organizations by providing innovative on-site and school-based programming.

We are open weekends, 11 to 4, April through November. Admission is free for members, \$5 for the general public. For the safety of our animals and yours, no dogs please.”

The *Catskill Sanctuary* has a wish list that is rather unusual. To see it and to consider helping, go to their site: <http://www.casanctuary.org/wish.php> (“For anyone interested, we are a non-profit and all donations are tax-deductible.”) 



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