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# Abandoned livestock often the result of an owner's lack of knowledge

By Vincent T. Davis, Staff Writer | August 21, 2017 | Updated: August 21, 2017 8:40pm

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Photo: Courtesy Photo / Animal Care Services

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IMAGE 1 OF 2

Harley the Pig is one of two roaming pigs that Animal Care Services officers picked up recently. Swine, including potbellied pigs, are illegal in San Antonio.

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Earlier this summer, a San Antonian on the far West Side was startled to see a portly brown pig in a bright red harness trotting down Boling Brook Street, trailing a lead rope. The good Samaritan corralled the piggy in his yard and called **Animal Care Services**.

A week later, a resident on the Northeast Side found a pink baby pig in her backyard on Castle Inn Drive. She called ACS, too.

More recently, two mares showing signs of neglect were discovered roaming on the far East Side off Uecker Road. A third mare was left alone on the East Side after her owner was evicted.

The sad scenes are seen all too often by ACS staff.

“You have these animals that come in that are used to interacting with people — Harley and Quinn are very friendly pigs — and they become lost or are abandoned by their owners,” said ACS spokeswoman Lisa Norwood, referring to the two found in July. “They don’t know what’s going on, they just know that they’re not home.”

The problem is often that owners don’t realize what it takes to care for livestock or poultry and aren’t aware of city ordinances regarding such animals.

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## LOCAL

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It's illegal to have any pigs within San Antonio city limits, even those called "miniature potbellied pigs." Residents are limited to three fowl and no more than two livestock animals from this list: equines, bovines, sheep, goats and llamas. That's a maximum of two total; not two of each.



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"Sometimes people get this idea, 'I live in Texas, I should have a cow, I should get a horse' and they don't fully understand the amount of care the animal is going to need, the amount of food and veterinary care the animal is going to need," Norwood said. "When there is a rise in the cost of hay, we see a rise in the number of roaming horses. Animals will get get turned out because livestock is expensive to maintain."

ACS records show the agency has brought in more than 28,000 animals since Oct. 1. The vast majority are dogs and cats, but 559 were other kinds of animals, including livestock, and there were 267 birds, including chickens.

With the recent heat wave and semi-drought conditions, "farmed animals" will become more active and move about if they don't have the care they need where they are, said Lynn Cuny, founder and president of Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation.

"If you don't have the proper shelter, food and water then you're going to go looking for it because you have to have it," Cuny said. "The weather can be an element that will dictate to

them to go seek better quarters elsewhere. And sometimes they're in a setting where they've never been particularly well contained, where the fencing is not secure and things of that nature."

Norwood said when these animals stray and become the responsibility of ACS, it's the taxpayers that pay for their upkeep. None of the owners of the pigs or horses found recently have been found.

"Because livestock is not what we normally take in, when we do bring in these animals there's an additional cost for caring for them," Norwood explained. "It's a cost we wouldn't have to take on if people would only understand the ordinance and respect the ordinance when it comes to keeping these animals in the community."

Norwood said ACS can always use donations of tack and other equipment for livestock as well as breed-specific feed needed for animals they don't usually house.

She said people must take into consideration the needs of any animal they want to bring home.

"Folks will take on animals that they're not ready for," Norwood said. "Then the animal may be abandoned. It's very sad."

ACS is working on revisions to the city's animal ordinance, including , and has had nine public meetings about the proposed changes. The next one is set for Wednesday , 6 p.m.-8 p.m. at the Dorie Miller Community Center, 2802 Martin Luther King Dr, # 2. For more information, go to <http://www.sanantonio.gov/Animal-Care/Laws-Fees/Ordinances-Laws>

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