



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **YUMA MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT TO ANIMAL CRUELTY**

PHOENIX - Matthew T. Ashby, 44, of Yuma, Ariz., pleaded guilty late last week in front of U.S. Magistrate Judge Jay R. Irwin in Yuma to two misdemeanor counts of treating a horse inhumanely after animals in his care were found without proper feed, water or medical care.

Four animals, three horses and a burro, had been placed in Ashby's care under a private maintenance and care agreement he had entered into with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in April 2006. At a recent hearing in federal court, a Yuma veterinarian testified that a privately owned horse also being maintained by Ashby had been euthanized due to its poor condition. Information about that horse, and its dead foal, led officials to the Ashby property on December 5, 2007 where it found the four BLM animals in poor health as well.

The BLM animals were immediately removed from Ashby's property and placed at RRR Ranch, a rehabilitation and recovery center in Yuma, where they all eventually recovered. Ashby was charged with violating the terms of the private maintenance and care agreement he had entered into with the Bureau of Land Management. He was also charged with treating the animals inhumanely.

The guilty plea occurred on Thursday, April 10, 2008. Sentencing is set before Judge Irwin on May 28, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. A federal conviction for each count of treating a horse inhumanely carries a maximum penalty of not more than one year in federal prison, a \$2,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Irwin will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management; the Yuma County Sheriff's Office; the Arizona Department of Agriculture, Animal Services Division; and the Humane Society of Yuma. The prosecution is being handled by Bret Alexander, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Yuma.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1114M  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-090(Ashby)

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