PRESS RELEASE

September 29, 2017

Cottonwood Man Admits Responsibility, Pleads Guilty in Straying Cattle Case

In light of the recent publicity in the community about the case against Shan Ferrier, the Shasta County District Attorney would like to take this opportunity to provide additional background information about the case and to clear up inaccuracies reported by local print media.

Today, Shan Ferrier pled guilty to all charges in the grade of an infraction. Earlier this month Mr. Ferrier rejected a complete dismissal of his case that would be earned by coming into compliance with the law – keeping his cows from straying from his property. This rejected offer did not involve any jail, fine or Mr. Ferrier having a criminal record. Mr. Ferrier’s plea was entered after the Shasta County District Attorney exercised its discretion in reducing the misdemeanor charges to infractions. The decision to reduce the case to infractions was based upon the fact that Mr. Ferrier has made attempts to prevent future incidents of straying cattle. An infraction is punishable only by a fine. An example of a typical infraction level offense is a vehicle code violation such as a citation for speeding.

The pleas stem from a March 23, 2017 incident in which he was cited by Shasta County Animal Control for allowing his cattle to stray from his property after repeated complaints by neighbors. Mr. Ferrier was cited by Shasta County Animal Control on March 23, 2017 after several neighbors reported his 2 cows had strayed from his property. On that date, an animal control officer responded to the scene, observed the cows loose, and contacted Mr. Ferrier. Mr. Ferrier told the officer that he would make sure that the animals were returned to his property. With these assurances, the officer left the scene.
Later on the evening of the March 23, the animal control officer was again dispatched to the area on a report that the cows were again loose. Upon arrival, the officer talked to neighbors who reported that the cows had again left their property and had threatened a dog. By the time the officer arrived, the cattle were no longer roaming free.

Based on the neighbor complaint, the animal control officer issued a citation to Mr. Ferrier for 2 violations of the Shasta County Code: allowing an animal to stray and allowing an animal to trespass on the property of another.

March 23 was not the first time that neighbors had complained about the straying cows. On three separate days in March 2017 (March 3, March 8, and March 21), neighbors had called law enforcement to report the cows straying from their property.

Mr. Ferrier was not cited on those previous occasions. Animal control cited Mr. Ferrier on March 23 after repeated violations and complaints from neighbors.

Following the issuance of the citation, Animal Control submitted the case to the District Attorney for a filing decision. This case was one of thousands of cases received by this office every year. The case was reviewed by a deputy district attorney, who made the decision to file the charges based upon the facts of the case. Of particular significance in the filing decision was the fact that multiple violations had occurred prior to the March 23 citation date without gaining compliance.

District Attorney Stephanie Bridgett and her staff take our responsibility to public welfare and safety seriously. This office is committed to filing only those cases in which the interests of justice and the evidence support the filing of criminal charges.