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Last of ill horses given new homes

Authorities and Tom D. Hall have been in conflict for the past few years over care of the animals.

By Andrew J. Nelson / *WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER*

GLIDDEN, Iowa — Roughly half of the 40 horses that once lived on a barren pasture south of here have been removed and given homes elsewhere.

The rest should be taken away Saturday.

It is the latest chapter in the saga of Tom D. Hall and his horses. Hall owns the 40-acre site where the horses were until this week. Authorities and Hall have been in conflict for the past few years over care of the animals.

Carroll County Attorney John Werden filed an animal rescue petition in 2008. After Hall paid a \$20,000 bond for care and feeding of the animals, they were returned to him in May 2009, according to court documents.

The county again took action in October of this year after deputies, responding to a complaint, found some of Hall's horses outside the fence of his property, and all of them appeared emaciated. On Oct. 26, District Court Judge Joel Swanson ruled the horses should be removed from the property.

An attempt to reach Hall this week was unsuccessful. He has previously declined to comment. In court in October, he described the situation as "hyped."

Hall appealed the judge's October decision but did not post a necessary bond, authorities said. Representatives from Iowa animal welfare organizations — the Des Moines-based Animal Rescue League of Iowa and Hooves & Paws Rescue of Glenwood — examined the horses and told authorities they needed to be removed before the onset of severe weather, said Sheriff Doug Bass.

Authorities allowed the groups to begin taking the animals. "With the winter coming on as it is," Bass said, "we thought it was a point of necessity."

All but two of the horses found at the pasture a month ago will get new homes. "They are all being farmed out to different organizations and to people who really wanted the animals," the sheriff said.

Two of the horses died due in part to their previous malnutrition, Bass said.

The rest of the horses appear to be doing well, he said. "When they started getting actual grass, they started bulking up," said Cheryl Koch of rural Manning, who said she has supplied salt and mineral blocks to the horses.

Werden, the county attorney, said the county was grateful for the help that has been provided.

"The people who have come forward, who have taken care of these animals who can't take care of themselves, it's a touching thing," he said.

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