

Charges Refiled Against Tiger Ranch Cat Sanctuary Owner

Linda Bruno has been charged with 574 counts of animal cruelty in conjunction with her Pennsylvania cat sanctuary.

Posted: April 10 2008 2 a.m. EDT

Hundreds of cats were seized from Tiger Ranch Cat Sanctuary in March. On Tuesday, prosecutors filed 574 counts of animal cruelty against Linda Bruno, owner of Tiger Ranch Cat Sanctuary in Frazer, Pa. The counts include 203 misdemeanor charges and 371 summary offenses, to which Bruno pleaded not guilty at her arraignment, the Valley News Dispatch (Pennsylvania) reports.

Each of the misdemeanor counts represents a cat that was either "dead on March 13, 2008, or has died since that date, or has been euthanized due to an irreversible illness or condition," according to the papers filed in court. All but five of the 371 summary offenses represent individual cats found on Bruno's property. The five remaining counts represent four horses and a goat found at the facility. In all, the charges represent the four horses, one goat and 467 cats, with some cats accounting for more than one charge.

"We believe the evidence supports the fact that a crime was committed," said Mike Manko, spokesman for the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office.

The charges were refiled after District Judge Suzanne Blaschak last week dismissed 13 previous counts of animal cruelty filed against Bruno. The judge ruled that Bruno's attorney, Ron Valasek, was not provided enough information to mount a defense against the charges.

Bruno's facility was raided last month by the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Animal welfare professionals said they found more than 400 cats suffering from conditions including severe malnutrition and dehydration, respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, and untreated abscesses, wounds, oral ulcerations, neurological diseases and circulatory system abnormalities.

If convicted, Bruno faces a fine of up to \$10,000 and jail term of up to five years for each misdemeanor count. Fines ranging from \$50 to \$750, and a jail term of up to 90 days, could come with each summary charge if she is convicted.