

Nachrichten von Oktober 2002 bis April 2003

ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
PVO 38/69

SPCA Member Centres:

Bulawayo - Chegutu - Chinhoyi - Chiredzi - Gweru - Harare - Hwange - Kadoma - Kwekwe - Marondera - Mashava - Masvingo - Mutare - Zvishavane

08 APRIL 2003

I keep hoping that the next report I write will be to let everyone know that things have taken a turn for the better. Regrettably, in this report we can only let you know that the situation has taken a further turn for the worse. Meryl and the rescue team bravely and determinedly battle on but there just does not appear to be any end in sight.

Following the mass civil action on 18 and 19 March, there have been wholesale violent acts of retribution meted out to any and all perceived government opponents. The level of brutality has left us all completely stunned and shocked.

Inevitably innocent animals are 'caught in the crossfire'. Many of you will have seen footage of the young female opposition supporter who was raped with the barrel of an automatic weapon and had her arm slashed resulting in permanent nerve damage. Despite her horrific experience, this brave soul provided information to Meryl about a dog which had been badly injured during the violent reprisals.

The rescue team recovered 'Shumba' from a house in Mabvuka, Harare. The owners had been hospitalised due to the extent of their injuries. It is reported that 8 men in army uniform arrived at their home late at night and before beating the occupants, they first beat 'Shumba', a female Collie cross who had tried to protect her owners. They beat her with rubber batons and neighbours said they had heard the dog 'screaming' during the attack. The team rescued Shumba and took her straight to a vet who reported that although completely covered in injuries, her thick coat had probably saved her from any permanent injury. She is recovering well although still not able to walk properly.

The eviction of 1000 farm workers from MDC MP Roy Bennett's farm in the Chimanimani area has also been reported in the media.

Meryl received a report from Mr Bennett that cattle on the farm had been slashed with axes. When the team arrived at the farm, they found 15 head, mainly calves and weaners (which are easy targets) that had been attacked. Most had serious gaping wounds. One young bull had a shoulder wound about 15cm deep. One weaner had received a spinal injury and could no longer walk and had to be euthanised. All other animals have been treated and are recovering.

The most distressing part of the report is that following the team's visit, the few remaining workers on the farm who co-operated with the rescue team were subjected to a vicious beating, in particular one farm guard, who had to be hospitalised, having been beaten with a truncheon encased in a metal pipe. The beating was reportedly carried out by one Joseph Mwale of the CIO and the Officer in Charge of ZRP Chimanimani. The farm worker said that he finally begged them to shoot him as he was in such unbearable pain but was told by Mwale that he had to suffer. 5 other workers received treatment at the local clinic.

These scenes are obviously becoming more and more difficult for Meryl and the team to cope with. We have reinforced the rescue team, but the emotional stress is obviously taking its toll. They battle on and we all hope and pray that we will not have to hang on too much longer. Surely the international community can no longer stand by and ignore the worsening situation.

We must also unhappily report that 5 more black rhino have been killed in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force reports that 6 black rhino were caught in poachers' snares on the Bubiya Conservancy. One was saved and one broke free with the snare still imbedded in its flesh - the remaining 4 died. The 5th rhino was reported dead at the hands of poachers on Gourlays Ranch. No further details are yet known.

As always, we strenuously commend the many wonderful people and organisations who continue to rally round us in our efforts to protect the animals of Zimbabwe. There are so many who have assisted in so many ways and we are always reluctant to name them in case we exclude any of the special people who have contributed in any way, but I am compelled to name those who have been such a tower of strength when the situation has seemed so hopeless and who have given us the encouragement and strength necessary to keep going: Organisations we must commend are the NSPCA in South Africa, IFAW, RSPCA, Vizara Ridgebacks, Zimbabwe Pet Rescue Project, WSPA, Mafikeng SPCA, the Zimbabwe Blue Cross, SPANA, Motorsport SA, the South African Animal Anti Cruelty League, Sims Black Trust, National Horse Trust, SAfm, SW Radio, the Zimbabwe Animal Support Group and the Hugg Foundation.

Individuals who need special mention are Marcelle Meredith, Chris Kuch, Val Wise, Mary Pringle, Estelle Walters, Ann Kempen, Roger Matthews, Timmy Ralfe, Sherri Williamson, Mariette van der Veer, Tracey Clarke, Beulah Schoeman, Lisa Haylett, Patricia Glyn, Nadine Da Silva, Anne Bosman, Christine Baseotto, Linda Costa, Jimmy Bass, Pat Sessi and Howard and Jane Why.

There are many other individuals, companies and organisations who have been supporting us with regular donations and kind messages of commendation or who have been disseminated our reports. In all the chaos and pressure we are working under, I know you will fully understand if we have omitted you from our messages. We thank each and every one of you. We really could not do it without you.

Should any individuals, especially ex-Zimbabweans, wish to receive copies of other reports relating to the situation in Zimbabwe, please let me know.

Best regards

Bernice

ZNSPCA UPDATE 8 MARCH 2003

This year has been incredibly hectic without any sign of letting up. Despite reports to the contrary, farm occupations and designations continue. Whilst in the area, Meryl established that 44 more Karoi and Tengwe farmers are being evicted, just at the point when their crops are reaching maturity. One family were forced off without their belongings and despite assurances by authorities that they could return to collect their possessions, were refused entrance by the invaders who said that they would set fire to their home if they returned.

The team rescued 'Bart' the Boerboel from Beatrice, for the second time. They had rescued him previously and the family had later returned to their farm but have once again been evicted. He had lost weight, not having had food or water for 3 days, but was otherwise unharmed. All cattle have been uplifted but the new occupants would not permit the removal of the Simmental bull which is injured and his condition is reported to be deteriorating. Meryl will negotiate for his release on Monday.

In Harare South area a family was physically forced off their farm despite the fact that the time period on their Section 8 notice had not expired. The farm owner's elderly wife was still in her pajamas - she was refused permission to dress and had to leave the farm as she was. Of their 4 dogs, 3 have been PTS by request. Their horses were walked off the farm without incident.

As reported earlier this year, there is an increased level of militancy accompanying the occupations. Meryl reports the presence of 'green bombers' in all areas. For the most part they have not interfered with the work of the rescue team. Meryl advises that many of them are very young (+-16) and all sporting new uniforms, which comprise of a bottle green uniform with the Zim flag on the pocket, peak cap, red epaulettes and black boots.

We are saddened to have to report that 38 head of Sable mentioned in earlier reports were sent to Saudi Arabia without our knowledge, despite assurances that this would not occur. It is believed that they will be used for game hunts. We have also received information that the Zimbabwe Wildlife Advisory Council are planning to send a further 60 of the Sable to South Africa. We have been unable to establish the destination. The Zimbabwe Wildlife Advisory Council, despite this misleading title, is a private company owned by Ed Kadzombe who has very lofty connections which places Parks and Wildlife officials in an invidious position. They have refused permission for this translocation but all indications are that it will go ahead.

Our wildlife concerns remain very high. The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force reports that a further white rhino was found shot and dehorned in Matusadona on 11 February.

In the Chiredzi Conservancy 3 tame elephants have been shot by a National Parks employee on instructions from the DA, despite the fact that there had been no reports of problem animals. These animals are from a herd of 25, including 7 babies. All had been darted, captured, kept in boma's and released, forming a herd in the Conservancy. Initially 2 animals were shot, tragically with body shots, so that both animals fled. The remains of one animal has been found - with ivory and meat stripped. The second animal has not been found and despite strenuous objections, a third animal has been shot. The Parks officer claims that it was the wounded animal but this is yet to be confirmed as witnesses have given conflicting information. There is great concern as there is a newborn calf in the herd and it has not yet been established whether any of the animals shot were its mother.

We have also finally received feed-back on the consignment of animals which were sent to Abuja in September 2001 - of the pair of giraffes sent, the male died within a few weeks of arrival - the young buffalo are reported to have run out of their crates and straight into the surrounding fence, killing themselves. The most tragic report related to the wild caught female Leopard. She is reported to have still been in her travel crate in April 2002 because there were no suitable enclosures for carnivores. She was being kept at 'Aso Rock', the President's compound as there was no place at the zoo. It was reportedly said that "people are afraid to feed it because it is too wild". She is believed to have died of thirst and starvation. Her suffering and torment must have been unimaginable.

Despite being assured otherwise, we have been advised that a further consignment is being collected and Meryl has received information that a second Leopard was to be sent to Abuja - this time a captive bred male - but we have been informed by National Parks that he died before being sent - cause of death as yet unknown. According to the records Meryl managed to obtain sight of, under the entry for the Leopard, the death has been recorded along with 'to be replaced'.

In a separate incident, Meryl was asked to arrange for the removal of 20 Zebra by a war vet on Dambury Park Farm (formerly owned by the Baileys - mentioned in last year's reports), but when she arrived it was to find that the Zebra had been sold to Ed Kadzombe

for export - destination unknown.

Another tragic situation which has been uncovered was the smuggling of donkeys from Zimbabwe to Zambia. The ZRP from Kezi are to be commended for uncovering the racket. This occurred when a civilian reported to the police that he had just seen some of his missing donkeys on a truck leaving town. The Police managed to catch up with the truck which was carrying approximately 50 animals. Due to the manner in which they had been loaded and were being carried, several animals had gone down and been trampled. Six were already dead. It is believed that the animals were intended to be used as live bait. This was a smuggling operation as it is illegal to export donkeys from Zimbabwe. The case involves a government vet who compounded the matter by having all the animals 'branded' after they had been impounded in an attempt to cover up the origins of the animals.

On a rescue in the Concession area at probably the biggest dairy farm in the country, Meryl had been asked to recover 2 dogs and 2 cats. When Meryl and Jimmy arrived at the property, the war vet, 'Ngwenya', who occupied the farmhouse came to the gate and warmly greeted Meryl and Jimmy and the policeman who accompanied them and then putting his face inches away from Meryl said 'get out'. Meryl stood her ground and advised that they were there to uplift the pets and check on the condition of the cattle. Ngwenya became abusive and ranted at Jimmy "why did you bring 'the white'? I told you not to bring 'the white' ". He then took a stick from a worker and threatened Meryl 'I'll show you how rough I can be - you're going to get beaten just now". Meryl said he proceeded on a barrage of racial abuse and said the only worthwhile 'whites' were Lenin and Marx. He ended by stating that they could not take the dogs. In a complete turnabout he then invited Meryl to a nearby store for a cold drink. She agreed hoping to persuade him to release the pets. He told her that his earlier conduct was just 'intimidatory tactics'. He agreed that the pets could go and the cattle could be checked. When Meryl advised that she would return with the government vet and animal health inspector, Ngwenya again lost his temper and said that Meryl was an 'MDC spy and was white scum working for the farmer'.

Meryl gained approval from Dispol for the area and returned with a police sergeant and constable. Again Meryl was denied entry but Mark and Jimmy gained access. However, the situation rapidly deteriorated without Meryl to stand up to his threats and they again left without the pets but were able to establish that some of the heifers were ill from suspected Lantana poisoning (a noxious weed), a calf was suffering from Tetanus and the sheep were suffering from footrot. No silage was seen. Meryl will persevere, hopefully with the co-operation of other war vets, to secure the release of the pets. It is gratifying to report that many of the war vets and settlers who were previously hostile towards the team are now co-operating and in some instances assisting them. Meryl has also received requests to return and carry out educational activities and to treat domestic animals.

Following our reports of the added safety risk Meryl and team have been facing this year, IFAW are most generously providing high frequency radio equipment in order that the team's movements can be monitored and they can keep in touch with each other at all times. We greatly appreciate this support for the vital work of the ZNSPCA.

We are also indebted to the NSPCA - SA (Zimhelp Fund) for procuring the human rabies vaccine with which to vaccinate SPCA Inspectors and the National team following an upsurge of rabies in Zimbabwe - 3 Inspectors have been exposed to animals confirmed to have rabies.

And finally we must thank the Zimbabwe Pet Rescue Project for the 6 tons of dry dog and cat food, as well as euthanasia and vaccines which have arrived and is being distributed to all of our centres who are struggling to get supplies. We will be appealing to them for assistance with the procurement of animal rabies vaccine as government vets report that their supplies are now at critically low levels.

Regards, Bernice

This is the last update from the ZNSPCA / ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS/.../
UPDATE 16 JANUARY 2003

There has been a definite increase in the level of militancy on the farms where Meryl and the team have been effecting rescues. She reports that there is an increasing build up of quasi youth militia. Following an upsurge of acts of violence on farms, the team have been called upon to uplift or secure the release of livestock and horses. Following the removal of dairy cattle and calves from Concession, the team attended to a further appeal from this area to try and secure the release of another cattle herd. Most unfortunately, in this instance, Meryl did not get the usual co-operation and support from the Police. After receiving assurances from the Officer Commanding District that the rescue team would be provided with an escort, the Officer-in-Charge at Bindura Police Station (an ex-combatant) accused Meryl of conniving with farmers to get on to the farms and would not provide support. Undaunted, the team proceeded and managed to get two Sergeants from Concession Police Station to accompany them. Meryl found it most unusual that when they arrived, the boom was opened and they were not even asked why they were entering the farm. Upon arrival at the farm house, the team were told to wait. After some considerable time, the war vet in command of this area, known as Gumba Tshuma, arrived and began shouting at Mark and Jimmy in Shona, ordering them not to translate what he was saying. After agreeing that they would not remove the herd, Meryl was given permission to check the condition of the animals. The war vet said that Meryl could check the cattle but that she would have to go alone and on foot. Not wanting them to know that she was actually terrified, she agreed and proceeded down the road

and around a bend which put her out of site of the others. As she was nearing the cattle, she heard someone running up behind her and was relieved to find that it was Jimmy. Mark and Jimmy had overheard that, even before they had arrived on the farm, the war vets had planned to separate Meryl from the others and beat her up. Sadly, the police details knew about the plan and both had stood aside and not provided any assistance. After Jimmy joined Meryl, the police details suddenly appeared and the war vet shouted 'enough, enough' and Meryl decided it would be best for them to leave. Later, arrangements were made, and agreed to, for the farmer to uplift the cattle, but after the truck arrived and loading had commenced, authority was suddenly withdrawn and the cattle could not be moved. Despite the exceptionally high temperature, today Meryl and Jimmy, accompanied by Belinda and two grooms from Chinhoyi proceeded to Karoi to uplift 4 horses. They were provided with one Police detail. Having loaded the horses who were not used to horse boxes, the settlers refused to let the team leave unless they provided 'documentation'. Lengthy negotiations ensued and the police detail did his best to assist. Following a distress call from Meryl at 12h30 that the situation was getting out of hand, we called for police back-up. After being confined for over two hours, the horses had become distressed and were kicking the sides of the horse boxes and sweating heavily. Fortunately, the police responded quickly and were on the scene within 20 minutes. The team were able to leave with the horses. These developments are obviously of great concern to National and we will have to review the protocols currently being followed for effecting rescues. On a happier note, after much red tape, and with grateful thanks to IFAW, we have obtained an Isuzu 4x4 for the rescue team. This will obviously improve accessibility and we can expand the size of the team, when considered necessary, for added security. Fuel continues to be very scarce and despite being provided with a letter from the ZRP, this remains problematic. Sympathetic businesses and garages have been of assistance. Regards Bernice

• This is the last update from the ZNSPCA / ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS/.../UPDATE 05 JANUARY 2003

We would like to start the year off by thanking all of the wonderful people and organisations who stood by our Society and provided vital support for the Rescue Teams to enable them to carry out their very difficult and often heartbreaking work during 2002. With very limited resources and of course time and manpower, we are not always able to personally thank each and every individual who has sent donations, messages of support, organised fund-raisers, obtained supplies or spread the word about what is taking place in Zimbabwe. We do most sincerely thank you all for your incredible support and generosity - we could not have done it without you. 2002 was not a good year for the animals of Zimbabwe. Looking back over the reports, it is amazing that our teams did not give in, having faced so much unnecessary and totally unwarranted cruelty and abuse of the innocent animals who have been such helpless pawns in this interminable crisis. We commend all those who have taken such great risks to rescue and protect animals in peril. Many of you are already aware that Meryl Harrison and Addmore Chinhembe received the BBC Special Award on 27 December 2002 for their rescue work. Meryl was invited to receive the award which she accepted "on behalf of all the animals who have lost their lives" since the start of the ongoing land dispute. Sadly, our first report of 2003 is not an encouraging one. On New Year's Day Meryl and Jimmy Zuze went to Mvurwi Police Station to follow up on a report that some cattle had been drowned by settlers. The details on duty were unfortunately not helpful and denied any knowledge of the case. No escort was provided but the team bravely continued until they found the scene of the incident which took place on a cattle ranch. The farm formerly supported some 6,000 head of cattle which have since been reduced to 1,000 head. A War Vet had been inciting workers to strike in order to receive 'packages' from the farmer. To achieve this, a group of workers drove a herd of weaners into a confined area enclosed by Msasa trees. The area was deeply gullied, at the bottom of which rain water had accumulated. There was no grazing or other source of drinking water. The animals were thus confined for 5 days. As the young animals became thirsty, they attempted to enter the gullies to reach the water and in so doing became stuck in the mud and drowned. 300 animals died in this most abhorrent and cruel manner before the herd was released. The bodies of the dead young animals had to be pulled out of the thick mud with a Tractor. On 3 January Meryl and Jimmy were called to Concession to rescue 5 dairy cows with calves. The farmer had been severely beaten and was forced to leave. The team will move the calves and have secured a truck to move the heifers. On a positive note, the head of National Parks has requested a meeting with Meryl to discuss mutual concerns regarding wildlife. Meryl has already secured an undertaking that no translocation of wildlife abroad will take place without ZNSPCA involvement. It is hoped that if there is a lull in reports from farms that Meryl can proceed with the relocation of Billy (the Chimp) from Zimbabwe to Chimfunshi in Zambia. Best regards to you all Bernice

• This is the last update from the ZNSPCA / ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS/.../21 NOVEMBER 2002

The past month has been incredibly busy for the team - there has not been much time for news. The tragic situation of the agricultural security company that was put out of business has been finalised. Over 400 dogs were euthanised*. This was an extremely difficult exercise for the teams. When the guards got wind of what was happening in terms of the future of the company, they 'downed tools' by locking up and tying up their dogs and heading into town. They ripped out telephones and radios and commandeered all company vehicles as well as destroying the deployment records which would have shown us where to find all the dogs. With the aid of one brave guard and three private vets who volunteered their services, the teams would set off as soon as it was daylight and finish off attending to the dogs with the use of headlights. The sights which met them were often heartbreaking - animals which had been left tied up for several days without food or water; some tied in such a way that they could not lie down; some in the blazing sun; others injured from their struggle to free themselves; one dog which had fallen in a reservoir, and in spite of being seen by locals, was left in the water for days - fortunately he was able to stand up in the water and not drown; another animal had chewed through the bark of a tree to try

and escape. Many of the animals were extremely overwrought and barely approachable. Inspector Addmore Chinhembe disappeared and returned wearing one of the guards uniforms (although a bit tight) and thus disguised* was able to calm the excited animals and remove them from their tethers and cages. All concerned are to be commended for their determination and bravery, often enduring threats and intimidation. The exercise took two weeks to complete. The few animals with a friendly nature were rehomed and the company have retained some of the young healthy animals in order to continue with a smaller operation, but we are concerned as Meryl received word last week that the dogs were being dished out to all and sundry. The Inspector from Chinhoyi will follow up. In spite of ongoing events, we managed to hold our annual Congress, courtesy of Gweru SPCA, at the beginning of the month, which was happily attended by most centres and fortunately by the head of NSPCA - SA as well as the head of the NSPCA Livestock Division. We greatly appreciate that they took time off from their busy schedules to show their solidarity and provide us with the benefit of their knowledge and experience. It was a most positive and productive meeting and all present gained a great deal by sharing their problems and ideas. All centres went away with a much needed boost in moral, reassured that they are not alone, and laden with drugs and supplies sponsored by the Zimbabwe Pet Rescue Project and the incredibly caring people of South Africa who have stood by us steadfastly during the past 2 years. Last week Meryl and the team were kept extremely busy. They received several appeals, despite reports that there would be no further occupation of farms. In Bromley, the team went to a farm where a few months ago a mother (82) and daughter (50's) were beaten by a group of female farm invaders. The daughter dropped to the ground to try and escape the beating, only to be kicked by the assailants. They also severely kicked the family's GSD. This time the team were called because the family have a stud farm with about 60 horses and settlers were ploughing up all available grazing to plant crops. Meryl managed to stop ploughing and ensure that an area was left for the horses. Sadly, this week the family contacted Meryl to report that the settlers had removed the pipes which carry water to the horses. At another farm in the Bromley area, an elderly lady lives on her own with many animals - dogs, cats, goats, cattle, sheep and pigs. Her farm has been designated and she has appeared in court but has no family and nowhere else to go. The team then went on to a farm in Rusape where 21 horses have been left behind. The situation is very tense as the workers claim to be owed wages and have staked a claim on the horses. The horses are in very poor condition and most will have to be euthanised. Two mares (with foals) are limping badly from being injured in snares. Meryl reports that the police from Rusape have been excellent and will certainly be needed in dealing with this situation. Whilst on the farm in Rusape, the team were monitored by two 'green bombers' who were being very arrogant and aggressive. Fortunately, the police escort cautioned them, explained the role of the ZNSPCA and pointed out the authority of our Inspectors and that even they as policemen could be prosecuted by SPCA Inspectors. They encountered an individual wearing badges for a well-known security company but when questioned admitted to not being employed by them and the police ordered him to remove the insignia. In a joint effort between NSPCA, ZNSPCA and the Government Wildlife Veterinary Officer, a herd of 150 Sable which have been confined in bomas since February were tranquilized and treated. The animals have been kept in small bomas lined with black plastic sheeting. There are about 13 animals in each enclosure, the smell of urine is overpowering and their condition is deteriorating, being fed only on hay with a smattering of fresh grass. Since they have been confined, 20 calves and 1 bull have died. There is an ongoing dispute over the ownership of the herd. We were very pleased when the Chief Veterinary Officer ordered their release. However, due to their lengthy confinement, most animals were limping badly and could not walk properly due to overgrown and cracked hooves. The costly but necessary drugs were procured with 'Zimhelp' funds held by the NSPCA for such emergencies and all animals have been darted, hooves trimmed, vitamin injections administered and are now ready for their very much overdue release from the quarantine facility in Norton. This week the team recovered several abandoned farm cats from Bindura, Darwendale, Nyabira and Norton. Meryl also established that all is well at Golden Acres but several horses have been moved to another farm which is considered to be more safe at this time. Meryl continues to arrange for the release and provision of food and water for livestock and horses on farms where 'negotiations' continue between the stakeholders. From a farm in Tengwe the team rescued 7 dogs, 1 rabbit, 2 cats and 4 tortoises. Settlers were very militant and had placed an enormous piece of machinery in front of the gate to prevent entry. Earlier, Meryl was barricaded in, for four hours and had resigned herself to spending the night on the farm. Police and armed Support Unit were required and the settlers tried to demand that Meryl remain on the road and that only Addmore and Mark Manhuwa could have access. The Police once again explained the role of ZNSPCA and the entire team were able to re-enter. Meryl estimated that there were between 70 - 100 settlers present. Again, demands for retrenchment packages were made and when the team were leaving they found that the road had been completely barricaded with logs*. Mark and Addmore were able to move enough aside in order for them to leave. All this, despite the fact that the farmer has not been issued with a Section 8 Notice. We are arranging for a large consignment of human rabies vaccine through NSPCA for all ZNSPCA and SPCA centres as, in the last month, 4 Inspectors and assistants have required treatment following exposure to rabid animals - another unfortunate development of the current situation. As always, we are very grateful to all those who continue to support our efforts, share our concern, keep their friends and colleagues informed and send kind messages. Thank you all. Bernice

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"We sadly must confirm that the euthanasia of 650 former agricultural security dogs is underway. 76 animals had been euthanised by the end of last week, 55 on Sunday and 24 yesterday. This heartbreaking work continues as the rescue teams round up the animals, many of which were abandoned at their last post, tied to trees or chained to fences. There is a total of 650 dogs. It is anticipated that only about 50 will be saved. This is obviously nightmarish work for Meryl, Addmore and Mark who have had to arrange mass graves to accommodate all the bodies. Meryl has ensured the release of the herd of cattle which were stranded without food and water on a South African farmer's property. There is no alternative but to send them to be slaughtered. When I contacted Meryl last week for the latest statistics of animals rescued, she replied that it had now all become a blur as both teams trek from one farm to the next

whilst the reports keep rolling in. Several more horses have also been euthanased as heartbroken owners finally come to terms with the fact that this is the only responsible course of action. Several horses have been moved from one farm to the next in an attempt to save them but the net keeps closing in as more farms are assimilated. With the current mass exodus of Zimbabweans, I once again commend all SPCA Inspectors, and those who remain behind to support them, for not giving up on the thousands of animals imperiled by current events. Their courage and fortitude when being confronted daily by so much suffering and injustice, when most would have given up the fight, is truly remarkable. On a lighter note, whilst the SPCA have been working in the Chinhoyi area where 'settlers' have made it clear that they do not want to see 'any white skin', the question was asked why the rescue team were permitted to come and go unhindered, the reply came that 'they are different'. It is gratifying that our apolitical, factual and non-sensational stance have ensured that the rescue team and animals they serve to protect have not been further endangered. Some may have found it difficult to comprehend why we have not had banner headlines regarding events in Zimbabwe, but every decision is based solely on 'what is in the best interests of the animals?'. We are indebted to all those who have taken our story around the globe without politicising your reports and articles. You have all helped us to help them. The teams are concerned and disheartened about the many animals they have not been able to save such as the poor cow who was found having just given birth to twins. She had not had food or water for several weeks. When the team found her, one calf had just died and despite all their efforts, the other calf and mother died later in the day*. In another tragic case a farmer who tried to stay on his farm was severely beaten in the presence of his two GSD's. Understandably, he has given up and is leaving the country. His two pets have been PTS. There have been no further incidents at Golden Acres following the release of all the horses. Meryl continues to monitor the situation*. Regards Bernice"