

Humane Society of Elmore County News – 13 Oct '14

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Executive Director

Have you ever hit an animal in a vehicle? That is something most of us dread, not only because of the injury or death of the animal, but the damage to our vehicles and possible injury to ourselves and passengers. It is, however, one thing to hit a small wild animal or domestic pet, but an entirely different matter to hit something as large as a deer, goat, cow or horse. Alabama deer are probably the most common larger animal hit by automobiles and adults and can range anywhere from 60-200 lbs. Many reading this can likely attest to the damage hitting a deer can do to a vehicle, but multiply that 5-10 or more times for hitting a horse or cow that might weigh 1000 - 2000 lbs!

Why are we bringing all this up? Because loose livestock seems to be a daily problem for law enforcement in Elmore County lately and it could sadly only be a matter of time before someone is seriously injured or killed from hitting loose horses or cattle on one of our roadways. Owners of livestock not only have a neighborly obligation to keep their animals contained, they also are required to maintain adequate fencing by Alabama State Law so that these animals don't endanger the public or themselves.

Section 3-5-2 of the Alabama Code makes it unlawful for the owner of any livestock to knowingly, voluntarily, negligently or willfully permit such livestock to go at large either upon the premises of another or upon the public lands, highways, roads or streets. Furthermore, any person(s) owning or having the possession, custody or control of any livestock who unlawfully and knowingly permit the same to run or be at large, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. There is no "open range" in Alabama for livestock.

Alabama Code takes this even further and defines minimally required fencing in explicit detail for cattle, horses, or all livestock in general. This means that owners with fencing that does not comply with Alabama Law and who don't take the effort to repair or build a fence to the "Code" could find themselves in a courtroom for damages caused by their livestock as a result of them continually getting out. This law is not directed at those 'one-time' instances of a tree falling and taking out a section of fence, or a gate being accidentally left open – we all know animals don't exactly understand property lines at those times. But we have far too many property owners with fencing that is in severe disrepair or doesn't even come close to meeting the Code and, consequently, have livestock that escape often, endangering the public and tying up law enforcement time that could be better spent elsewhere. For the sake of people and animals alike, if you own livestock, please make sure your fences and gates are adequate to contain your animals and that you make immediate repairs in the event of a breach. If you are not familiar with the legal fencing requirements in Alabama email the shelter at hselco@bellsouth.net and we will send you that excerpt from the Code of Alabama.

Don't forget – we have tickets for sale at the shelter for THREE separate items/events! First are \$5 tickets (also at all PrimeSouth Bank locations) for an ultra-modern Yeti Cooler (drawing 22 Nov)! Second are \$50 tickets for your chance to win \$5000 at the Fur Ball (also at all PrimeSouth Banks) on 22 Nov at Quail Walk Country Club, Wetumpka. And last are tickets for \$25 (12 & under half-price) for an evening with Billy Joe Royal and The Rockets, & Buddy Baker and The Dixie Drifters at 7 pm, Fri, 14 Nov at the Wetumpka Civic Center where our volunteers will also be running the concession stand!

To keep up with all of our shelter activities check out our website at www.elmorehumane.org, join us on Facebook, contact us via email at hselco@bellsouth.net or phone at 334-567-3377.