



Animal Cruelty Investigations Unit Overview and Legislative Update

El Paso Police Department Cmdr. Lawrence Lujan

Introduction

- EPPD Animal Cruelty Investigations
Unit - ACIU
- 2025 Legislative Updates



EPPD Animal Cruelty Investigations Unit (ACIU)

- **Respond to:** animal abuse related offenses received from 911, 311, CR complaints, assigned cases, and community complaints
- **Types of cases:** Cruelty to livestock animals and non-livestock animals within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of El Paso
- **Work with:** Office of the District Attorney, Animal Services, Code Enforcement, Ft. Bliss, City Departments, Community partners, Animal Rescues and other law enforcement agencies



Animal Cruelty Investigations Unit (ACIU)

ACIU:

- Criminal investigation of Animal Cruelty
- Case presentation to the Office of the District Attorney

Vs.

Animal Services:

- Issue citations for violation of Title 7 of the Municipal Code (Animals)
- Citations presented to Municipal Court



Animal Cruelty Investigation Unit - ACIU

- Penalties vary based on the severity of the offense – Class A misdemeanor up to a 3rd degree felony
- From one year in county jail and fines up to \$4,000 to state jail felonies, carrying a sentence of 180 days to two years in state jail and fines up to \$10,000.
- Severe offenses are prosecuted as third-degree felonies, punishable by two to ten years in prison and fines up to \$10,000



Animal Cruelty Investigation Unit - ACIU

- **Community Social Awareness on Animal Cruelty**
 - Community Presentations and Events
 - Media Interviews and Public Service Announcements
- **2025 Case work**
 - 231 Case Investigations;
 - 53 Warrants / 45 Arrests;
 - 236 Animal Cruelty/Neglect Tips



ACIU – Case #1: Cruelty to Animals

- The housing of multiple dogs in unsanitary conditions
- Medical intervention found K9's to be in medical distress with many having foreign material (clothes and Plastic) in their intestines.
- **Outcome:**
 - Seizure of 25 K9's
 - Arrest of the owner



ACIU – Case #2 - “Max”

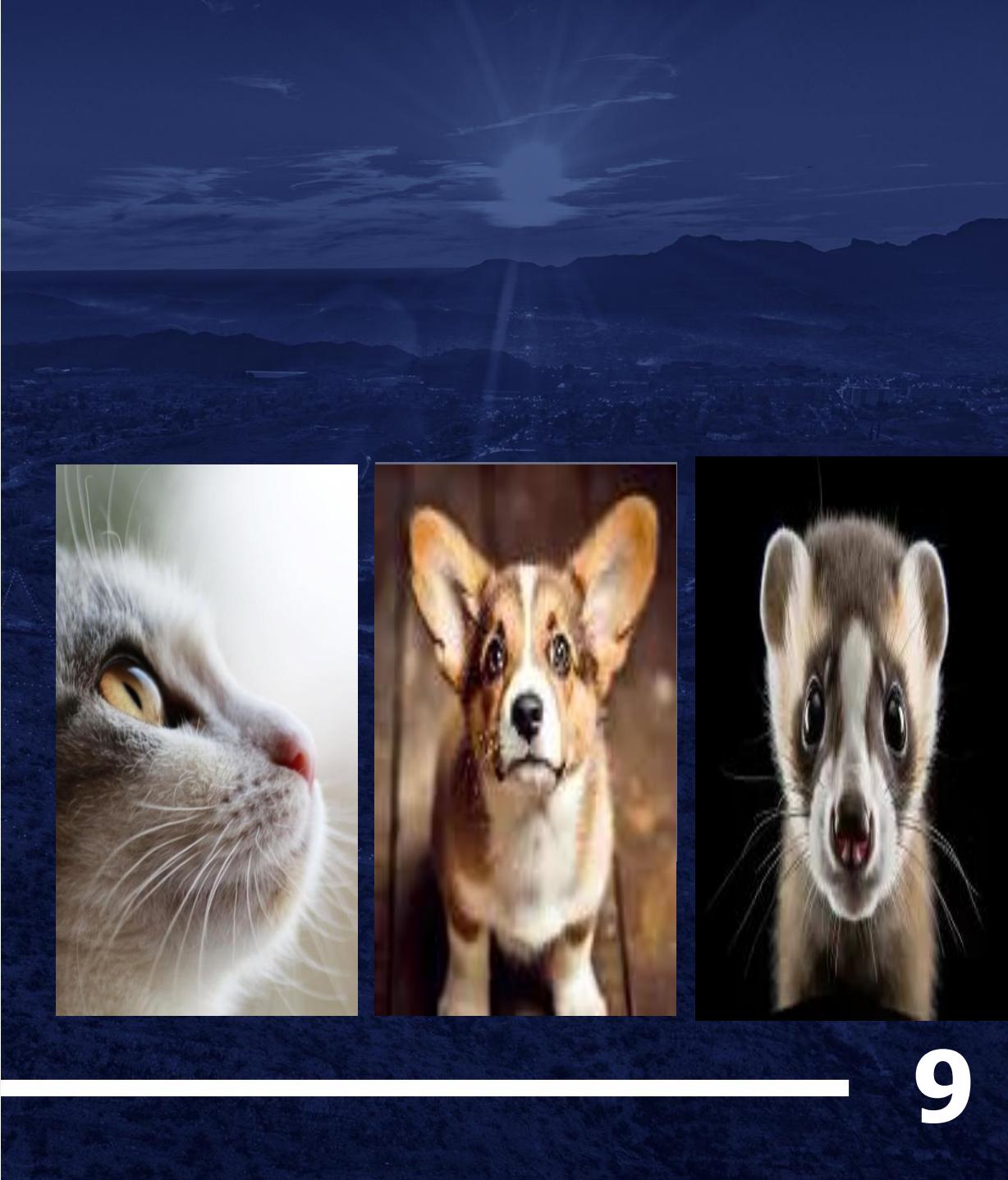
- **Investigation** revealed that Max’s condition was due to neglect and lack of proper nutrition.
- Intervention found foreign objects in his stomach
- **Outcome:**
 - Seizure of Max
 - Arrest of the owners
 - Max now has a forever home and is loving his new life.



HB 285

Poncho's Law

- **Adds** criminal negligence to the mental state for cruelty to non-livestock animals, expanding prosecutorial options.
- Pet service businesses may be held accountable for any harm or death caused to animals in their care.
- **Allows** for penalties including fines and imprisonment.
- **Enhances** animal welfare standards



SB 1245 Taking of certain sheep

- **Allows** landowners or agents to take depredating **Aoudad Sheep** by helicopter.
- **Previous version** of the law only permitted the taking by helicopter of feral hogs and coyotes.
- **Provides** landowners with another wildlife management tool.



SB 261

Cell-Cultured Protein

- **Defines** *Cell Cultured (lab grown) Protein* as a food product grown from animal cells in a lab.
- **Ensures** that only beef and other animal proteins raised by traditional, natural methods are sold to consumers..
- **Makes** it illegal to sell or offer cell-cultured protein for human consumption
- **Provides** for both civil and criminal penalties, including administrative penalties for violations and supports real Texas food and ranchers

SB 2155 Regulation of Vet Professionals and facilities

- **Grants** the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) greater authority to inspect facilities, handle public complaints, and take emergency action against unsafe practices.
- **Change:** All veterinary facilities to include mobile and remote veterinary services must now register with the TBVME.



SB 1568 Specialty License Plates

- **Allows** the issuance of plates that will benefit spay and neuter programs
- **Expands** on the words “Animal Friendly” to include the words “Spay, Neuter, Adopt”



SB 305

Passing Certain Vehicles

- **Impacts** Traffic Safety
- **Adds** Animal Control and Local Authority vehicles that issue parking citations, to the states “Move Over” law
- **Change:** Motorists must also slow down or move over for these types of vehicles when stopped on the side of a highway.



HB 2731 Roadside vendors and Solicitors

- **Amends** Transportation Code to enhance regulation of roadside vendors and solicitors in counties with populations exceeding 200,000 and that border the United Mexican States
- Commissioners Court may regulate specific roadside activities such as the sale live animals in unincorporated areas



SB 1948 - Fire Prevention Standards

- **Amends** the Local Government Code
- **Restricts** political subdivisions from regulating certain agricultural facilities, specifically regarding fire prevention standards.
- **Prevents** the requirement of fire sprinkler systems in agricultural facilities like pole barns, farm buildings, and feed mills.



QUESTIONS?

ACIU TIP line (915) 212-0800

