

# The Lincoln County News

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## Homes Found For Seized Whitefield Animals

By Dominik Lobkowitz

A number of animals seized from Robert "Cisco" Barnes' Whitefield farm earlier this month have found homes, according to Carrie Koskela of the Lincoln County Animal Shelter.

Out of the 23 animals seized by Whitefield Animal Control Officer Peggy Sirois, only five rabbits still need homes, Koskela said. The animals were removed from Barnes' farm Jan. 5 and 11 following repeated attempts to get Barnes to meet minimum standards of care for his animals.

The town of Whitefield has conditional custody of the animals until Barnes chooses to appeal or lets the deadline lapse, Sirois said. Barnes has until Monday, Feb. 4 to file an appeal and must post a \$10,000 bond for the continued care of the animals during the appeal process.

The adoptions of the animals are conditional because of the potential appeal, Sirois said.

Daniella Tessier, who operates Peace Ridge Sanctuary in Penobscot, came to pickup some animals being kept at the Lincoln County Animal Shelter in Edgecomb and at a Nobleboro farm.

Peace Ridge is offering a permanent home for a goose, a turkey, three chickens and three of the five pigs, Tessier said.

The 10-acre sanctuary specializes in farm animals and is already home to about 100 animals and birds, including a small dog rescue. The dogs are the only animals that the sanctuary tries to find homes for, Tessier said.

"Most people in our society look at [farm animals] as food," Tessier said. "That's not how we operate; we're actually a vegan organization."

Taking custody of farm animals can pose a bit of a problem in Maine, according to Tessier. Shelters aren't often equipped to deal with farm animals, and few agencies are willing to help with the long-term holding of such animals, Tessier said.

"The shelters are the ones responsible for cleaning up the mess," Tessier said. Shelters, which often rely on donations to survive, have to absorb the costs of feeding and sheltering the farm animals.

Koskela estimated caring for Barnes' animals had cost the shelter \$1100 as of Jan. 26.

The shelters can only do as much as communities will support them to do, Tessier said.

District attorneys need to be vigilant in pursuing and penalizing animal cruelty offenders, Tessier said. Unless people have penalties to discourage them or restrictions on having animals at all, offenders can keep getting more animals, often to only have them seized again and put back into shelters' care, she said.

"Animal cruelty is a big deal; not just because the load falls on someone else later on, but because animals deserve to live comfortably," Tessier said.

Sirois said she's spent around \$150 of her own money on hay, feed, and gasoline to help relieve the burden on the animal shelter for caring for Barnes' animals.

"The shelter, they'll just keep pouring in," Sirois said. "They've never once complained."

For more information on Peace Ridge Sanctuary, visit [www.peaceridgesanctuary.com](http://www.peaceridgesanctuary.com).



This goose will join about 50 other birds currently living at Peace Ridge. (Photo courtesy Carrie Koskela)

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