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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 08/03/2021**

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## **Arkansas Department of Agriculture Law Enforcement Helps Complete Successful Cattle Theft Investigation**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s law enforcement team successfully partnered with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Rangers on a cattle theft and animal cruelty case that resulted in a conviction.

Jay Lee Parker of Waldron, Arkansas was found guilty of two counts of Theft of Leased or Rented Property valued at \$25,000 or more and one count of Cruelty to Animals in Scott County Arkansas Circuit Court on Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

Parker entered into a one-year agreement in November 2017 to care for 433 cattle belonging to a Texas family who lost their lease and were seeking adequate pasture to winter the cattle. In the fall of 2018, the family discovered numerous cattle were missing and many had died because of neglect.

Arkansas Department of Agriculture Law Enforcement Chief Billy Black and Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Rangers Bart Perrier, Kenny Wadsworth, and Johnny Cummings investigated the case. The investigation revealed Parker sold 54 head of the cattle at the Leflore County Livestock Auction in Wister, Oklahoma and 29 head at the Waldron Sale Barn in Waldron, Arkansas.

Parker was sentenced by the jury to serve 12 years in the Arkansas Department of Corrections, including two six-year sentences for the felony theft charges to be served consecutively and one year for the misdemeanor cruelty to animal charge. Parker was also ordered to pay \$120,000 in restitution.

“The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s law enforcement team is here to serve and work collaboratively to help resolve crimes impacting agriculture,” said Black. “Bringing resources together from various entities, especially in cases like this one that involve more than one state, increases efficiency and effectiveness.”

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture's law enforcement officers work with state, local, and county law enforcement to investigate agricultural crimes that affect any part of Arkansas’s diverse agricultural industry, including wildfire arson, timber theft, livestock theft, and agricultural and forestry equipment theft or vandalism. Visit the Department’s [website](https://agriculture.arkansas.gov) for more information regarding the Department’s Law Enforcement team or services.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit [agriculture.arkansas.gov](https://agriculture.arkansas.gov). The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.