

ANIMAL *Wednesday*

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SPCA seizes more horses; rancher arrested

By Terri Morgan
Special to the Mercury News

Eighteen more Arabian horses were rounded up Thursday by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and one of the owners was taken into custody on a charge of resisting arrest.

Nezih Sabankaya was being held at the Santa Cruz County Jail after he refused to stop driving a van through his Bonny Doon ranch, scattering the 18 horses the SPCA was trying to capture. The SPCA called sheriff's deputies to the ranch.

On Tuesday, the SPCA rounded up 26 of the horses after receiving a complaint from a neighbor that the horses appeared thin and malnourished. Following a recommendation from the Santa Cruz County district attorney on Wednesday, the SPCA returned to round up the rest of the herd. SPCA staff members from Monterey, Marin, and Santa Clara counties helped, as did volunteers from the Santa Cruz County Horseman's Association.

Judy Cassada, the SPCA director of

education, said the horses appeared to be malnourished. She said blood and fecal tests would be taken to determine the health of the animals.

Cassada said many of the horses have bloated bellies, which indicates the presence of worms and other parasites. She said she suspects others are suffering from respiratory ailments.

"It's a tragic situation to see animals in this state," Cassada said.

"We've been trying to work with them (the owners) for months," said

Lisa "Red" Juday, who led the roundup Thursday. "We offered to come up here with a veterinarian, no strings attached, to assess their health."

According to the search warrant, the Sabankayas are breeding the horses, and one of their techniques is under-feeding the herd, which requires the animals to fight for the food.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

To donate time or money to the Arabian Horse Fund, call the Santa Cruz SPCA at (408) 475-6454.