

PETA workers charged in dead-animal dumping

By Sue Lindsey
Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va.

Dumping the bodies of dead dogs and cats in the garbage is wrong, but the president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said Friday that animal cruelty charges against two employees won't stick.

"It's hideous," Ingrid Newkirk, president of the animal rights group, said of the dumping. "I think this is so shocking it's bound to hurt our work."



Hinkle

But she told a news conference there was no indication of "pain or suffering" among the 18 animals that police in Ahoskie, N.C., found in a shopping center garbage bin or the 13 found in a van registered to PETA. The animals received lethal injections, Newkirk said.

Adria Joy Hinkle, 27, of Norfolk, and Andrew Benjamin Cook, 24, of Virginia Beach, appeared Friday in Hertford County District Court and their trial was set for July 19. Each faces 31 felony charges of animal cruelty and nine misdemeanor counts — eight of illegal disposal of dead animals and one of trespassing.

Each felony charge carries a maximum of 15 months in jail, and the maximum term for each misdemeanor is 60 days.

Investigators arrested the two workers after staking out a garbage bin where animals had previously been dumped, police said Thursday.

Newkirk said the workers were picking up animals to be brought to PETA headquarters in Norfolk for euthanization.

Veterinarians and animal control officers said the PETA workers had promised to find homes for the animals rather than euthanize them, according to police.

"PETA has never made a secret of the fact that most of the animals picked up in North Carolina are euthanized," Newkirk said.

Neither police nor PETA offered any theory on why the animals might have been

dumped. Newkirk said no one from PETA noticed that over several weeks Hinkle was returning from her weekly trips to North Carolina without animals to be euthanized.

Ahoskie Police Chief Troy Fitzhugh said at least 60 to 70 animals were dumped in the garbage over four weeks.

PETA spokeswoman Colleen O'Brien said the organization euthanizes animals by lethal injection, which it considers more humane than shooting or gassing them in groups, as some counties do.

Hinkle was suspended following the arrest, but Cook, a new employee, was not. Hinkle has been with PETA for two years in its community animal project division.

Neither Hinkle nor Cook had any comment as they left court. Newkirk said PETA also runs a program in the three North Carolina counties to sterilize animals, and has encouraged them to set up programs for animal adoptions.



Cook



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'It's hideous': President Ingrid Newkirk discusses the charges against two PETA employees.

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