



COUNTY OF FRESNO

Lisa A. Smittcamp
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DISTRICT ATTORNEY FORMS “ANIMAL CRUELTY” UNIT FOR FRESNO COUNTY

Fresno County District Attorney Lisa A. Smittcamp is pleased to announce the formation of an “Animal Cruelty” Unit in the District Attorney’s Office dedicated to addressing animal abuse cases throughout Fresno County.

Recognizing that animal cruelty can be a precursor to violent crimes against people, the D.A.’s Office is attempting to stem this tide of violence. According to the United States Humane Society, research has determined that between 71 and 83 percent of women entering domestic violence shelters have reported that their partners had also abused or killed the family pet. Additionally, 88 percent of the families being supervised for abusing their children also experienced animal abuse. In seven school shootings that took place across the country between 1997 and 2001, all of the young males involved had previously committed acts of animal cruelty. One of the goals of the Animal Cruelty Unit is to break this connection between animal abuse and human violence.

Cock-fighting and dog-fighting also plague our community. These activities often involve guns, drugs, gangs, prostitution, and other violence. Children are routinely taken to these events, indoctrinating yet another generation of animal abusers.

The Animal Cruelty Unit will be staffed by several dedicated prosecutors working alongside local law enforcement, including SPCA Humane Officers who investigated over 1200 cases of animal neglect/cruelty last year. The Unit’s mission is to make our community safer by fully enforcing the animal protection laws to break the connection between animal abuse and human violence through education, prevention, and prosecution. DA Smittcamp is committed to having knowledgeable prosecutors pursue justice on behalf of these vulnerable victims who have no voice.

To report suspected Animal Cruelty, please contact your local Law Enforcement Agency, animal control agency, or the Central California SPCA at (559) 233-7722.

The Media may contact Administrative Secretary Geri Benavides at (559) 600-4441 with any questions.

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OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

2220 Tulare Street / Suite 1000 / 10th Floor / Fresno, California 93721 / (559) 600-3141 / Fax (559) 600-4400
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