

Racing greyhound dies, 72 dogs sickened at Sanford-Orlando Kennel Club

Dog dies after eating apparently bad meat, report says

By Mike DeForest - Investigative Reporter

Posted: 11:22 PM, May 16, 2017

Updated: 11:22 PM, May 16, 2017



SANFORD, Fla. - A racing greyhound died and 72 other dogs became ill, apparently after eating bad meat at the Sanford-Orlando Kennel Club earlier this year, according to a newly released report.

On the morning of Jan. 17, trainer Edel Figueroa found a greyhound named SWG Mother Neff dead in its crate with vomit and feces saturating the carpet, a Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation investigative report states.

Seventy-two other greyhounds were sick and had feces covering their crates' carpets, the report adds.

The dogs had been fed a type of meat not approved for human consumption called "4-D meat," according to the company that sold the meat to the trainer.

4-D meat is made of dead, dying, diseased or disabled livestock.

Although 4-D meat is legal to sell and has been used in the greyhound racing industry for decades with only a small number of documented reports of death or illness, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration believes it "may **present a potential health hazard to the animals that consume it and to the people who handle it.**"

"The use of 4-D meat is one of our concerns with this industry," said Carey Theil, co-founder of Grey 2K USA, an organization opposed to greyhound racing. "It's fed to greyhounds raw, which is a terrible, terrible idea. Cooking the meat would remove pathogens like salmonella and E. coli, but the greyhound industry won't do that."

In 2014, two greyhounds died and 97 others became ill at the Daytona Beach Kennel Club after **eating food that contained raw 4-D meat.**

The morning before SWG Mother Neff died and the other dogs were sickened, Figueroa began defrosting the frozen meat, records show.

"The meat was left out for approximately 23 hours without refrigeration so it would thaw," a DPBR investigator wrote. "He stated that he made a 'stew' of boiled macaroni and rice with the raw meat, which he served to the greyhounds."

Track veterinarian Bruce Olson told state investigators that slaughtered cattle may contain bacteria that can cause illness and death in greyhounds.

He also believed the rice and macaroni could have allowed bacteria to grow and produce toxins if not handled correctly, according to the report.

Another veterinarian, Mark Anderson, believes meat left out for 23 hours could have caused the greyhounds' health issues, the investigative report states.

The company that sold the 4-D meat to the trainer, Seminole Animal Supply, said it recommends that the meat be defrosted for no more than 12 to 16 hours in the winter months and seven to eight hours in the summer.

"You just can't let it lay out all day," general manager Mark Nicholas told News 6.

Seminole Animal Supply reported no other issues or complaints with meat it sold in January, a company official said.

Figueroa did not respond to multiple phone messages left by News 6.

DBPR investigators determined there was insufficient evidence to show any animal welfare violations occurred.

Theil acknowledged that even meat approved for human consumption could cause illness if left out to defrost for an entire day. However, he believes 4-D meat is more susceptible to such problems.

"That dog died because the industry wanted to save money by using this meat, and because the trainer then chose to take this dangerous product and handle it in a way that made it even more dangerous," Theil said.

Copyright 2017 by WKMG ClickOrlando - All rights reserved.