

Major Cockfighting Trafficker in Wilkes County Tied to Last Weekend's Granville County Bust

Major bust in Granville County may lead to unraveling a larger cockfighting network

GRANVILLE COUNTY, NC, USA, August 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The cockfighting bust led by the Granville County Sheriff's Office has produced evidence of involvement by a major cockfighting trafficker in North Carolina and a larger organized crime network in the state.

Granville County Sheriff Robert Fountain led a multi-agency bust of a cockfight in progress over the weekend, producing at least 15 arrests, 200 roosters and 50 cars seized, and the discovery of thousands of dollars, guns, and drugs tied to the illegal fighting operation.



Los Panchos Gamefowl Farm

Sheriff Fountain confirmed razor blades were attached to the birds' legs, the hallmark of cockfighting, and noted that he had never seen anything of this magnitude, as cockfighters were injecting birds with adrenaline and throwing them back into the battle when they were near death.

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Wayne Pacelle, President of Animal Wellness Action

Sheriff Fountain released photos of the crime scene, and one photo showed a trailer featuring the logo of Los Panchos Gamecock Farm in Traphill, N.C. Los Panchos Gamecock Farm has been the subject of an ongoing investigation by Animal Wellness Action, and today the group releases drone footage and still photographs of

what is clearly a major cockfighting complex, one of the biggest in North Carolina.

The owner of that farm is Francisco Valadez Jr. of North Carolina, and his farm may be one of the largest gamecock operations in the state.

Aerial video of Los Panchos Farm may be [accessed by clicking here](#)

Photo of Los Panchos sign taken by [Sheriff's Office by clicking here](#)

Sheriff's photo of Los Panchos at the site of the recent largescale cockfighting bust.

The images collected by Animal Wellness Action show the telltale features of an animal trafficking operation, with neatly organized rows of perhaps 1,000 roosters tethered to A-frame huts destined for sale for use in illegal animal fighting operations both here and abroad. As part of the standard industry practice, these sellers are also involved directly in animal fighting themselves, throwing their birds into battle to demonstrate the ability of the operator of the facility to produce winning bloodlines.

“The bust in Granville County exposed a criminal network of cockfighters, and that includes operators of a massive gamecock farm in Wilkes County, perhaps the biggest in North Carolina, that sells fighting birds throughout the United States and into Mexico,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “Federal and state laws prohibit these animal fighting ventures, and we will cooperate with law enforcement officials and provide information to them to help them understand the reach and complexity of this organized crime network.”

Animal Wellness Action and Showing Animals Respect and Kindness have conducted ongoing investigations of cockfighting in North Carolina. AWA released information in 2020 revealing that cockfighters in the Tarheel state illegally shipped hundreds of fighting birds to Guam. It was the fifth largest shipper of fighting birds to that small U.S. territory, which has major pits that now operate illegally in the western Pacific.

Wilkes County was in the news in 2024 because of a controversy over the past dogfighting activities of Stony Greene. Mr. Greene resigned his chairmanship and then his seat on the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners after AWA and others brought his long-time involvement in dogfighting to light. The Board of Commissioners unanimously endorsed federal efforts to crack down on dogfighting and cockfighting by supporting the FIGHT Act, H.R. 2742 and S. 1529, in Congress.

Bust Indicates Largescale Criminal Network Operations

Animal Wellness Action and the Center note that the bust in Granville County is not a one-off incident. To support that claim, the groups released a video this week revealing the documented cockfighting activities of the so-called North Carolina Gamefowl Breeders Association and a few of the other illegal animal fighters who consort with this group. The video can be viewed by

clicking here:

[North Carolina Gamefowl Breeders Association and their ties to COCKFIGHTING](#) - YouTube

“The cockfighters are engaged in a long-running but transparent charade – telling people they just breed birds and are not involved in fighting,” said Steve Hindi, president of SHARK, which also has a national campaign against cockfighting. “But the only reason cockfighters are interested in buying birds is because they know that the seller has produced birds who win at derbies in the states and in other countries.”

“Since our 2020 investigation into illegal cockfighting in North Carolina, we’ve learned about the people who have built a criminal syndicate driving cockfights inside and outside of North Carolina,” added Pacelle. “This crime network, partly organized by the North Carolina Gamefowl Breeders Association, needs to be disbanded. It not only threatens the well-being of animals but the safety of our communities. Gambling, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and other criminal conduct are routinely commingled with animal fighting.”

Here are some details about the leaders of the NCGBA.

- Jorge Yanez, director of NCGBA: Yanez has transported roosters to Mexico and advertised in cockfighting magazines. His game farm includes a price list, and he shares on social media, asking people to defend cockfighting.
- David Thurston, vice president of NCGBA: He owns a gamefarm and has written emails opposing bills that would put cockfighting out of business.
- Jeff Hudspeth of Cedar Creek Farm: a show judge for United Gamefowl Breeders Association has advertised selling gamecock knives and has been documented to illegally ship 150 roosters in the U.S. mail to Guam, which is a hub for cockfighting. The birds were shipped without food or water for 9,000 miles, as they were destined for the fighting pits.
- Gerald Allen, UBGA Director: His business, Belle Farm, sells the knives and gaffs affixed to the birds’ legs to enhance the bloodletting of the staged battles. It is a federal crime to traffic in these devices.
- Gerald Allen Jr., NCGA Treasurer: He was convicted by the federal government for being involved in a cockfight in Tennessee. His criminal record is posted in the video related to this matter.
- Alan Turney, NCGA Director: His criminal history is attached in the video and consists of weapons and drug convictions.
- Francisco Valadez Jr. of North Carolina: His business logo for his “Los Panchos NC Game Farm”

was identified on a trailer at the cockfight that was raided in Granville County. It may be one of the largest gamecock operations in North Carolina.

Best Remedy is a Federal Law to Eradicate Staged Animal Fighting

Congress is now considering an upgrade of the federal law. The FIGHT Act bans on-line gambling on dogfights and cockfights; prohibits shipping adult fighting roosters through the U.S. mail, strengthens forfeiture authority for fighting pits and properties used to conduct these cruel activities; and allows private rights of action against dogfighters and cockfighters in the absences of federal law enforcement.

More than 650 organizations and law enforcement agencies already endorse The FIGHT Act, including the National Sheriffs' Association and National District Attorneys Association. North Carolina endorsers of FIGHT include the Carteret County Sheriff's Office, Craven County Sheriff's Office, Onslow County Sheriff's Office, Swain County Sheriff's Office, along with Mayor Allen Jones of Winston-Salem), County of Wilkes, Surry County Board of Commissioners, Town of Boone, Town of Ronda, and the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.

"I consider passing the FIGHT Act in Congress as urgent a priority as we have at Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy," Pacelle said.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction_News.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter.

SHARK is a non-profit organization with supporters around the U.S. and beyond. SHARK receives no government funding and completely relies on donations and grants to work on issues ranging in scope from local to worldwide. With a small core of volunteers, and a staff of five, SHARK battles tirelessly against rodeos, bullfighting, pigeon shoots, turkey shoots, canned hunts and more. President Steve Hindi has an open invitation to debate "the opposition." Because of his domination of past debates with animal abusers, however, it has been years since the opposition has taken him on.

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