**April 23, 2014:** Troy, OH - The operator of the disbanded Serenity Horse Rescue was convicted Tuesday by a jury on three misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty and exonerated on two other criminal counts.

Shula Woodworth, 46, was accused of failing to provide food and water to animals at the rescue located off Ohio 201 in Bethel Twp. The rescue was raided Feb. 24, 2013, by humane society and other officials who seized more than 100 animals.

Woodworth shook her head in disbelief and began to cry as the verdicts were read Tuesday evening. The Miami County jury deliberated about 90 minutes before reaching its verdicts.

Judge Gary Nasal ordered a pre-sentence investigation. A sentencing date was not set.

In summations, Andrew Johnston, a municipal prosecutor, asked jurors to look closely at a veterinarian's assessment of the horses seized. She said they showed varying degrees of malnourishment and signs of dehydration.

Defense lawyer Scott Blauvelt said Woodworth was buying and providing food and water to the animals. He said the charges dealt with conditions Feb. 24, 2013, when the raid was carried out before Woodworth was able to be on the property to water and feed the animals.

The animals had been fed the night before, he said, noting Woodworth was not allowed on the property until 9 a.m. under health department orders regarding living on the property.

Woodworth testified Tuesday she "takes the horses others don't want."

She told jurors about her love of animals, strongly denying failing to provide adequate food and water to 19 equine along with 11 rabbits, two swine, a jersey calf and two alpacas.

"These horses never went one day without hay Ever," she said.
Woodworth said the animals were fed and watered daily, denying prosecutors' claims she failed to provide for them.
The not guilty verdicts involved charges regarding two swine and a jersey calf.
Story from WHIOTV.COM