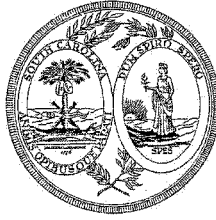


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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
July 1, 2011
**SEVENTY-SEVEN PEOPLE CONVICTED IN
COCKFIGHTING OPERATION**

Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor Walt Wilkins announced today that seventy-seven people have been convicted on cockfighting charges which arose from a June, 2010 raid on an illegal cockfighting operation located in the Cleveland community of Northern Greenville County. Greenville County Sheriff's Deputies conducted a raid at property owned by Samuel D. Boyd located on Hades Hill Road in Cleveland, S.C. on June 6, 2010. The majority of the individuals charged with cockfighting that day pled guilty and paid fines soon after the charges were brought. Boyd along with several other defendants pled guilty on the eve of their trials which were scheduled to begin last week in Marietta.

During the raid, Deputies discovered a sophisticated cockfighting operation with several covered fighting "pits" surrounded by wooden bleachers for spectators. Air-conditioned trailers were located nearby where the roosters were staged prior to the fights, along with a grinding stone used to sharpen the gaffs which were affixed to the roosters for the fights. Deputies also discovered a concession stand by the "pits" where spectators could purchase various snack items, and fighters could purchase drugs to inject into their birds before the fights. After the fights, the dead birds were thrown in a mass grave in the woods on the property.

On the day of the raid, 145 roosters were seized from the property. The Humane Society of the United States, along with the Spartanburg County Humane Society and Greenville County Animal Care Services, assisted in the raid by handling, documenting and transporting the roosters.

In all, the seventy-seven convictions yielded over \$28,000 in fines being paid to the State. Under current South Carolina law, it is illegal to engage in, or be present at a cockfight.

Anyone with information about illegal animal fighting is asked to call Greenville County Crimestoppers at 23-Crime.