



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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## Jury Upholds Animal Cruelty Conviction

FAYETTEVILLE – A Cumberland County Superior Court jury convicted a Spring Lake woman of cruelty to animals on Monday, Dec. 7. Jessica Nichole Canada, who had appealed her district court conviction in August, was found guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Cumberland County Animal Control visited Canada's home in May following a report that a dog had possibly been abandoned in the back yard. Canada surrendered the dog, a black lab/German shepherd mix named Gino, to the Animal Control shelter. Animal Control Director Dr. John Lauby examined the dog and reported Gino weighed 26 pounds at the time; a normal body weight would have been 50 pounds.

Chief Superior Court Judge Jim Ammons suspended Canada's 45-day sentence and placed her on five years unsupervised probation. Ammons ordered her to complete 48 hours of community service at the Cumberland County Animal Control shelter and pay \$1,182 in fees and court costs. Canada will not be allowed to own any pets.

The case is the first jury trial in Cumberland County for animal cruelty, Lauby said, and the conviction sends a strong message to the community.

"We are doing what we can in Cumberland County to stop animal cruelty. I want to advise our citizens to contact us if they suspect animal cruelty. If we hear about a cruelty issue, we are going to investigate and if it leads to charges, we will get these offenders into court and convicted when guilty," Lauby said.

Animal Control has three officers certified by the University of Missouri's National Animal Cruelty Investigations School who investigate these offenses and institute charges; and two more officers are undergoing the certification process, Lauby said.

If you suspect animal cruelty, contact Animal Control at 910-321-6852; during evening hours and weekends, call the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office at 910-321-1500.

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