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FEATURED

Cattle rustlers hit Mount Jackson farm

By Charles Paullin The Northern Virginia Daily
Nov 5, 2020



Cattleman Larry Lantz, of Mount Jackson, walks with part of his Belted Galloway herd on his farm west of town. Lantz is missing 14 members of his herd and law enforcement is investigating.

Photos by Rich Cooley / For the DN-R Cattleman Larry Lantz, of Mount Jackson, walks with part of his Belted Galloway herd on his farm west of town. Lantz is missing 14 members of his herd and law enforcement is investigating.

Although they're smaller cows and they take some time to grow in size, once a person tastes the beef from a Belted Galloway, cattleman Gary Lantz says they'll be a customer for life.

"Usually when they have the taste of a Belted Galloway, they don't want any other beef," said Lantz, who owns the Cannon Hill Farm in Mount Jackson.

Fourteen of Lantz's cattle have been missing from the 300-acre farm for a couple of weeks, he said. The haul is about a \$15,000 blow to Lantz' business, in the costs of the livestock. A bull, which is valued at about \$5,000, was also missing from the herd but was found returned on the farm in a different field and with different ear tags Thursday morning, Lantz said. There were no signs that the bull had hopped over the fence on its own, he added.

"The bull was one of the best on the East Coast," Lantz said.

Because the missing cows are brood cows and intended for breeding, the farm is losing future cows for years to come, said Martha Lantz, Gary Lantz's wife. And, because the beef is quality grade, when the calves of those cows are processed for the consumer, they are losing a chance of profits from selling it directly to the consumer, she added.

"I don't want to overstate it, but for a small farm it's a big deal," she said.

Insurance doesn't cover theft, Gary Lantz said, and it has never happened before to him.

It's unclear when and how the cows and bull were stolen, he said, noting that the rustlers probably studied the schedule of when he and his helper were away and took the cattle during the day. But it could've been at night when the two were sleeping, Martha Lantz said.

Instead of using a pickup truck and a small trailer to take the cattle one or two at a time, a large truck with a large trailer had to have been used to take all the cattle at once, she said. The average weight of a cow is about 1,100 pounds, with the bull weighing probably 2,000 pounds, she added.

The cows are tame and docile, and they could've easily been guided with a feed bin, Gary Lantz said. He's checked with neighbors for the cattle but with no luck, and the animals didn't leave through the fences, he said.

Because the cattle are so distinctive looking and rare, Gary Lantz said the rustlers likely have either hidden them in a remote location, taken them to a stock sale or sold them out of state.

"They look like an Oreo cookie," Gary Lantz said, with their black rears and fronts, and white stripes going down the middle. They're commonly known as "Belties," Martha Lantz said.

At the cattle sales, which are locally set up by other farmers, sellers are taken at their word for owning the cattle before they are sold, even if they may not be, Gary Lantz said. Buyers can pay by cash or by check the day of or through the mail, he added. Because farmers likely aren't familiar with Belted Galloways, the cattle will likely be processed as regular beef, not the quality tasting beef it actually is, Martha Lantz added.

Because the cattle have a little bit of a thicker coat, they are often prized possessions up north, Gary Lantz added, saying that the cows are likely pregnant with their next offspring so the seller could get another \$500 to \$600 per sale of each animal, if the deal is right.

"It's quite a blow," Gary Lantz said.

He explained it takes about three years for the cows and bull to go from conception to consumption, which is when his business will have fewer cows to sell. With 47 other Belted Galloways, different cow breeds and crops, his business will be all right, he said, just not quite as profitable.

On Saturday, Gary Lantz will begin weaning off the calves from the cows. A calf that is found to not have a mother because she was stolen likely will be stressed, but all right, he said. Kelp will be added to the calf's diet to help increase its immune system.

Any cattle that are returned will have to be quarantined for some time so as not to spread any diseases to the other cattle on the farm. That's part of the organic and humane certification process the farm undergoes, Lantz said. The bull is undergoing that now.

The Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office is investigating the theft, and Sgt. Kolter Stroop said they have some possible suspects in the case. He added that he can't recall that many cattle being reported missing in his 10 years with the department.

Gary Lantz has taken measures to prevent the theft from happening again but declined to say what exactly because of the investigation and to not tip off any more cattle rustlers.

He is offering a \$2,500 reward for information that leads to an arrest or indictment of the cattle rustlers. Call tips in to Gary Lantz at 540-333-0976.

Contact Charles Paullin at cpaullin@nvdaily.com

https://www.nvdaily.com/nvdaily/police-capture-shooting-suspect-in-woodstock-after-pursuit/article_422becc7-78e9-5a46-9665-5ea25179cdaa.html

FEATURED

Police capture shooting suspect in Woodstock after pursuit

By Charles Paullin The Northern Virginia Daily
Dec 10, 2020



Virginia State Police 1st Sgt. B.C. Andrews talks on his cellphone outside the scene of this crash involving a state police armored vehicle and a U-Haul box truck. Police began pursuing the truck in Harrisonburg after the driver refused to stop.
Rich Cooley / For the DN-R

A shooting suspect who was chased by police from Harrisonburg north into Shenandoah County was apprehended in Woodstock on Thursday morning.

At around 10 a.m. Thursday, there was a shooting at the Motel 6 on South Main Street in Harrisonburg, according to the Harrisonburg Police Department. The female shooting victim was transported to the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville where she was reported in stable condition with serious injuries Thursday evening, police said.

Witnesses to the shooting alerted police that the suspect had left the scene in a U-Haul truck and was traveling north on Main Street, according to police. Police chased the U-Haul driver north on Interstate 81 and then on Route 11 to just north of Woodstock where state police were able to stop him, according to a Harrisonburg Police Department news release.

Umar Burley, 50, of Baltimore, was driving the truck and taken into custody, the release states. Burley was charged with malicious wounding and attempted murder.

The pursuit of the U-Haul truck ended between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. in front of the Woodstock Equipment Company when a tactical vehicle hit the left rear bumper of the U-Haul truck, said Bobby Funkhouser, a salesperson at the store. He said the hit forced the U-Haul truck to spin out into a ditch.

The U-Haul truck driver then tried to drive off, but the tactical vehicle came around to the front of it and stopped it before the suspect was apprehended, Funkhouser added. Officers at the scene had their weapons drawn, in the form of both pistols and long rifles, but Funkhouser said he never heard a shot.

It was about five minutes from the time of the crash and when the suspect was taken into custody, Funkhouser said. About 20 mins later, the suspect was being treated at an ambulance, Funkhouser said. He said he counted 34 police cars from several different departments in the area where the chase ended.

"It was pretty intense," Funkhouser said.

Shenandoah County's central school campus went into a modified lockdown for about 30 minutes from about 10:20 a.m. to 10:54 a.m. as a precaution during the incident, according to Lori Swortzel, the principal at Central High School. A modified lockdown means no one is allowed to enter or leave the building, but instruction carried on.

This appears to be an isolated incident that remains under investigation and additional charges are pending, Harrisonburg police said.

Anyone with additional information regarding the shooting and the pursuit is encouraged to contact that department's Major Crimes Unit at 540-437-2640. To remain anonymous, contact Crime Solvers at 540-574-5050 or text "HPD" and the tip to CRIMES (274637).

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https://www.nvdaily.com/nvdaily/state-police-vehicle-shot-at-during-chase-of-shooting-suspect/article_6c0db464-3349-57ac-80ed-ed0679e834e1.html

FEATURED

State police vehicle shot at during chase of shooting suspect

By Charles Paullin The Northern Virginia Daily
Dec 11, 2020



Burley



A state police patrol vehicle was shot at prior to the high-speed chase of a shooting suspect that ended near Woodstock on Thursday.

State police Sgt. Brent Coffey states in an email on Friday that Harrisonburg police issued a “be on the lookout” bulletin at around 9:50 a.m. Thursday for a suspect involved in a shooting they had responded to that morning in the city.

Around 10 a.m., Coffey states, a state trooper saw the suspect's vehicle, a rental box truck, traveling north on Interstate 81 at the 254-mile marker in Rockingham County. The trooper pulled up to the truck and the driver shot out the patrol vehicle's back window.

A chase ensued, and Coffey states the suspect's vehicle rammed several police vehicles as well as sideswiped a van traveling on Route 11. No injuries were reported from those collisions.

At speeds between 60 and 75 miles per hour, the pursuit continued north on Route 11, Coffey states. The chase ended near Woodstock when state police vehicles forced the suspect to stop on the south shoulder of the road in the 22,000 block of Route 11.

Harrisonburg police on Thursday identified the driver as Umar Burley, 50, of Baltimore, who was wanted for a shooting of an unidentified female at the Motel 6 on South Main Street in Harrisonburg.

The shooting victim was flown to the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville and was reported in stable condition with serious injuries on Thursday evening.

Coffey noted that a firearm was recovered by state police at the scene.

Burley was held in the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail on Thursday and then sent to the Rockingham/Harrisonburg County Jail, where he is being held without bond. He appeared in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham Juvenile Domestic Relations Court on Friday for a bond hearing on two malicious wounding charges, according to the Clerk's Office there.

Harrisonburg police stated in a news release Thursday that Burley also had been charged with malicious wounding and attempted murder. State police charges are pending in Rockingham and Shenandoah counties.

Witnesses to the shooting alerted police that the suspect had left the scene in a U-Haul truck and was traveling north on Main Street, according to police on Thursday.

The pursuit ended in front of the Woodstock Equipment Company, Bobby Funkhouser, a salesperson at the store, told the Northern Virginia Daily on Thursday.

Funkhouser said he counted 34 police vehicles from several departments at the scene.

Strasburg Police Chief Wayne Sager said his officers were at firearms training in the Woodstock area and heard about the chase over radios. With reports of shots being fired at officers, he said his officers responded without hesitation until the suspect was apprehended. None of his officers were injured and no vehicles were damaged, he said.

Shenandoah County's central school campus went into a modified lockdown during the incident - no one was allowed to enter or leave the schools but instruction continued, Central High School Principal Lori Swortzel said Thursday.

According to the Baltimore Sun, Burley recently received a nearly \$8 million settlement from the City of Baltimore in the Gun Trace Task Force police scandal. The newspaper reports that Burley had served seven years in prison after officers had planted drugs in his car.

Anyone with additional information regarding the shooting and the pursuit is encouraged to contact the Harrisonburg Police Department Major Crimes Unit at 540-437-2640. To remain anonymous, contact Crime Solvers at 540-574-5050 or text "HPD" and the tip to CRIMES (274637).

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