

**DOG ATTACK:** Prosecution rests in San Francisco mauling case. *B-3*

# Local

Section  
**B**

Tuesday, March 5, 2002

Record Searchlight

## Man arraigned in cruelty case

### Attorney says cattle were received in poor condition

By Kimberly Bolander  
*Record Searchlight*

A Shasta County man tending cattle in Ono was arraigned Monday on charges of animal cruelty for allegedly starving the cows, some of which have died.

Ronald Perry Skiver, 53, is the caretaker for a herd of about 800 cattle near Ono. Animal regulation officers say too many of those ani-

mals are underfed and weak — and at least 11 have been found dead.

Skiver's Redding attorney, John Kucera, said his client received the cattle in poor condition from snowy, barren lands in northeastern California.

"These cattle came from very harsh circumstances, and that's why they've come here. They were basically pulled from the snowbanks,"

Kucera said.

Instead of allowing the depleted animals to starve, as court documents allege, Skiver

gave them medicine, vitamins and feed to strengthen them, Kucera said. They improved in Skiver's care, the attorney said.

"Unfortunately, law en-



Ronald Perry Skiver

forcement is assuming that my client put them in this shape, when actually he's gotten them into better shape than they were. And of course, some didn't make it. But that's not due to his neglect," Kucera said.

Skiver is grazing the animals on land about five miles southwest of Ono, near Platina and Bland roads. There's plenty of grass on it, Kucera said. Until this winter, the area hadn't been grazed since 1965, he said.

Nevertheless, Skiver is complying with orders from

county animal regulation officers to feed the cattle, Kucera said. The cattle broker sets out about 40 bales, or \$300 worth, of hay each day, Kucera said.

Skiver loses money for animals that die in his care, Kucera said.

"It wouldn't make sense that he wouldn't take care of what he's got. It's more a question of what he's been given to deal with," Kucera said.

Animal regulation officers,

See *Cattle*, B-2

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# CATTLE: *Vet rates some animals near death*

## *Continued from B-1*

working through the Shasta County Sheriff's Department, have seized a sample of four cows from the herd, manager Mayra Morris said Monday.

The bovines weigh at least 200 to 300 pounds less than they should, she said.

In a cursory examination, a veterinarian scored them according to the body condition scoring system, which ranks cattle on a 1-to-10 scale with 1 being the worst.

One cow earned a 1 — "the last stage before death," Morris said.

Two cows scored 2½, and the fourth cow merited a 2, Morris said.

She doesn't expect the herd to produce prize cattle, but they should score in the average range of 4, 5, or 6, she said.

Skiver appeared Monday before a Shasta County Superior Court judge, but declined to comment outside the courthouse.

He is charged with felony cruelty to animals and a misdemeanor for leaving a dead animal in or near the street. Kucera said he expects his client to plead innocent when he returns to court at 11 a.m. Monday.

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