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WOMAN FOUND GUILTY OF STARVING TWO HORSES TO DEATH

On Wednesday, February 29, 2012, after on 15 minutes of deliberations, an Ellis County jury convicted Barbara Renee Lee, 52, of Denton of cruelty to animals. Evidence presented at trial showed that in December 2009, when Lee lived in Red Oak, Texas, two of four horses in her care died of starvation and malnourishment. The remaining two horses were near death at the time of investigators' response to the scene. Over the course of two days of testimony, 19 witnesses testified for the State, each giving an account of their personal observations of Lee's cruel treatment of her horses.

During the punishment phase of the trial, Lee testified that she believed she did nothing wrong, even after the horses died. "Lee has shown no remorse and no regret for her actions," Assistant County & District Attorney Seth McCloskey told Judge Harold Entz (presiding as a visiting judge in Ellis County Court at Law 2). Judge Entz sentenced Lee to 365 days in jail and suspended the sentence for one year, placing Lee on community supervision. Lee was also ordered to pay a fine of \$2,500, not own any horses, and spend thirty days in the county jail as conditions of her community supervision.

Ellis County and District Attorney Patrick Wilson issued the following statement: "Today the jury and the Court both sent a message that cruelty to animals is a serious and disturbing crime that will not be tolerated in Ellis County. I thank them for that."

