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Dog attack raises fears

Fri, Apr 29, 2005

Second deadly incident within a month occurs in Brantley

By MELISSA DONLEY

The Brunswick News

A second brutal dog attack in less than three weeks near Nahunta is raising concerns in Brantley County about safety for children.

On April 7, four pit bulls attacked two horses, killing one and injuring the other. Wednesday, an attack by a pack of dogs left five sheep dead, including two newly born lambs.

Sondra Jacobs of Nahunta discovered the five dead animals when she went to feed them at her home off Browntown Road. Three Rottweilers were in the pen attacking the sheep.

Her 8-month-old grandson was with her at the time.

"They just mauled the animals," Jacobs said. "It was horrible. I just cried my eyes out."

Two baby lambs and the nanny were killed immediately. Two other sheep died that evening.

One of the dogs went after Sondra Jacobs' husband, Chet Jacobs, before he was able to shoot and kill two of the three. The third dog escaped.

Sondra Jacobs said she is concerned about the safety of children in Brantley County, which has no organized animal control program. Animal problems are referred to the sheriff's department.

"It's not about the sheep. It's about our children," Sondra Jacobs said. "Our children are not safe with these dogs in packs like that."

She is not the only person affected a dog attack in Brantley County who feels that way. Mary Hinson, owner of the horses that were killed or mauled, agrees that it is time for action.

When Hinson's twin 14-year-old daughters tried to break up the attack on the horses, one of the pit bulls went after

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them.

"Brantley County needs to do something about it," Hinson said. "I guess a child needs to be killed before Brantley County does anything."

Overall, dog attacks are not a problem in the county, said Sheriff Chief Deputy Mike Mercier.

From her perspective in an adjacent county, Glynn County Animal Control Director Marcia Stewart says Brantley County has needed an animal control program.

"It's a health and safety concern, not only for the animals, but for the people and the residents of that county," Stewart said. "As that county grows, that problem is going to grow."

Carolyn Danese, president of the Humane Association of Georgia, said the problem in Brantley County can be blamed on the owners of the attacking dogs. When dogs are not properly restrained and get loose, they may form packs, she said.

The pit bulls escaped from a fenced-in pen. It is not known if the Rottweilers were on a tether or in a closed-in compound prior to the attack on the sheep.

"It's all about the humans," Danese said. "When (dogs) get out like that, they do what comes naturally."

Danese said the aggressive nature of dogs in packs could be countered by spaying and neutering. Animals are three times more likely to roam and attack if they are not neutered, she said.

"(As citizens) it truly is our business," Danese said. "We all need to understand even a well-behaved animal when it gets into these packs can attack."