



For Immediate Release

January 7, 2008

## **Animals Celebrate as Pleas are Entered in Nation's Largest Cockfighting Bust**

### **Last Chance for Animals to Observe Proceedings**

Van Buren, Arkansas - On Monday, January 7th, in connection with the nation's largest cockfighting bust, thirty-nine people will appear in Crawford County Circuit Court to enter pleas. Judge Gary Cottrell ordered the mandatory appearance of the cockfighters. Last Chance for Animals, responsible for undercover investigation leading to bust, will also be in court, to observe the pleas of the cockfighters.

Last May, with information provided by Last Chance for Animals' Special Investigations Unit, county law enforcement officials, along with Arkansas State Police and FBI agents raided a crowded and popular cockfighting arena, operating on Shiloh Road near Cedarville. The raid resulted in 127 arrests, with both federal and misdemeanor charges. Those not represented on Monday have appeared before Crawford County Court or in Van Buren District Court.

**"I will be in court on Monday to look these degenerate cockfighters square in the eye. They have been getting away with horrific acts of animal cruelty for far too long. Last Chance for Animals speaks on behalf of all the animals that have been abused and killed; we must take a tough stance against animal cruelty. Dog fighting has garnered much attention this past year, let's make sure we don't forget about the scum that cockfights." Stated Chris DeRose, President and Founder, Last Chance for Animals.**

The raid came after several months of surveillance, which included infiltration of the group by undercover officers. All of those in court face unclassified felony charges of keeping a gambling house and misdemeanor charges of cruelty to animals. Twenty of the group faces additional charges of criminal use of property or laundering criminal proceeds and 21 face added charges of engaging in a continuing criminal or gang organization or enterprise.

**Where: Crawford County Circuit Court - Division I  
300 Main Street  
Van Buren, AR 72956**

**When: 8:30 AM, Monday, January 7th  
Scheduled Time for Cockfighters to Arrive in Court**

**Who: Chris DeRose, President and Founder, Last Chance for Animals**

Last Chance for Animals (LCA), a national non-profit animal rights organization based in Los Angeles, has been active for almost 25 years. Founded and led by animal expert, author and actor, Chris DeRose. LCA fights for the rights of animals by conducting investigations that expose animal cruelty. Visit [www.LCAanimal.org](http://www.LCAanimal.org).

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