



**U.S. Department of Justice**

***United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Arkansas***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CONTACT: Bud Cummins  
United States Attorney  
501-340-2650**

**SHARP COUNTY COUPLE SENTENCED FOR THEIR ROLES IN MONEY  
LAUNDERING SCHEME RELATED TO THE SALE OF DOGS AND CATS  
TO RESEARCH FACILITIES**

**Little Rock** – Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today that Chester Clinton Baird, Jr. (a/k/a "C.C. Baird"), age 59, and his wife Patsy M. Baird, age 59, both of Williford, Arkansas, were sentenced today by the Honorable J. Leon Holmes, Chief United States District Judge.

C.C. Baird was sentenced to three years probation to include six months home detention and was fined \$7,500. Judge Holmes advised Baird that he was prepared to sentence him to a year and one day in federal prison but for a motion filed by the government for downward departure in response to Baird's substantial cooperation. Patsy was sentenced to two years probation with a \$2,500 fine.

The Bairds also consented to criminal forfeiture of \$200,000 in U.S. currency, and approximately 700 acres in Sharp County, Arkansas, valued at approximately \$1.1 million, including their residence and former kennel facilities known as Martin Creek Kennels and Pat's Pine Tree Farm. The Bairds agreed to pay approximately \$42,400 in partial reimbursement of costs of investigation as directed by USDA, OIG-Investigations. These funds reimbursed animal rescue groups approved by USDA, OIG to take custody of animals seized pursuant to a criminal search warrant executed on the Baird's property in August, 2003.

"It is particularly challenging to maintain your objectivity when dealing with emotionally compelling issues involving animals," stated Cummins. "I believe our office has done a good job at reaching an appropriate outcome in this case and I feel Judge Holmes' sentence is very appropriate, especially in light of the defendants' cooperation."

The sentences stem from their roles in a mail fraud scheme related to the sale of dogs and cats to research facilities across the United States. The sales violated the Animal Welfare Act because Baird, a former USDA licensed Class B animal dealer, transferred the dogs and cats to research facilities with false acquisition records.

A search warrant was executed in this investigation at the Bairds' kennel and residence on August 26, 2003 by agents from the United States Department of Agriculture-Office of Inspector (USDA-OIG) and the U.S. Postal Inspectors. Officers from Arkansas State Police and Sharp County Sheriff's Office provided support, security and traffic coordination throughout the duration of the search, which concluded on August 31, 2003.

During that search, approximately 125 dogs and one cat were seized by federal agents as evidence of various violations of the Animal Welfare Act. The dogs and cat were treated by a veterinarian and securely maintained in the Swine Barn at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds until arrangements could be made to place them in foster and permanent homes by various rescue organizations.

C.C. Baird, Jr., pled guilty to conspiracy to launder money in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h) during the period January 1, 2001, through December 31, 2001. Patsy M. Baird pled guilty to misprision of the felony of mail fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 4.

This investigation was conducted jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General - Investigations, Little Rock, Arkansas; the United States Postal Inspection Service, Little Rock, Arkansas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division, and the Arkansas State Police.

Assistant U. S. Attorney Linda B. Lipe represented the United States.

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