

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Laura E. Duffy***

For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Perry, (619) 546-7964

For Immediate Release

Man Sentenced for Attempting to Smuggle Roosters into Mexico for Cockfighting; Mutilated Birds Had to be Euthanized

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – June 27, 2013

A man who attempted to smuggle more than two dozen roosters and hens into Mexico for the purposes of cockfighting was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge William Q. Hayes to time served, which amounted to 65 days in custody.

Marco Marquez-Avila, 41, of Tijuana, was returned to the United States on April 22, 2013, by Mexican authorities who discovered that he had 28 adult roosters and hens that were covered by floor mats in his Toyota Camry.

Each bird was individually encased in a nylon sock with the head covered and the feet bound with a velcro strap. Additionally, the birds had had their combs and wattles removed, a common mutilation for birds intended for cockfighting. All birds required euthanasia.

While cockfighting is legal in Mexico, it is not legal in the state of California. Federal law in the U.S. prohibits the transportation of animals that are to be used in an animal fighting venture. Additionally, federal regulations require that poultry exported to Mexico be eligible to be freely transported and marketed in the United States, which cockfighting birds are not.

This is the fifth case of cockfighting birds being smuggled southbound to Mexico this year, and the second time someone has been turned around by Mexican authorities and returned to Customs and Border Protection officers in as many months because adult poultry are not allowed to be exported to Mexico without prior inspection and certification.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 13cr01845

MARCO MARQUEZ-AVILA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Unlawful transportation of animals used in animal fighting venture – Title 7, United States Code, 2156
Maximum penalties: 5 years imprisonment and \$250,000 fine

AGENCIES

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General
U.S. Customs and Border Protection