

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Exotics' owners nearing deadline

Pets not registered by Monday will be open to seizure

By Alan Johnson

Monday is decision day for Ohio owners of exotic animals: Register, or lose them.

The journey that began Oct. 18, 2011, when Terry Thompson set free his personal menagerie outside Zanesville and then killed himself, comes to a fork in the road with the Nov. 5 deadline for people who own animals and snakes on the restricted-species list.

"It is in every owner's interest to see they have a registration form in here on time," Ohio Agriculture Director David T. Daniels said yesterday at the first meeting of the Ohio Dangerous and Restricted Animals Board. He said the agency has no leeway under the state's exotic-animals law for owners who miss the deadline: either they register their animals, or they can expect to give them away or have them seized by the state.

"Our last resort would be that we have to take custody of an animal," Daniels said. He added, "We want the public to be safe."

While the ownership ban included in Senate Bill 310 doesn't take full effect until Jan. 1, 2014, owners have only until Monday to register if they want to keep their animals. Otherwise, they will be in violation of the law. Based on complaints, the state then could go to the local county prosecutor to obtain a court order to seize the animals.

Article continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/11/01/exotics-owners-nearing-deadline.html>

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