

Fifth suspect arrested in Delta, Fannin County cattle rustling ring

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Another suspect in a cattle theft ring in Delta and Fannin counties was arrested Friday on charges of organized criminal activity. Five suspects have been arrested after a string of cattle thefts in Delta and Fannin counties took place in March. Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Rangers Toney Hurley and Troy McKinney led the investigation.

Charles Damon Williams, 35, of Cooper was the latest person to be taken into custody regarding the cattle rustling. He was arrested Friday. Previous arrests included Jonathan Jones, 20, of Cooper on March 24; John Green, 43, of Klondike on March 26; James Shaffer, 60, and Terry Wynne, 51, both of Terrell, on April 2.

On March 18, authorities in Delta County received a call from one of the victim's neighbors who witnessed a suspicious vehicle and trailer leaving the property. The witness was able to obtain a license plate number, which led authorities to the suspects.

According to Hurley, as many as 26 head of cattle were stolen from five farms in Delta County and 10 head from two victims in Fannin County. Hurley and McKinney were able to recover 32 of 36 head and return them to the owners.

"This is a prime example of neighbors looking out for neighbors, which isn't unusual in the ranching community," said Hurley. "Because we were able to obtain information quickly from the neighbor and work with both the Delta and Fannin County sheriff's offices, we were able to track down the stolen livestock and return most of them to the different victims."

Hurley says that investigations are continuing, and authorities expect more arrests. All suspects with the exception of Green have bonded out. Green is still in custody in Fannin County on a \$105,000 bond. He has more charges waiting in Delta County.

TSCRA said in a release Delta, Fannin, Hopkins and Hunt County Sheriff's departments, as well as Texas Ranger John Vance, assisted with the investigation.

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While this has cleared and resulted in recovery of several cases in other counties, numerous cattle theft cases reported in Hopkins County remain unsolved and more than 60 head of cattle still missing, according to Hurley. A reward of more than \$10,000 is still being offered for tips which result in the arrest or conviction of those responsible for the Hopkins County cattle thefts; call Lake Country Crime Stoppers at 903-885-2020 to report tips.