



**Marin Symphony**  
 Tickets 472-3500  
[www.marinsymphony.org](http://www.marinsymphony.org)

**ALASDAIR NEALE!**  
 See what the buzz is about.

Entertainment Real Estate Special Sections Classifieds About the IJ Obituaries Weather Contact Us

May 19, 2003  
Marin County, CA

EMAIL ARTICLE LINK TO ARTICLE PRINT ARTICLE

Article Last Updated: Thursday, May 15, 2003 - 11:24:12 AM PST

**Site Search**

Enter search term,  
hit enter key  
[Advanced Search](#)

**HOME**

Nation/World  
**Marin**  
Sports  
Lifestyles  
Business  
California  
Obituaries

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Horoscopes  
TV Listings  
Events Calendar  
Arts & Music  
Restaurants  
Movies  
Recreation

**SPECIAL**

Marin Biz Directory  
Auto Showroom  
Buy IJ Photos  
From House to Home  
Got Golf?

**REAL ESTATE**

Homes For Sale  
Luxury Homes  
New Homes  
For Sale By Owner  
Interest Rates  
Mortgage Calculator  
Community Profiles

**CLASSIFIEDS**

Homes, Apts, Etc  
Cars & More  
Employment  
Place An Ad

**ABOUT THE IJ**

Newsroom Contacts  
Subscribe  
Find the IJ  
IJ Employment  
Advertise  
Letters to the Editor  
FAQs  
Contact the IJ

**Cows fall off cliff onto Lucas Valley Road**

**Ranchers unsure what caused heifers to run off edge**

By Gary Klien, IJ reporter

In 150-plus years of Marin County agriculture, the hearty ranchers of West Marin have seen earthquakes, torrential storms and devastating wildfires. But they may never have seen cows jumping from cliffs.

A small herd of cattle ran off a cliff yesterday in Nicasio, plummeting about 50 feet before crashing into Lucas Valley Road, police said. Two of the cows, Holstein heifers, were euthanized because their injuries were so severe.

One of the cows had a broken back while another broke its two rear legs, said Deputy Matt Bloesch, who killed the animals with a 12-gauge shotgun.

"The Humane Society didn't have a big enough gun to put the cows down," said Bloesch. "It's just kind of one of the things that's part of the job. I didn't like doing it, but I knew the cows were suffering."

One of the cows died after one shot, the other took four. About 10 other cows that ran off the cliff suffered little or no injury.

"It's terrible when unsuspecting and helpless animals are caused to lose their lives," said Lorraine Silveira, who owns the cattle with her husband Anthony. "It's hard to handle."

The incident occurred at approximately 11 a.m. near Skywalker Ranch, the filmmaking compound of George Lucas. The Silveiras run their own ranch in the area and also lease some grazing land from Lucas.

It was unclear whether the cows jumped from a Lucas parcel or a Silveira parcel, but the bigger question was why they jumped at all. John Reese, a spokesman for the Marin Humane Society, said it is possible the cows were scared by a coyote or a mountain lion.

"Even if there are hazards on the property, the cows are keen enough to avoid them," he said. "It's really kind of a mystery as to why the cows went off the steep embankment."

A veterinarian found no signs of a contagious dementia such as "mad cow disease" in the herd, Reese said.

Lorraine Silveira said her husband's family has owned the ranch for more than a century, and to her knowledge there have been no mass cow jumps.

"We get calls all the time of one heifer on the road, and everybody gets panicky until we get it back," she said.

Police closed Lucas Valley Road for about 10 minutes while the dead cows were hauled off by ranch workers. No motorists were injured in the incident.

Contact Gary Klien via e-mail at [gklien@marinij.com](mailto:gklien@marinij.com)



California Highway Patrol officer Larry Goodman (right) directs traffic around a cow that fell off a cliff on Lucas Valley Road. Two cows were so badly injured they had to be humanely put down by a sheriff's deputy. IJ photo/Frankie Frost

**OTHER ARTICLES IN THIS SECTION**

5/19/2003

- [Mountain Play's 90th season opens with spirited 'Annie'](#)
- [Bee population booming](#)
- [Teacher honors come amid budget fears](#)
- [County's top public teachers honored with Golden Bell Awards](#)
- [Deal will preserve historic ranch](#)
- [Lecture series to address health issues](#)
- [Plan would change Strawberry Point service provider](#)



RETURN TO TOP