

## Police summoned to quell moose ‘rodeo’

by Sarah Elizabeth Brown Star Reporter  
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A gigantic and irate trespasser gave Faro’s RCMP detachment commander a chance to try out his Taser for the first time Wednesday afternoon.

Cpl. Ken Alderson’s handcuffs would have been useless as he and several others faced a furious cow moose trying to protect its newborn calf stuck in the local conservation officer’s back yard.

Unfortunately, the conservation officer was out of town at the time, leading to the RCMP taking on animal control duty.

Around mid-afternoon, the mother and son moose had wandered into Kirby Meister’s yard from the street, and Mama Moose — weighing at least 1,000 lbs. — was able to step over the one-metre chain link fence, but the calf couldn’t get over. The fence stood about head-high to the calf.

“One of the neighbours phoned up and said there was a moose that was going crazy in the backyard,” Alderson in an interview this morning. “Whoa, this was a big cow.”

When he and Const. Garry Sokwaypnace arrived, they could tell the calf hadn’t been born long before.

“The mother was just irate, eh, because people were gathering and dogs were barking at it — she was trying to protect her little baby moose,” said Alderson. “The mother was trying to get it over the fence and of course the harder she tried, the more the little baby moose just couldn’t do it, and started crying.

“It was very, very sad to see it. Geez, my heart went out to the poor little thing, but we couldn’t do anything with the mother — you can’t reason with a moose.”

As the two police officers and members of the public tried to help the stranded calf, so new it was still wobbly on its legs, the madder the cow became. They could also tell the calf was getting tired, Alderson said.

Town of Faro foreman Pat McCracken heard the call on the radio and went out to Meister’s place to see if he could help out. The terrified calf was stuck in a corner of the 7.5-metre by 15-metre yard, while his mother stood over him with her hair on end, growling and snorting at anyone who came near.

“There was no way of chasing her out of there ... because she won’t leave her calf,” said McCracken.

The cow charged one person who got a little too close, Alderson said.

“That cow was pissed off, boy; she was going to hurt somebody.

“That was a rodeo.”

They had two options, he said.

The first was to shoot the mother, but that would necessitate shooting the newborn calf as well.

“So I said, ‘Well, let’s try this damn Taser gun on it,’” said Alderson, who’d never used his electric shock gun before.

The M26 Tasers were issued to RCMP officers for the first time last year.

Often called a “stun gun,” a Taser emits an electric shock that essentially jams the signals between a person’s brain and muscles, causing the muscles to contract and the person to be immobilized. The Taser on RCMP officers’ tool belts uses 50,000 volts and 26 watts of electricity.

It works on really big moose too.

“You know what? It absolutely worked perfect,” said Alderson. “That whole scenario worked perfect. We never did any damage to the mother, other than we put her down (on the ground).”

Alderson, with McCracken behind him, snuck up on the cow to get within shooting range, using a greenhouse as cover.

Once Alderson shot the Taser and knocked the cow over, Sokwaypnace and local resident Al Bonderchuck ran into the yard, grabbed the trapped calf, dumped it over the fence and scooted back to safety. Alderson let go of the trigger, cutting off the current, and the cow was able to get back up.

“And as soon as we let the mother up ... the two of them just skedaddled out of there. It worked perfect,” said Alderson.

McCracken said the whole fracas took about 10 minutes. In his 30 years in Faro and seeing animals being tranquillized, he said, this was the most incredible incident he's seen. "It was a wonderful thing that happened," Alderson said. "It saved everything — there was no damage done to the cow, absolutely none to the baby and no one got hurt. "That Taser thing, I'll tell you, what a tool that is."



## The moose and the stun gun



RCMP in Faro, Yukon, were summoned in June to the Northern version of a cat stuck up a tree. A cow moose and her newborn had wandered into a backyard in the community. When it came time to wander out, the mother stepped easily over the high fence but the still-wobbly babe was too little to follow. The distressed pair wasn't able to get around the situation -- hey, they're only moose -- so Corporal Ken Alderson and Constable Garry Sokwaypnace had to figure things out for them.

The calf began to tire. His 500-kilogram mother became aggressive, snorting and charging would-be helpers. The officers worried they might have to shoot the pair, until they thought of a novel alternative: their government-issue taser.

The device is designed to deliver a 50,000-volt current that temporarily immobilizes bad guys. Alderson snuck up behind the cow and applied the current while Sokwaypnace and another man lifted the newborn gently over the fence. As soon as they scrambled away, Alderson cut the current. Mother and baby are reported to be doing fine.



## Stun gun solves moose crisis

Friday, June 6, 2003

By CP

WHITEHORSE -- A Yukon RCMP officer had a chance to try out his new Taser on a gigantic and irate cow moose trying to protect its newborn calf stuck in the local conservation officer's backyard.

"One of the neighbours phoned up and said there was a moose going crazy in the backyard," Cpl. Ken Alderson said yesterday.

The mother and son moose had wandered into the yard Wednesday afternoon. Mama moose - weighing at least 1,000 pounds - was able to step over the one-metre chain-link fence, but the calf couldn't get over. The fence stood about head-high to the calf.

The more the officers tried to help the stranded calf, the angrier the cow became, Alderson said. "So I said, 'Well, let's try this damn Taser gun on it,' " said Alderson.

Often called a "stun gun," a Taser emits a 50,000-volt electric shock that immobilizes a person. Once Alderson shot the Taser and knocked the cow over, another officer and a local resident ran into the yard, grabbed the trapped calf, dumped it over the fence and scooted back to safety.

Alderson let go of the trigger, the cow got up and the pair skedaddled away.