



Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!

Dr. Robert Gibbens  
Director, Western Region, USDA/APHIS/AC,  
2150 Center Ave.  
Building B, Mailstop 3W11  
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

3/15/21

Dr. Gibbens,

I am writing to you today to file an Official Complaint against the University of Missouri, Columbia (43-R-0048), for clear violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

University of Missouri, Columbia correspondence dated 1/8/21 states: ***“This letter serves as the final report from the University of Missouri (MU) in response to an adverse event in which an animal caretaker entered a room in one of our facilities and found that it was very warm, humid, and 5 of the 10 dogs deceased. . . . When they entered the room, they saw that the water hose used to wash down the room was hanging on the wall, as it should be, but that the end was laying on the floor and a portion had been pulled into one of the dog runs. There was a hole in the section of the hose in the dog run and water was shooting up to the ceiling. The hose was turned off, the remaining 5 dogs were moved to another room, and the emergency veterinarian was called. Necropsies were performed on the 5 deceased dogs and no cause of death was identified. Based on the warm and humid condition of the room, we presume that the 5 dogs succumbed to heat stress.”***

This incident would be a clear violation of ***Sec. 2.38 Misc (f)(1) Animal Handling: Handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.***

Another report dated 6/12/19 states:

***“Swine Center facility personnel checked pigs on the evening of Sunday, June 2, 2019 and all pigs were well. On the morning of June 3, 2019, that same person came into the building and found that a 12 x 12 inch section of flooring over the drain trough had come up in one of our farrowing crates. All three of her piglets had presumably fallen into the trough through the hole left by the floor piece. There was no water in the trough so personnel climbed into the trough and recovered one piglet. Both the sow and the recovered piglet are doing well. The other two piglets were not found.”***

This incident is another clear violation of ***Sec. 2.38 Misc (f)(1) Animal Handling: Handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.***

I know that your office considers major violations of the Animal Welfare Act to be very serious in nature, especially when these violations kill, abuse, or seriously injure animals. Since negligence at the University of Missouri, Columbia has led to multiple animal deaths and injuries, I must insist that you take the most severe action allowable under the Animal Welfare Act and immediately begin the process of issuing the maximum fine allowable against the University of Missouri, Columbia at the completion of your investigation -- \$10,000 per infraction, per animal.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future about the fate of this facility.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,  
Executive Director, SAEN



University of Missouri

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January 8, 2021

Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
RKL 1, Suite 360, MSC 7982  
6705 Rockledge Dr.  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

**Subject: Report of adverse event**

This letter serves as the final report from the University of Missouri (MU) in response to an adverse event in which an animal caretaker entered a room in one of our facilities and found that it was very warm, humid, and 5 of 10 dogs were deceased. The Division of Compliance Oversight was informed of this incident initially in an email from Dr. Jeff Henegar on December 15, 2020. The MU Animal Welfare Assurance Number is D16-00249 (A3394-01).

The caretaker was performing their normal weekend animal care duties. When they entered the room, they saw that the water hose used to wash down the room was hanging on the wall, as it should be, but that the end was laying on the floor and a portion had been pulled into one of the dog runs. There was a hole in the section of hose in the dog run and water was shooting up to the ceiling. The hose was turned off, the remaining 5 dogs were moved to another room, and the emergency veterinarian was called. Necropsies were performed on the 5 deceased dogs and no cause of death was identified. Based on the warm and humid condition of the room, we presume that the 5 dogs succumbed to heat stress. The 5 surviving dogs have been under close veterinary observation and treatment and are doing well.

We thoroughly investigated why this event occurred and what we can do to prevent similar events in the future. We do not know the maximum temperature reached in the room because the room hygrometer was blank, likely due to the high humidity. We were concerned that we were not alerted to the high temperatures but then realized that while all rooms in this building are monitored for temperature and humidity, the alarm system is set up as zones (one alerting sensor/several adjacent rooms). The alerting sensor for the zone containing this room was next door. Thus, the elevated temperatures and humidity in this one isolated room did not trigger an alert. We have since installed alerting sensors in all large animal holding rooms in this building. We are assessing our other buildings that alert in zones and installing room-level alerting sensors as needed.

We were also concerned that the air changes in the room did not mitigate the rise in temperature and humidity. We had the room air change rate checked on November 13, 2020 and it was 10.7 room air changes/hour. We had our maintenance department look at the HVAC ductwork and they found that a grate in the exhaust system was covered with debris. It was their opinion that the debris could have decreased exhaust air flow. Maintenance told us that the grate was not necessary in the exhaust system, and they removed it.

We have changed our daily husbandry procedures. Our new procedure is to remove hoses from large animal holding rooms at the end of the day. We have also changed our maintenance procedures. We have regularly checked to make sure that we are able to reach the alerting system and that it is online. We have added a test of the alerting system every 6 months to assure that if temperatures go out of range, all appropriate personnel are notified. We are updating our standard operating procedures to include these new practices and training our personnel.

We now consider this situation resolved. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jeff Henegar (Director of the ACQA Office, (b) (6)) or myself if further information is required.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Michele Kennett, JD, MSN, LLM  
Institutional Official  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

cc: MU Attending Veterinarian  
Director, Office of Animal Resources  
Assistant Director, Office of Animal Resources  
Chair, Animal Care and Use Committee



June 12, 2019

Division of Compliance Oversight  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
National Institutes of Health  
RKL 1, Suite 360, MSC 7982  
6705 Rockledge Dr.  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

**Subject: Report of adverse event**

This letter serves to outline the final actions taken by the University of Missouri (MU) in response to an adverse event in which a floor panel over a trough came up and three piglets fell into the trough. The Division of Compliance Oversight was informed of this incident initially in an email from Dr. Jeff Henegar on June 5, 2019. Public Health Service grant number U42OD011140 covers the animals but there were no expenses incurred. The MU Animal Welfare Assurance Number is D16-00249 (A3394-01).

Swine center facility personnel checked pigs on the evening of Sunday, June 2, 2019 and all pigs were well. On the morning of June 3, 2019, that same person came into the building and found that a 12X12 inch section of flooring over the drain trough had come up in one of our farrowing crates. All three of her piglets had presumably fallen into the trough through the hole left by the floor piece. There was no water in the trough so personnel climbed into the trough and recovered one piglet. Both the sow and the recovered piglet are doing well. The other two piglets were not found. A plumber was called to see if the piglets might be in the drain pipes. The pipes were followed, manhole covers removed, and cleanouts checked but there was no evidence of the piglets. Efforts to find the piglets continued for several more hours but they were never recovered.

The plan to help prevent this from happening again is all floor pieces over the troughs will be checked visually, to assure they are seated correctly and have no visual flaws, and manually, by walking and putting weight on them, prior to putting pregnant sows in the farrowing crates. In addition, drain plugs will be kept in the trough drains when piglets are small.

We now consider this situation resolved. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jeff Henegar (Director of the ACQA Office, (b) (6)) or myself if further information is required.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Michele Kennett, JD, MSN, LLM  
Institutional Official  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

cc: MU Attending Veterinarian  
Facility manager