



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Animal Care

INSPECTION REPORT

George Carden Intl. Circus

Site Travel

46-C-9825

1679 W Hwy O
Springfield, MO 65803

Crane Field
Yankton, SD

7-25-98

1:00

Complaint

NARRATIVE

ANIMAL INVENTORY: 3 ELEPHANTS (Joe-12 yrs, Cindy-27, Betty, 30)
8 BENGAL TIGERS.

This inspection and exit interview was conducted by Dr. Ruth Bakker, VMO and Bradley J. Vosker, ACI with Joe Frisco and Charles Amarel Jr.

All items on elephants were found to be in compliance

CATEGORY III: Non-compliant item(s) identified this inspection

Tigers:

2.131 (a)(1) and (2)(I)

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. Physical abuse shall not be used to train, work or otherwise handle animals.

Inspection procedures began with observation of the 1:00 pm circus performance. The tiger act took place with no problems noted. After the tigers were ushered into their transport cages, during the first half of the circus performance, inspectors noted that a "groom" was offering water to each of the tigers. One of the tigers, "PI" housed in cage number 2, lunged at the cage front and pounced against the door panel. At that point the groom, (Shaun Skinner, one year of groom experience) picked up a prodding stick and made a threatening motion with it at the animal, but did not insert the prod into the cage.

During intermission of the performance, Mr. Skinner was seen again in front of "PI's" cage. He again picked up the prod and began forcefully and repeatedly poking the animal through the cage bars. He paused and stood in front of the cage close to the bars staring at the tiger menacingly. The USDA inspectors could also see that Mr. Skinner was verbally taunting the animal as he

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stood with his face just inches away from the cage front.

The animal was again subjected to another session of abusive prodding by Mr Skinner. Because USDA inspectors did not observe any further aggression directed at the groom by the animal, the inspectors concluded that Mr Skinner was retaliating for the animal's earlier aggression.

Two other grooms observed near "P's" cage did not provoke the aggressive behavior the animal exhibited toward Mr. Skinner.

This unprofessional and abusive behavior on the part of the groom is unacceptable. The entire issue was addressed with Show Management. Management assured USDA that the situation would be appropriately dealt with and that Mr Skinner would be relieved of animal related duties. This would be taking effect immediately.

RB

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