



Animal Care

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care ANIMAL WELFARE COMPLAINT

Complaint No. W11-085A	Date Entered 22-Mar-11	Received By RAE
Referred To Denise Sofranko cc: Tims & Plumlee		Reply Due

Facility or Person Complaint Filed Against

Name George Carden Circus		Customer/License/Registration No. 4532/43-C-0025	
Address 3901 W. State Highway O			
City Springfield	State MO	Zip 65803	Phone No (417) 833-3588

Complainant

Name Madelyn Keldah, Angela Adams and Julie Grosso		Organization Alliance for Animals	
Address P. O. Box 1632			
City Madison	State WI	Zip 53701	Phone No./Email address (608) 219-7263

How was complaint received?
From Eastern Region

Details of Complaint: Two elephants w/stiff front legs, one while being ridden. Another with light green nail, possible infection. One with red, potentially infected cuticles on right front foot. Another with sore or wound on back of leg. Poor veterinary care. Using bullhooks. Barrier during rides inadequate. Bo observed with short chains front & back; range of movement insufficient.

Results: An inspection of the George Carden Circus, Customer #4532 certificate 43-C-0025 was conducted over two days by this Veterinary Medical Officer and Veterinary Medical Officer Konstanze Plumlee in response to this complaint. The inspections were conducted at the Abou Ben Adhem Shrine Circus and at the home site of George Carden Circus in Springfield, MO.

The George Carden Circus' morning elephant rides and performance was observed on 3-16-11 at the Abou Ben Adhem Shrine Circus in Springfield, MO. There were 4 elephants present; Vicky, Jenny, Cindy and Betty. Three of the four elephants were used for rides and all four elephants were used for the performance. There were several instances where it was apparent that the elephant handlers present did not have direct control of the elephants at all times. The exhibitor was cited under 2.131 (d) (3) at this inspection.

All elephants completed all maneuvers and behaviors willingly during the performance. However, the third elephant in line, later to be identified as Betty, did appear to have intermittent stiffness to the front legs.

There was no misuse of the anchus noted by elephant handlers during the rides and performance observed.

George Carden was not observed handling the elephants during the inspection, therefore that part of the complaint could not be evaluated.

The elephant Bo was not located at the TRA site so an assessment of whether the tethering while traveling was restrictive could not be assessed.

The inspection continued at the nearby home site as the four elephants returned there between performances and that was where the remaining elephants were located at the time of inspection.

Elephants present and inspected at the home site included Bo (24), Betty (42), Bimbo (55), Cindy (39), Vicky (48), Judy (48 and does not travel), Jenny (46) and Tory (47).

The complaints alleged lameness and stiffness of several of the female elephants used for rides and performances. All of the female elephants were observed at the walk and video was obtained.

Close inspection and review of the videos showed that elephants Tory and Bimbo had stiffness in the front legs and gait abnormalities which supports the complaints. Betty was observed to have an inconsistent intermittent stiffness to the front legs. No other elephants appeared to have stiffness or lameness at the time of inspection. No abnormal green areas, cuticles or wounds were noted on any of the female elephants at the time of inspection. APHIS Officials were aware of the stiffness in the front legs of Tory.

The stiffness and gait abnormalities that were a concern and the focus of the complaints were discussed with Larry Carden, Animal Superintendent. Among things discussed was whether or not lameness exams and periodic evaluations for fitness to travel and perform were being done on the traveling elephants and whether or not they had any radiographs of the elephant feet.

Based on the results of the inspection and that there was no documentation available regarding assessments for fitness to travel and perform, a citation for inadequate veterinary care 2.40 is appropriate as a direct noncompliance. An inspection report was issued with the citation and the following correction; Provide adequate veterinary care to these performing elephants by having the elephants examined and evaluated by a veterinarian that is experienced in elephant medicine and husbandry to assess their stiffness and gait issue, as well as their suitability for travel and performances. Included in this evaluation should be a discussion on maneuvers and behaviors required for performances, appropriate exercise, weights, diet, substrate and potential medications. The evaluations should be performed at regular intervals and ongoing to assess the elephants suitability for performance and travel throughout the year. Correct by: 22 March 2011.

A followup inspection will be conducted within the required timeframe of 45 days.

Application packet provided? Yes No

INSPECTOR
Debra Sime, DVM

DATE
22-Mar-11

REVIEWED BY

DATE 3/23/11

Heather J. Sparto