

EXHIBIT 7

APHIS-2000-34



PERFORMING ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

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November 1, 1999

Mr. Mike Dunn
Marketing and Regulatory Affairs
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box AG-0109
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Dunn,

I have recently obtained inspection reports for Ringling Brothers Conservation Center which indicate that baby elephants are suffering both physical and behavioral stress during the unnatural process of separation from their mothers at an unconscionable age.

The reports state that "there were large visible lesions on the rear legs of both Doc and Angelica. When questioned as to the cause of these lesions, it was stated by Mr. Jim Williams and Mr. Gary Jacobson that these scars were caused by rope burns, resulting from the separation process from the mothers on January 6, 1999. Angelica's lesion appeared as a pink linear scar, approximately 6" long and 1" wide on the right rear leg. The left rear leg also had a scar directly below the cloth leg tie. Both lesions appeared to have been treated with an iodine-based ointment. Angelica also had two linear healing scars on the back of the right hind leg. Doc had a pink scar on the right rear mid-leg area."

The incident above obviously violates Section 2.131 (a) (1) of the Animal Welfare Act and should be investigated immediately. The inspector is to be commended for realizing that this is an unnatural and unethical treatment of the baby elephants at the Center. In the wild, baby elephants nurse for a minimum of 2-4 years, sometimes longer. They remain with the mothers and with the herd for the rest of their lives and it is this social bond that is the basis of elephant life. At the Ringling facility, baby elephants are torn from their mothers at less than two years old and subjected to harsh training. The mothers, who would naturally remain with the calves, suffer not only from the loss of their calves but also from being bred again, a process which causes physical problems which are reflected in the reports as "dystocia." I am also concerned about the cavalier way in which Ringling euthanizes elephants for treatable problems such as tuberculosis.

I am, therefore, requesting immediate investigation by the USDA of these reports which clearly violate section 2.131(a) (1) the Animal Welfare Act.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,



Rat Derby
Director

cc: Kathryn A. Meyer, Meyer and Glitzenstein