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USDA cites Harvard’s Primate Center for Another Negligent Death; Watchdog Group Again Calls for Federal Fine as Death Toll reaches 9

BOSTON/SOUTHBOROUGH, MA – Recently obtained federal reports reveal the USDA has cited staff of Harvard’s Primate Research Center for improper animal handling for an incident which killed a primate, the third negligent primate death at a Harvard Medical School laboratory in 1 ½ years, and the ninth animal killed overall.

Harvard University staff negligently killed four animals during this period, and Harvard Medical School affiliated hospitals have killed another five animals through negligence in the same period.

The most recent violations at Harvard’s Medical School are in a December 12, 2011 inspection report, which cites five separate infractions including improper animal handling, three citations for improper enclosures, and a final violation for inadequate environmental enhancement. The reports recounts an October 2011 primate escape. The animal was recaptured, but after a procedure, Harvard said the animal was "discovered" dead.

Harvard Medical School is already the center of a swirling controversy for previously killing two non-human primates in just over a year. One incident was reported in a June 19, 2011 USDA report (drug overdose death), and the previous incident was last February (primate found dead inside a cage which had just exited a cage washer system), which resulted in an Official Warning from the USDA.

A USDA inspection report dated June 15, 2011, reveals that a Harvard University staff administered four times the correct dose of anesthetic to two goats – one died during recovery from surgery after staff also failed to monitor the goat during recovery, causing the death.

The Harvard Medical School affiliated psychiatric facility, McLean Hospital, was cited by the USDA in an August, 2011 inspection report for the negligent death of a primate during an experiment.

The Harvard Medical School affiliated Brigham & Women’s teaching hospital was cited by the USDA for four negligent animal deaths in just over a year. A July 19, 2011 USDA report cites BWH staff for the deaths of two rabbits who were overdosed during surgical procedures and a February 9, 2010, USDA report cited BWH in the deaths of a dog and a sheep.

“Harvard facilities and affiliated hospitals have now killed nine animals through negligence,” said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director, SAEN. “It is patently obvious that Harvard staff is unqualified, careless, and have no concern for animals or science.” “It is also clear that the USDA’s Eastern Regional Office is utterly unable to enforce federal law, and as a result the labs connected to Harvard have become killing fields,” added Budkie. SAEN has contact the USDA to insist on a

The USDA inspection reports are available upon request from SAEN.

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