

For Immediate Release

September 30, 2014

Contact: Michael Budkie 513-703-9865

Illegal Cleveland Clinic Calf Surgery Draws USDA Complaint; Watchdog Group Says Lab has "Culture of Arrogance"

Cleveland, OH -- Stop Animal Exploitation NOW! (SAEN), a National Research Watchdog Group has filed an Official Complaint with the USDA against the Cleveland Clinic, alleging multiple violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Federal reports obtained by SAEN reveal that Cleveland Clinic staff denied pain relief to a calf who was used in experimental heart surgery. Pain relief was intentionally withheld at the direction of the Principal Investigator, an unapproved method of euthanasia was utilized, and unapproved procedures were also performed. SAEN is seeking a stiff penalty from the USDA, as high as \$10,000 per infraction.

According to SAEN, the calf surgical gaffes are just one part of a "Culture of Arrogance" at the Cleveland Clinic, wherein research staff apparently believe they are not bound by either federal law or National Institutes of Health policy.

SAEN points to two other incidents of non-compliance with federal policy as illustrating the "Culture of Arrogance." In one situation, a post-doctoral fellow used unapproved housing, improper euthanasia, and was apparently dishonest with veterinary staff. In a separate incident involving a different project, twenty four animals received unapproved intracranial injections which were not part of the experimental protocol, and the injections were administered by a research technician who was not approved to work on the protocol in question. These incidents were not part of the SAEN complaint because they involved mice, who are not regulated by the Animal Welfare Act.

"Apparently Cleveland Clinic staff believe that they can violate both federal law and NIH Policy with impunity," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director SAEN. "The utter inability of Cleveland Clinic staff to abide by federal law/policies - or even follow their own protocols - clearly indicates their incompetence and indifference."