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Primate Escapes and Injuries Continue to Plague University of Wisconsin, Claims Watchdog; USDA 'Open Case' Probe Still Targets UW

MADISON, WI – Primate escapes and injuries continue at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, although the university's research program is already the target of an "Open Case" by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, as confirmed by a USDA spokesperson.

SAEN, a non-profit Ohio-based non-governmental watchdog that monitors U.S research facilities for illegal behavior and animal abuse, said documents it recently obtained confirm multiple violations of the Animal Welfare Act by the University of Wisconsin.

SAEN is calling for USDA – which enforces the Animal Welfare Act – citations for inadequate animal handling, personnel qualifications, and facilities against the University of Wisconsin.

SAEN said incidents recounted in UW correspondence discuss multiple incidents of monkey escapes and injuries, despite numerous previous citations for this very violation in previous USDA reports.

The recent primate escapes are revealed in UW correspondence dated Dec. 14, 2017 and February 10, 2017. A 2016 USDA inspection cited the UW for at least 12 incidents of escapes and injuries in one year, and that was itself a repeat citation, referencing even earlier escapes.

The recent UW correspondence obtained by SAEN also discloses a serious injury to a marmoset monkey, caused by a faulty enclosure.

"USDA action against the University of Wisconsin is long overdue," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., executive director and co-founder of SAEN, which has filed multiple official complaints with the USDA after discovering evidence animal deaths and injuries from federal records obtained from Freedom of Information Act requests.

"This has to raise questions about the entire research program at the UW," added Budkie. "If the UW staff is so inept that it can't even lock down enclosures to prevent escapes, then why should we believe that the staff can do complicated scientific procedures?"