



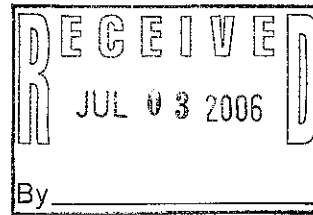
United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW
Washington, DC
20250

The Honorable Barack Obama
United States Senator
Suite 1520
607 East Adams Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

JUN 27 2006



Dear Senator Obama:

Thank you for your letter of May 31, 2006, to Secretary Johanns on behalf of Ms. RaeLeann Smith of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals concerning our Agency's enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) with regard to elephants exhibited by Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

We hope that Ms. Smith has now received our reply of June 13, 2006, to her letter of April 18, 2006, to Secretary Johanns. In that response, we addressed the issues that Ms. Smith raised in her letter. We enclose a copy of that reply for your convenience.

With regard to the additional concerns Ms. Smith mentions in her inquiry to you—namely, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's four ongoing investigations into alleged AWA violations by Ringling—the status of these investigations is as follows:

Case # AZ 04 156, regarding a July 2004 incident involving Clyde the lion, was initiated by our Animal Care (AC) program's Western Region office and is currently undergoing Department review;

Case # FL 04 287, regarding an August 2004 incident involving the elephant Riccardo, was initiated by our AC program's Eastern Region office and is currently undergoing Department review;

Case # VA 05 008, regarding an August 2004 incident involving the elephant Angelica, was initiated by the Western Region office and is currently undergoing Department review; and,

Case # FL 06 932, regarding a December 2005 incident involving the elephants Angelica and Rudy, was initiated by the Eastern Region office and is currently under investigation in the field.



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These matters are complex; we assure you and Ms. Smith that we are moving forward as expeditiously as we can under the circumstances. Because these cases are still open, it would be inappropriate for us to comment further on them at this time. If any of these investigations result in a determination by our officials that AWA violations occurred, we assure you and Ms. Smith that we will pursue appropriate enforcement action.

In the meantime, we continue to conduct inspections of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, and we will continue to take any necessary actions to ensure that the facility's elephants and other regulated animals receive care in accordance with the AWA standards.

We appreciate Ms. Smith's concern for the welfare of exhibited elephants and other animals and hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kevin Shea, with the word "for" written below the signature.

W Ron DeHaven
Administrator

Enclosure