



February 10, 2021

The Honorable Bernard A. Carter
Lake County Prosecutor

Dear Mr. Carter:

I hope this letter finds you well. We're writing to request that your office (and the proper law-enforcement agency, as you deem appropriate) investigate and, as appropriate, file criminal charges against those responsible for failing to provide a severely injured guinea pig with care and for keeping hundreds of the animals caged in their own feces at Kuiper Rabbit Ranch, LLC, a breeding mill near Gary.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) veterinarians documented the neglect and squalor detailed in the attached reports. We urge investigators to bring an independent veterinarian with expertise in guinea pig and rabbit health and welfare with you when visiting this facility to identify any animals in need of veterinary care and opine on the conditions of and for the animals there.

On January 7, a USDA veterinarian found a deep, open, and bloody wound on the left forelimb of a guinea pig and feces stuck to her footpads. Staff had evidently been unaware of her painful injury. That day, all the cages confining 1,334 guinea pigs on site were crusted with urine. Many of the animals' food bowls contained feces. Approximately a quarter of the animals in one barn were confined with excessive feces—as another USDA veterinarian had found to be the case on January 21, 2020.

While beyond the statute of limitations, investigators may want to know that between March 2018 and February 2019, USDA agents found hundreds of guinea pigs at the site with chewed ears and/or caged with large accumulations of feces and urine and that up to 500 rabbits were kept in severely rusted cages.

This systemic neglect may violate Indiana's anti-cruelty statute. Action by the USDA doesn't preclude criminal liability under state law for federally licensed facilities and workers who perpetrate acts of cruelty against animals there. If you'd like to learn more about the USDA's findings, please see the relevant contact information for the Riverdale, Maryland, office [here](#). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Paden
Vice President of Evidence Analysis

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