

Franzen Bros. Circus

7725 CR 48 W., Bushnell, FL 33513

Franzen Bros. Circus has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Franzen Bros. Circus for failing to provide veterinary care, failing to meet animals' nutritional requirements, failing to provide sanitary conditions, and repeatedly failing to maintain transport trailers. A tiger attacked and killed Wayne Franzen during a performance. Brian Franzen was charged with felony cruelty to animals when several emaciated ponies were confiscated from a filthy trailer, and in a plea bargain, he was ultimately convicted of permitting animals to go without care. Franzen Bros. Circus has leased animal acts to other circuses, including Loomis Bros. Circus, Shrine circuses, Sterling & Reid Circus, Piccadilly Circus, and Royal Hanneford Circus. Contact PETA for documentation.

June 27, 2024: Brian Franzen was slated to exhibit Okha the elephant with The Mysterious Circus in Denton, Texas, but due to a city ordinance prohibiting elephants, local officials required Franzen to remove Okha from the city.

November 12, 2020: The USDA issued Franzen Bros. a “teachable moment” for failing to provide acquisition paperwork and a record of animals for review during the

inspection.

November 1, 2020: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission issued Brian Franzen a verbal warning for failing to comply with public safety regulations while offering elephant rides at a Loomis Bros. Circus performance at the Citrus County Fairgrounds.

July 24, 2019: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide an elephant named Megu with adequate veterinary care. Megu had gait deficiencies and joint crepitus while walking. Franzen stated that he was not aware of the condition and had not reported it to the attending veterinarian. The attending veterinarian examined Megu during the inspection and agreed with the inspector's findings, stating that the elephant shouldn't participate in any performance until further evaluation and appropriate treatment had been carried out.

August 9, 2018: The Highlands County Fair Association in Sebring, Florida, canceled Loomis Bros. Circus shows that were scheduled to include elephants and tigers from exhibitor Brian Franzen.

November 3, 2016: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to store food and supplies in a manner that would prevent contamination. While the circus was exhibiting in Georgia, inspectors found an accumulation of dirt on the surfaces of all the items in the food-storage areas of the trucks. There were supplies, debris, and sawdust on the floor. There was a thick layer of dirt on the freezers, and two freezers that held meat contained dead insects and dirt.

May 23, 2013: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide seven tigers with adequate shelter. Tigers were held in traveling pens outside the travel truck. It was raining and in the upper 50s during the

inspection. The floor of the pens was wet, and the tigers didn't have a dry space to lie on. Franzen was also cited for not providing the tigers with sufficient space to make normal postural movements. The inspector noted that an exercise pen was available but that it hadn't been set up or used since Franzen had arrived at that site three days earlier.

November 27, 2012: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for not properly maintaining a tiger enclosure that had rust at the bottom. A few vertical rods were also detached and corroded at the bottom.

October 2, 2012: The USDA issued an official warning for violations of federal regulations to Franzen Bros. for the citations that it was issued on August 8—the beating of elephant Kosti and having an insufficient number of adequately trained employees—while traveling with Piccadilly Circus. (See August 8, 2012.)

August 8, 2012: The USDA cited Franzen Bros., which was traveling with Piccadilly Circus as the elephant exhibitor, for striking elephant Kosti forcefully with a bullhook at least five times about the eyes and ears to “teach” her not to take another elephant’s hay. (See August 7, 2012.) Franzen was also cited for not providing the elephants with a sufficient amount of water and for not having a sufficient number of qualified elephant handlers.

August 7, 2012: According to a letter that Animal Care & Control in Fort Wayne, Indiana, addressed to Brian Franzen and Piccadilly Circus, a witness observed that elephant Kosti was repeatedly beaten with a baton. This incident was confirmed during interviews when Franzen, the circus manager, and the elephant handler all admitted that it took place. During an interview, Franzen stated that Kosti was having “attitude,” had put a hole in the

trailer, and was chained in a “time out” after she stole food from another elephant. According to animal control’s letter, the elephant handler was unable to control Kosti, so he struck her with a bullhook on her face and trunk. According to the witness, the beating took place after Kosti lunged at the handler. Fort Wayne issued an official notice that Kosti would not be allowed to perform or come into contact with the public while in the city.

January 25, 2012: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for unsafe primary transport enclosures—the roof of the enclosure had a piece of hanging metal that could injure an elephant.

June 30, 2011: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to allow inspectors to access and inspect records and property. The itinerary stated that the circus would be in Peru, Indiana, but when an inspector arrived, he learned that Franzen Bros. had left at least a week before.

February 18, 2011: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for inadequate housing. Three tigers were kept in an enclosure that had fiberglass flooring without a suitable method to eliminate excess water quickly. The wet surface could cause cats to slip and slide. The inspector also noted that the water contained feces.

January 11, 2010: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide records regarding the euthanasia of a tiger named Nona and for storing potentially toxic materials adjacent to thawing meat.

November 19, 2009: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide a travel itinerary for the entire year as well as failing to be available to allow the USDA to conduct an animal welfare inspection.

December 9, 2008: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain a tiger cage in good repair. The cage had splintered plywood flooring that posed a risk of injury to the animals and that could not be properly cleaned.

January 4, 2006: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide veterinary care to an elephant who had overgrown soles and for failing to provide documentation of compliance with the program of veterinary care.

January 8, 2003: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain structures in good repair in order to protect the animals from injury.

February 4, 2002: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to allow inspectors to access and inspect records and animals—no circus official was available. The inspector also noted that the last itinerary supplied ended December 2, 2001.

August 1, 2001: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide two tigers with minimum space. The cages were too small to allow them to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement.

May 9, 2001: A USDA inspector noted that tuberculosis test results for trunk-wash cultures from elephants had not been received for the 2001 season.

April 2001: Animal handler Brian Franzen required stitches after he was clawed by a tiger during a performance at the Tangier Shrine circus.

October 5, 2000: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain a transport trailer.

February 22, 1999: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain transport trailers, including one that was used for lions and tigers and that had been severely damaged after being hit by a truck.

January 25, 1999: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain transport trailers in a manner that protects the elephants from injury.

October 16, 1998: According to *The Press-Enterprise* (Riverside, California), “In a plea bargain agreement, [Brian] Franzen, 23, was ordered to pay \$1,287 in restitution and was placed on probation for three years ... after pleading guilty to two counts of keeping his animals in filthy trailers. He also agreed to allow any law enforcement officer to inspect his animals without a warrant. ... [On April 3] officials from the Humane Society of San Bernardino Valley claimed the ponies were severely dehydrated, malnourished and living in filth. One animal subsequently died.”

October 3, 1998: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to provide adequate veterinary care. The inspector noted that the toenails on the Asian elephant were overgrown and misshapen, with chips and cracks.

April 28, 1998: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for a second time for failing to have a veterinary-care program, meet the nutritional requirements of exotic cats, and properly maintain a transport trailer for an elephant.

April 17, 1998: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to have a veterinary-care program, meet the nutritional requirements of exotic cats, and properly maintain a transport trailer for an elephant.

April 3, 1998: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for inadequate cleaning of trailers and cages, failing to submit the required itinerary, inadequate exercise and space, and poorly maintained transport trailers. The trailer that was being used to transport the lions and tigers was placed “out of service” and towed by authorities when it was found to be without trailer brakes. Brian Franzen was charged with cruelty to animals by the San Bernardino Humane Society in California after humane investigators found several emaciated ponies in a filthy trailer while Franzen was touring with Sterling & Reid Circus.

May 8, 1997: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to have a veterinary-care program, maintain transport trailers, and keep records of acquisition and disposition.

May 7, 1997: Wayne Franzen, the founder and owner of Franzen Bros. Circus, was killed by one of the tigers he was exhibiting in front of 200 schoolchildren and their families in Carrolltown, Pennsylvania.

November 19, 1996: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to maintain transport trailers and for unsanitary conditions in the tiger enclosures.

September 30, 1996: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to allow inspectors to access and inspect records and property—no circus official was available.

September 20, 1996: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to allow inspectors to access and inspect records and property—no circus official was available.

December 30, 1994: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for failing to keep records of veterinary care, for unsanitary cages (with feces, food waste, and hair buildup), and for using unsafe enclosures for animals.

February 17, 1994: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for unsanitary cages and unsafe enclosures for animals.

February 1993: The USDA cited Franzen Bros. for cages that were in need of repair, meat thawing for lions and tigers that was exposed to many flies on and around it, and having no record of veterinary care.