

May 11, 2021

Robert Gibbens, DVM
 Director, Animal Welfare Operations
 USDA/APHIS/Animal Care

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]; animalcare@usda.gov

Re: Request for Investigation of Apparent Animal Welfare Act Violations by Adam Burck (license no. 33-C-0387)

Dear Dr. Gibbens,

I am writing on behalf of PETA to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) investigate Adam Burck (license no. 33-C-0387) for forcing a slow, weak tiger to perform in apparent violation of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

On May 7, 2021, Adam Burck exhibited tigers in Louisville, Kentucky at the Kosair Shrine Circus, produced by Carden Circus. In a video posted on [Facebook](#), a tiger who begins performing at 2:53 presented with a thin and weak hind end. According to wildlife veterinarian Dr. Monica Bando, “he is taking very slow, deliberate steps, and there seems to be muscle wasting of the hips and thighs, prominence of his spine, and spinal kyphosis (curvature). He appears slow to rise and slow to recline which is consistent with discomfort and pain. He may be suffering from spinal or lumbo-sacral disease such as spondylosis or intervertebral disc disease, and/or degenerative joint disease of the hips and/or stifles.”

Working an ailing animal rather than giving him appropriate rest and providing appropriate pain relief and treatment can aggravate and worsen his apparently painful condition and would plainly violate 9 C.F.R. § 2.131(b)(1) and (d)(1), which state that “[h]andling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma ... or unnecessary discomfort” and “[a]nimals shall be exhibited only for periods of time and under conditions consistent with their good health and well-being.”

Burck has been on tour with the Carden Circus this year, but the circus appears to be on break and has no upcoming shows. Burck’s home site is in *Oklahoma*, not Illinois, which is incorrectly the location listed on his USDA license. Indeed, the USDA attempted an inspection at Burck’s former Illinois location in December 2020, even though PETA informed the USDA in November 2018 that Burck had relocated to Oklahoma (*see* AC19-139, attached). Burck has not been inspected at his home site since March 2018, even despite the USDA receiving an alarming complaint in March 2020 alerting the agency to tigers in poor body condition who are forced to live in urine-soaked sawdust, a tiger found dead in her cage, another tiger suffering seizures without treatment, and a worker who was mauled (*see* AC20-189). Please be sure to investigate Burck for these serious welfare concerns, including the most recent evidence from May 7, at his home site address where has been based for over three years: [REDACTED] **Grant, Oklahoma,** [REDACTED].

PEOPLE FOR
 THE ETHICAL
 TREATMENT
 OF ANIMALS
 FOUNDATION

Washington
 1536 16th St. N.W.
 Washington, DC 20036
 202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
 2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90026
 323-644-PETA

Norfolk
 501 Front St.
 Norfolk, VA 23510
 757-622-PETA

PETA FOUNDATION IS AN
 OPERATING NAME OF FOUNDATION
 TO SUPPORT ANIMAL PROTECTION.

AFFILIATES:

- PETA U.S.
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

Please promptly inspect the apparently ailing tiger, along with his veterinary records, and ensure that he is receiving adequate veterinary care in accordance with 9 C.F.R. § 2.40, and that no injured or unwell animal is forced to perform. Please also hold Burck accountable to the fullest extent of the law for any and all violations of the AWA you uncover during your investigation, including failure to report a change of address pursuant to 9 C.F.R. §§ 2.3 and 2.8.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please inform me of the complaint number that your agency assigns to this correspondence.

Very truly yours,



Debbie Metzler, M.S.
Associate Director of Captive Animal Law Enforcement



cc: Dr. Laurie Gage, Big Cat and Marine Mammal Specialist 