

# Cicchelli Second Chance Rescue & Exotics

10944 W. Rosted Rd., Lake City, MI 49651

Cicchelli Second Chance Rescue & Exotics (Cicchelli Second Chance) is owned by April and Ryan Cicchelli. The facility has failed to meet the minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Cicchelli Second Chance for numerous infractions, including repeatedly failing to provide animals with adequate heating, exposing them to extreme cold weather, failing to provide accessible potable water, failing to contact the attending veterinarian to evaluate illness, failing to have proper acquisition paperwork for new animals, failing to provide animals with light, and failing to have adequate knowledge and experience when handling dangerous felids. In 2021, the USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance an official warning for exhibiting without a USDA exhibitor's license. In 2022, during a relicensing inspection, the Cicchellis gave false information to USDA inspectors, claiming that they hadn't acquired certain animals. They didn't admit to the acquisition until inspectors announced that the USDA had documentation that demonstrated otherwise. The USDA is currently seeking to terminate the Cicchellis' license to exhibit animals due to those false statements. In less than a year since they were first licensed, the Cicchellis received over 40 citations for violations of the AWA.

Contact PETA for documentation.

**September 19, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a critical repeat citation for failing to handle animals in a way that minimized the risk of harm to both them and the public. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development reported a bite incident to the USDA, noting that on July 29, 2022, a pot-bellied pig had bitten a child because there was no public barrier. The attendant wasn't able to prevent the injury. In addition, a repeat citation was issued for failing to have an adequate program of veterinary care. A water buffalo had overgrown hooves on both front feet and the right rear foot. On one of the affected feet, the inner hoof was curling into the other hoof. Another repeat citation was issued for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. During the inspection, the outdoor enclosure for two timber wolves was found to have holes in the woven wire fencing, which allowed the wolves to stick their heads through the fence. Holes ranged in sizes from 4 inches by 2 inches to 6 inches by 6 inches. The USDA cited Cicchelli Second Chance for failing to maintain an outdoor enclosure for four ring-tailed lemurs in good repair. The woven wire fencing had holes large enough for a lemur to stick their entire head and neck through the fence. The holes were approximately 4 inches by 2 inches in size. A citation was also issued for failing to provide the animals with wholesome, palatable food that was free from contamination. Two pieces of deer carcass were found in the primary enclosure of two foxes, giving off a "very strong odor of decaying meat," with "numerous flies on and around the pieces."

**September 13, 2022:** The USDA cited Cicchelli Second Chance for failing to have a responsible adult available for inspection.

**September 2, 2022:** The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) found that April Cicchelli and her husband had illegally transferred a cougar, named

Aria, from Cicchelli Second Chance in Michigan to Single Vision in Florida. The Cicchellis had apparently unlawfully possessed Aria in Michigan without a permit. April Cicchelli stated to an FWC investigator that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources had recommended that she transfer Aria to a licensed facility. The Cicchellis and Single Vision didn't contact the FWC before transferring Aria to Florida, and the Cicchellis didn't obtain a license from the FWC. Single Vision was issued a misdemeanor citation for acquiring the cougar from an unlicensed entity.

**August 12, 2022:** The USDA filed an order to show cause in federal court to determine whether the Cicchellis' exhibitor's license should be terminated. The USDA alleged that the couple's false statements to federal inspectors (see the January 26, 2022, entry) constituted violations that provided grounds for a license termination and that "permitting [the Cicchellis] to continue to hold an AWA license would be contrary to the Act's purpose of ensuring humane treatment of animals" because the Cicchellis' actions "constitute an abuse of the licensure privileges of the AWA."

**July 14, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a repeat citation for failing to maintain adequate programs of veterinary care that included daily observation. During the inspection, a goat was found to have a 2-inch lump on the left side. The licensee had noticed it but failed to contact the attending veterinarian about it. A pot-bellied pig had moderate brown ocular discharge coming from both eyes. The licensee hadn't noticed it so therefore hadn't contacted the attending veterinarian. A citation was issued for failing to maintain a program of veterinary care that included methods to prevent injury. A goat and an alpaca both had overgrown hooves. The goat's lateral hoof was broken off, and multiple toenails on the alpaca were curled.

The USDA also cited Cicchelli Second Chance for failing to demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge to maintain two newly acquired 2-month-old timber wolf pups. When the inspector asked whether the licensees had ever worked with wolves, they said no. A citation was also issued for failing to have direct control and supervision by an experienced animal handler during public interactions with the two wolf pups, who are considered dangerous wild animals. During the interactions, the pups were "tethered to two different trees with approximately 20–25' of plastic-coated wire affixed to harnesses attached to the wolf pups." An attendant never held the wolf pups or the leash to exert control. The attendant was also noted to not be paying attention to the interactions and looking the opposite direction. A citation was issued for failing to handle animals in a way that minimized the risk of harm to the animals and the public. During the wolf interactions, the attendant never exerting control of the pups left both the animals and the public at risk of injury. In addition, a cavy exhibit didn't have a public barrier and the attendant was approximately 50 yards away from it. The view was obstructed by the baboon enclosure, preventing the attendant from observing public interactions.

Furthermore, the USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a citation for housing 14 guinea pigs outside after the facility's application for permission to house guinea pigs outdoors in May 2022 was denied in June 2022. A citation was issued for failing to have methods to rapidly eliminate excessive water from enclosures. A water buffalo and a cow didn't have access to dry shelter, and they had to walk through puddles of water and mud to reach the shelter entrance.

**May 17, 2022:** An administrative law judge ordered that the Cicchellis wait one year before reapplying to add felids and an additional location to their USDA exhibitor's

license. (See the entry from March 14, 2022.)

**April 19, 2022:** The USDA cited Cicchelli Second Chance for failing to provide a female vervet with a primary enclosure that met the minimum space requirements for the species. For approximately 12 to 14 hours a day, this primate was kept in a wire crate that measured only 30 inches by 19 inches and was just 22 inches in height.

**April 4, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a direct repeat citation for failing to provide a cavy with accessible water. This animal was housed with a red kangaroo, and the only water receptacle provided was a 5-gallon bucket. The cavy had trouble accessing the water in this bucket. When the inspector asked that a smaller bucket be offered to the cavy, the animal drank from it for approximately one minute and 30 seconds straight.

A repeat citation was issued to Cicchelli Second Chance for failing to communicate with the attending veterinarian regarding a limping goat. The licensee stated that the goat was scheduled to see a local veterinarian later that week, but when the USDA contacted the attending veterinarian, he was unaware of the appointment. Repeat citations were also issued for failing to have an appropriate disposition record for a river otter who had been given to the sponsor of the animal; failing to maintain the brown lemurs' enclosure (the sides of the house were excessively covered and streaked with a brown organic material); failing to have an effective program to control rodents—there was a large accumulation of mouse feces on a shelf in the baboon enclosure; and failing to provide a 7-week-old porcupine with safe housing (a jar of Fluker's Repta Calcium With Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> had been spilled on the floor of the room where the animal was housed at night, and an electrical cord was present in an area that the porcupine had access to).

The USDA also cited Cicchelli Second Chance for having one cougar and two servals on exhibit with other regulated animals, even though the facility was not licensed to conduct regulated activities with wild or exotic felids, and for failing to clean the resting platform and blankets in the baboon enclosure. The blankets and platform were smeared with feces, and so was the inside portion of the enclosure that housed two rhesus macaques, which also reeked of urine and feces.

**March 14, 2022:** The USDA denied the Cicchellis' request to add wild and/or exotic felids and an additional location to their exhibitor's license. The agency justified its denial because of the couple's history of making false statements to inspectors. (See the January 26, 2022, entry.)

**February 10, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a repeat direct citation for failing to have a lockout (secondary enclosure) inside the olive baboon's heated shelter, forcing him to be outside while the facility was cleaned and sanitized. During inspection, the temperature read 28.5 degrees. The inspector noted that "[f]orcing the animal to stay outside during these events can lead to discomfort, suffering, freezing of fingers and toes, or other injuries."

**February 3, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a citation for failing to have a responsible adult available for inspection.

**January 26, 2022:** The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance 18 citations for violations of the AWA, including a critical citation for interfering with a relicensing inspection by providing the inspectors with false information. The facility's operator denied that they were in possession of a cougar cub and North American river otter until the inspector stated that the USDA had

documentation that demonstrated the operator was in possession of both animals. A direct citation was issued for failing to contact the attending veterinarian regarding an olive baboon who had a dramatic increase of pigmented growths in front of his right ear. A direct citation was issued for failing to provide adequate heating in the shelters of an olive baboon and two rhesus macaques. During inspection, the temperature read 31 degrees in the olive baboon shelter and 37.6 degrees in the rhesus macaque shelter. The inspector noted that the ambient temperature in shelters for primates should not be below 45 degrees for more than four consecutive hours to protect their comfort and well-being. A direct citation was also issued for failing to heat the kinkajou enclosure adequately. During the inspection, the inside temperature read 45 degrees, which the inspector noted was "too low for kinkajous." A direct citation was issued for failing to have lockouts inside the heated shelters of the macaques and olive baboon. The lack of a lockout resulted in the primates being locked outside while the indoor facility was cleaned, exposing them to extreme temperatures. At the time of inspection, the outdoor temperature was 12.3 degrees with a wind chill of 7.6 degrees. Another direct citation was issued for failing to provide a zebra with access to potable water. There was a layer of ice on top of the water trough, and when the ice was broken, the zebra drank rapidly for about 90 seconds.

The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a citation for failing to provide inspectors with acquisition paperwork for a cougar cub, a North American river otter, and an African crested porcupine. A citation was issued for failing to demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge of handling felids, including a cougar and two servals. The facility's operator stated that they had spent four to five hours with an animal trainer from the original seller of the cougar as a

demonstration of knowledge. During the inspection, the cougar was on a leash attached to a harness that was too big for the animal, fitting too loosely to enable proper handling. The inspector was also told that one of the servals was "unfriendly" and "didn't like people" but that staff had to clean the enclosure with the animals unsecured, leaving both the animals and staff vulnerable to stress or injury. Furthermore, the servals had no shelter to allow them to hide from stressors. A citation was issued for failing to maintain the surface of a hanging enrichment item for two rhesus macaques, stating "[t]he device was in disrepair with loose rope and had frayed ends." The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance citations for failing to provide adequate lighting in the indoor barn that housed 23 animals. The inspector found that "[t]he only lighting came from three doors located on three different sides of the building." A citation was issued for failing to construct a lemur enclosure that securely contained the six lemurs. The lemurs were housed in wire dog kennels inside the heated garage of the home address. The kennels had gaps of about 2 inches by 4 inches, large enough for the lemurs to escape, and three lemurs were observed loose in the garage at the time of the inspection. A citation was also issued for failing to seal the concrete floor of the lemur enclosure properly. Another citation was issued for failing to control "pests" in the garage used for housing lemurs, and a mouse was seen running alongside the lemur enclosure multiple times during the inspection. The USDA issued Cicchelli Second Chance a citation for failing to house a juvenile cougar and four coatimundis in appropriate enclosures. The facility's operators allowed a juvenile cougar to run loose in the house when they were home and four coatimundis were kept in a dog kennel inside the heated barn. There was a gap in the kennel large enough for them to stick their head and neck through, and the inspector noted that if the "coati



were to lose [their] grip/footing [while climbing] this gap could cause injury or strangulation of the coati.” An additional citation was issued for failing to house a juvenile cougar in an adequate enclosure. The facility’s operators allowed the cougar to run loose in the house while they were at home during the day, and at night, she was kept in a wire dog crate measuring 4 feet by 3 feet by 2 feet in the furnace room. A litterbox in the crate took up about one-third of the floor space. A citation was also issued for failing to properly house the cougar in a sanitary and safe location. The furnace room in which she was kept “was full of miscellaneous clutter including foam strips, paper, carpets, a Nintendo controller, and a trash bag. The items were close enough to the cougar crate that the animal could reach out and grab the items with her paw. There was evidence of chewed debris in and around the animal crate at the time of inspection.” Lastly, a citation was issued for failing to provide the cougar and two servals with adequate amounts of a calcium supplement with their food to support normal growth. The facility was using an inadequate amount of a seaweed-derived calcium supplement that its packaging said was recommended for dogs. The operators didn’t know the specific amount of meat fed daily to the animals and changed their reports of what amounts were fed when asked multiple times.

**May 27, 2021:** The USDA issued an official warning to Cicchelli Second Chance for exhibiting animals without a valid USDA exhibitor’s license on October 11, 2020.

**August 12, 2020:** The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development imposed a quarantine on Cicchelli Second Chance after determining that the owners had unlawfully imported a rhesus macaque, a baboon, and an otter. The Cicchellis had not obtained the certificates of veterinary inspection required for importation of these species, nor did they obtain the Coggins test required by law to import the horses, donkeys, and zebra they had acquired.