



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

January 3, 2024

The Honorable Kim Ogg  
Harris County District Attorney's Office

Dear Ms. Ogg:

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing to request that your office (and the proper law-enforcement agency, as you deem appropriate) investigate and file criminal charges as suitable against those responsible for the neglect of various exotic mammals at Animal Ark, a pet store located at 2730 Brookdale Dr. in the Kingwood neighborhood of Houston. PETA urges investigators to visit the facility with a veterinarian who has expertise in exotic-mammal health and welfare so that they can identify any animals in need of care and opine on the conditions of and for the animals there.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff documented neglect at the facility in the attached reports. On May 24, 2023, nine hedgehogs, three guinea pigs, and two rabbits were found confined amid their feces, which covered up to 70% of the floor of the enclosures. A federal veterinarian noted a "foul odor" coming from two of the rooms where animals were kept. Trash was accumulated atop an enclosure confining two hedgehogs, and "numerous" flies were found around animals' housing.

On September 11, 2023, the USDA veterinarian found algae growing on water bottles provided to 10 guinea pigs, hedgehogs, and degus. When this veterinarian returned to check on the animals on November 27, 2023, a store representative "refused to allow [her] to conduct the inspection" and "made many accusatory statements, including that [she] was inspecting too frequently."

The neglect in May and September appears to violate Texas' prohibition against cruelty to non-livestock animals, Texas Penal Code § 42.092. The USDA rendered no aid or relief whatsoever to these animals, and these reports carry no criminal or civil penalties and don't preempt criminal liability under state law for neglecting animals. If you'd like to learn more about the USDA's findings, please see the contact information for the office in Riverdale, Maryland, [here](#). Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let us know if we can assist you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Paden  
Vice President of Evidence Analysis

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