



March 23, 2026

Bernadette Juarez
Deputy Administrator
Animal Care
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Via e-mail: Bernadette.R.Juarez@usda.gov; ac.complaints@usda.gov

Dear Ms. Juarez:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which has more than 10.4 million members and supporters worldwide, to respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) investigate potential violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and its implementing Animal Welfare Regulations (AWRs; 9 C.F.R. Parts 1-3) at the New Iberia Research Center, operated by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (USDA Certificate No. 72-R-0007).

PETA recently received video footage,¹ filmed earlier this year by insiders at the New Iberia Research Center, depicting room after room of monkeys, housed alone in steel cages barely larger than their bodies, with waste pans beneath the cages containing accumulated feces and uneaten food. We see dilapidated conditions, including cage pans apparently propped up with overturned buckets, a pooled liquid covering much of the floor in one room, peeling floor paint, and multiple monkeys exhibiting hair loss on their arms and legs. Although recorded in low light, the video unmistakably documents bleak conditions, with the apparent "enrichment" limited to single strands of plastic beads hung outside the cages and occasionally, a worn Kong toy inside.

It appears to us that the footage documents conditions that do not comply with the minimum standards required under the AWRs, as detailed below.

Failure to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates

Section 3.81 of Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations mandates the provision of "[e]nvironment enhancement to promote [the] psychological well-being" of nonhuman primates, stipulating: "Dealers, exhibitors, and research facilities must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan for environment enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates." In particular, Section 3.81(b) states:

¹ Clips from the video footage that appear to depict violations of Animal Welfare Regulations are at this link:

<https://www.petapreview.com/inside-the-monkey-laboratories-of-new-iberia-research-center-peta/>

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The physical environment in the primary enclosures must be enriched by providing means of expressing noninjurious species-typical activities. Species differences should be considered when determining the type or methods of enrichment. Examples of environmental enrichments include providing perches, swings, mirrors, and other increased cage complexities; providing objects to manipulate; varied food items; using foraging or task-oriented feeding methods; and providing interaction with the caregiver or other familiar and knowledgeable person consistent with personnel safety precautions.

And Section 3.81(c) advises: “Certain nonhuman primates must be provided special attention regarding enhancement of their environment, based on the needs of the individual species and in accordance with the instructions of the attending veterinarian.” This section clarifies that primates “requiring special attention” include those who “show signs of being in psychological distress through behavior or appearance” (Section 3.81(c)(2)) as well as singly housed primates who “are unable to see and hear nonhuman primates of their own or compatible species” (Section 3.81(c)(4)).

However, video footage shared by the New Iberia Research Center insiders shows multiple monkeys with extensive hair loss on their arms and legs. Hair loss on the arms and legs of captive monkeys is widely recognized by veterinarians and animal welfare scientists as a sign of compromised welfare, often associated with chronic stress or abnormal behavior resulting from inadequate housing and psychological distress.²

In room after room, it does not appear that the monkeys have been afforded meaningful physical enrichment. The rooms are astonishingly bleak, barren, and ramshackle. The monkeys have nothing to look at apart from other caged monkeys. Apart from a lone string of plastic beads hanging outside the cages and/or a worn Kong toy inside, they appear to have no items to manipulate or engage their minds. Taken together, these conditions reflect a failure to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates, as required by the Animal Welfare Regulations.

Failure to ensure the compatibility of monkeys who are caged together

Section 3.81(a)(3) mandates that “[n]onhuman primates may not be housed with other species of primates or animals unless they are compatible.” The regulation further advises that nonhuman primates held in the same enclosure should not be “hazardous to the health and well-being of each other.”

However, video footage shared by New Iberia Research Center insiders shows a very thin, mostly hairless female long-tailed macaque with an injury on the top of her head, which may have been sustained during an interaction with the male monkey who appears to be caged with her. If the injury resulted from an interaction between the two animals, this would indicate a failure to ensure social compatibility among monkeys housed together, as required by the Animal Welfare Regulations.³

Failure to provide sufficient space for primates

² Please see Clips 1 – 8 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

³ Please see Clip 9 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

Section 3.80(a)(2)(xi) of Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations provides that “[p]rimary enclosures must be constructed and maintained so that they provide sufficient space for the nonhuman primates to make normal postural adjustments with freedom of movement.”

However, video footage shared by the New Iberia Research Center insiders shows that some primary enclosures appear too small for the monkeys housed in them. The video depicts monkeys unable to stand fully erect in their enclosures. Confinement in a cage that is too small deprives a monkey of the ability to make normal postural adjustments, limits movement and exercise, frustrates species-typical behaviors, and is associated with chronic stress, physical deterioration, and psychological harm. Additionally, for some cages that appear to be outfitted with a perch, the perch is positioned only a few inches above the cage floor, rendering it functionally meaningless as environmental enrichment. Such near-floor-level perches fail to provide elevated spaces necessary for species-typical behaviors, do not promote psychological well-being, and instead reduce the usable floor area available to the monkeys. Taken together, these conditions indicate that the facility is failing to meet the Animal Welfare Regulations’ minimum space and housing requirements.⁴

Failure to ensure proper drainage in a room housing monkeys

Section 3.75(f) of Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations pertains to drainage and waste disposal and states, in part: “Housing facility operators must provide for regular and frequent collection, removal, and disposal of animal and food wastes, bedding, dead animals, debris, garbage, water, and any other fluids and wastes, in a manner that minimizes contamination and disease risk. Housing facilities must be equipped with disposal facilities and drainage systems that are constructed and operated so that animal wastes and water are rapidly eliminated, and the animals stay dry. Disposal and drainage systems must minimize vermin and pest infestation, insects, odors, and disease hazards. All drains must be properly constructed, installed, and maintained.”

However, video footage shared by the New Iberia Research Center insiders shows a significant pool of liquid, possibly water or urine, in a room housing monkeys; it appears possible that a lixist to one of the cages was bent and leaking water onto the floor, or that waste pans beneath the cages spilled urine, potentially necessitating the use of overturned pails to hold up the pans.⁵

The presence of peeling paint on the floor in a room housing monkeys further compromises the facility’s ability to maintain surfaces in a condition that permits effective cleaning and sanitization. These conditions indicate that the facility is failing to maintain housing facilities in a sanitary condition, as required by the Animal Welfare Regulations.⁶

Failure to ensure adequate cleaning and sanitization of indoor primary enclosures

Section 3.84(a) of Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that “[e]xcreta and food waste must be removed from inside each indoor primary enclosure daily and from underneath them as often as necessary to prevent an excessive accumulation of feces and food waste, to prevent the nonhuman primates from becoming soiled, and to reduce disease hazards, insects, pests, and odors. Dirt floors, floors with absorbent bedding, and planted areas in primary enclosures must be spot-cleaned with sufficient frequency to ensure all animals the freedom to

⁴ Please see Clips 10 – 13 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

⁵ Please see Clip 14 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

⁶ Please see Clip 15 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

avoid contact with excreta, or as often as necessary to reduce disease hazards, insects, pests, and odors. When steam or water is used to clean the primary enclosure, whether by hosing, flushing, or other methods, nonhuman primates must be removed, unless the enclosure is large enough to ensure the animals will not be harmed, wetted, or distressed in the process. Perches, bars, and shelves must be kept clean and replaced when worn. If the species of the nonhuman primates housed in the primary enclosure engages in scent marking, hard surfaces in the primary enclosure must be spot-cleaned daily.”

However, video footage shared by the New Iberia Research Center insiders shows a significant accumulation of feces and food waste beneath the wire-bottom cages where monkeys are held.⁷

In a larger enclosure confining vervet monkeys, feces litter the floor. These conditions suggest that the facility is failing to maintain housing facilities in a sanitary condition, as required by the Animal Welfare Regulations.⁸

We respectfully urge you to investigate the concerns detailed in this complaint and, if substantiated, to take swift and decisive action—including citing the facility for violations of the Animal Welfare Act and its implementing regulations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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⁷ Please see Clips 16 – 19 of the video referenced in footnote 1.

⁸ Please see Clip 20 of the video referenced in footnote 1.