

Daniel Paden

From: Daniel Paden
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 5:00 PM
To: macortez@co.hancock.oh.us
Subject: Animal neglect, 7754 State Route 103
Attachments: 2025-09-10 R_R_Chinchilla_Inc 2.pdf; 2025-09-10 R_R_Chinchilla_Inc.pdf; r-r-chinchilla-inc-inspection-reports.pdf

Sheriff Michael A. Cortez
Hancock County Sheriff's Office

Dear Sheriff Cortez,

I hope this finds you well. I'm writing to request that your office investigate and, as suitable, file criminal charges against those responsible for the persistent neglect of chinchillas at R & R Chinchilla Inc., a breeding facility at 7754 State Route 103 in Van Buren Township. PETA urges investigators to visit the facility with a veterinarian who has expertise in chinchilla health and welfare to identify any animals in need of care and opine on the conditions of and for the approximately 364 chinchillas there.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff—including veterinary medical officers—have documented neglect at the facility in the attached reports. On September 10, USDA personnel found that a chinchilla's left eye was inflamed and crusted shut with a yellow substance; he had a mass under his jaw and the hair on his hindquarters was stained yellow. The suspect(s) hadn't even noticed his condition, let alone provided him with the veterinary care he required. The same day, federal personnel noted a "strong odor of ammonia" where chinchillas are caged, which "irritated" their eyes.

These findings may violate Ohio's cruelty-to-animals statute, R.C. § 959.13, which prohibits people from denying animals "change of air" and relief from unnecessary suffering.

In addition to the violations outlined above, you may wish to consider that the USDA has cited R & R Chinchilla for 28 additional violations of federal law. On October 25, 2023, an inspector also found that a chinchilla and her two nursing babies had been deprived of water. Once water was provided, they "drank voraciously for approximately 4 minutes." At least 24 other chinchillas were found without water, and "half ... immediately drank" when it was provided. The same day, two chinchillas with "excessive hair loss" were found in a 1-square-foot cage—one was "nearly bald," and the other had "approximately 1 inch by 1 inch patch of hair missing" with "slightly red" skin. They had been confined like this for "at least" two days and had been deprived of veterinary care for their condition.

This September, a federal veterinarian found "a thick buildup of dust, hair and debris on the top and sides of" numerous cages and dust and cobwebs on the vents in rooms where animals were confined. Similar filthy conditions were found on June 12, 2024; November 7, 2023; October 25, 2023; January 23, 2023; and September 13, 2022.

The USDA's action renders no aid or relief whatsoever to animals on site, carries no criminal or civil penalties, and doesn't preempt criminal liability under state law for acts of animal neglect. If you'd like to learn more about the USDA's findings, please see the contact information for the office in Fort Collins, Colorado, [here](#). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Paden
Vice President of Legal Advocacy
PETA