

Sarah J. Helming
Deputy Administrator, Animal Care, USDA/APHIS/AC
Via email: sarah.j.helming@usda.gov ; animalcare@usda.gov

11/7/24

Deputy Administrator Helming,

I am writing to you today to file a Federal Complaint against the Alpha Genesis Corporation (56-R-0105 ; 56-B-0120) for a large monkey escape which has occurred within the last 24 hours. I urge you to send an inspector to this facility immediately.

According to a Yemassee (SC) police department report posted on October 6 ***“As of 9:45PM, we can confirm that 40 primates have escaped from the Alpha Genesis facility located on Castle Hall Road.”***
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=978841384288120&set=a.228779092627690>

This incident would clearly violate either ***Sec. 2.38 Misc.(f)(1) Animal Handling — Handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort*** or ***Sec. 3.75 Housing Facilities, general.***

The clear carelessness which allowed these forty monkeys to escape endangered not only the safety of the animals, but also put the residents of South Carolina at risk.

It is important to note that Alpha Genesis was cited for primate escapes as recently as 2022 (see ***Sec. 3.75 Housing Facilities, general*** violation in the attached inspection report). Therefore, any violations issued against Alpha Genesis for this monkey escape must be considered repeat violations.

Alpha Genesis must be fully investigated and prosecuted. Their violations must be punished. A case must be opened with the Investigative and Enforcement Services Division of the USDA.

At the conclusion of this investigation, the maximum penalty must be assessed against Alpha Genesis — \$12,722 per infraction, per animal. As you know, since forty monkeys escaped, even a significantly reduced penalty could reach six figures.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future about the fate of this facility.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,
Executive Director, SAEN

Attachments: 1 Alpha Genesis Inspection report



Inspection Report

ALPHA GENESIS INC
95 CASTLE HALL RD
YEMASSEE, SC 29945

Customer ID: **905**
Certificate: **56-B-0120**
Site: 001
ALPHA GENESIS INC

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION
Date: 20-SEP-2022

2.38(f)(1) Critical

Miscellaneous.

Six separate incidents of animals being returned to incorrect enclosures were documented from January through August, 2022. One animal was found dead from trauma caused by the resident animals in the enclosure. Four animals required subsequent veterinary care, and one animal was found before any trauma occurred. The surviving animals were returned to their correct social groups.

Inadvertently placing animals into unfamiliar enclosures with unfamiliar inhabitants puts the newly introduced animal at unnecessary risk of significant injury and death caused by the resident animals. Per the regulations, handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.

The facility has revised the standard operating procedure for animal return to enclosure and has made significant changes in how animal returns are conducted and monitored. Corrected prior to inspection.

2.40(b)(3) Critical

Attending veterinarian and adequate veterinary care (dealers and exhibitors).

Prepared By: MARY ANN MCBRIDE
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care
Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Date:
21-SEP-2022

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
21-SEP-2022



Inspection Report

In two unrelated incidents in July 2022, two animals had digits become entrapped in structures inside their enclosures. Both animals were found dead in their enclosures with their fingers entrapped.

Insufficient daily observations can result in animals who become entrapped not being identified in a timely manner, allowing them to succumb to exposure to excessive environmental conditions. Per the regulations, each research facility shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that include daily observation of all animals to assess their health and well-being; Provided, however, that daily observation of animals may be accomplished by someone other than the attending veterinarian; and Provided, further, that a mechanism of direct and frequent communication is required so that timely and accurate information on problems of animal health, behavior, and well-being is conveyed to the attending veterinarian.

The facility has implemented improvements of the facility's standard operating procedures used for daily observations and reporting of animal counts and findings to the AV. Corrected prior to inspection.

3.75(a) Critical

Housing facilities, general.

Six separate incidents of animals opening or escaping from their primary enclosures were documented between January and August of 2022. Two groups of animals (7 animals and 4 animals) escaped through weaknesses in the chain link fences of their primary enclosure but remained contained within the perimeter fence. Three groups (2 animals each) opened the panels between their cages and had direct, unplanned interaction, three of which required veterinary care. One additional animal escaped its primary enclosure and subsequently required veterinary care. All animals were recovered and returned to their correct enclosures.

Prepared By: MARY ANN MCBRIDE
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care
Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER

Date:
21-SEP-2022

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
21-SEP-2022



Inspection Report

An infant monkey became entangled in a stretch gauze material used in an enclosure to hold a water bottle in a clinic cage. The infant did not survive.

Enclosures lacking appropriate structural strength and design can provide opportunities for escape, entrapment, or unintended interactions with other animals, potentially resulting in injury or death to the animals. Per the regulations, housing facilities for nonhuman primates must be designed and constructed so that they are structurally sound for the species of nonhuman primates housed in them. They must be kept in good repair, and they must protect the animals from injury, contain the animals securely, and restrict other animals from entering.

The facility repaired the associated weakened chain link areas and eliminated the use of the cages that the animals were able to open for inappropriate contact. The use of proper water bottle fasteners was implemented. Corrected prior to inspection.

This inspection (20Sep2022) and exit interview (21Sep2022) were conducted with facility representatives.

Additional Inspectors:

GWENDALYN MAGINNIS, Nonhuman Primate Species Specialist

Prepared By: MARY ANN MCBRIDE
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care
Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Date:
21-SEP-2022

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
21-SEP-2022