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San Diego-Area Lab (Pro Sci) Violates Federal Law, Animal Dies, Just 2 Weeks After USDA 'Official Warning'; Watchdog Group Calls for Federal Fine

SAN DIEGO, CA. – Government regulators have again found that San Diego area laboratory Pro Sci – one of the nation's leading suppliers of anti-bodies, but characterized as the most criminal lab in the U.S. – has violated the Animal Welfare Act, according to a national research watchdog group.

In an inspection Sept. 10, the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that negligent care led to the death of a rabbit, which had not been provided veterinary care for at least 20 days before death, SAEN, which monitors the nation's research laboratories.

Just last August, Pro Sci was hit with an "Official Warning" by the USDA for violating the AWA 13 times in one July inspection – more than any other U.S. laboratory, said SAEN executive director Michael Budkie, A.H.T. Budkie called Pro Sci a "hellhole" and "the most criminal lab in the U.S."

SAEN had previously filed an Official Complaint against Pro Sci, seeking a large federal fine.

"It is clear that this lab has a long-term pattern of negligence and a total disregard for even minimum veterinary care and cleaning standards as elaborated in the Animal Welfare Act. Pro Sci has continued to violate the Animal Welfare Act, even after receiving an 'Official Warning.' I must insist that your office immediately open a case against Pro Sci. This case must include the previous citations listed in the Official Warning, as well as the new citation from the (latest September) inspection," said Budkie in a letter to the USDA.

In the 13 violations Pro Sci incurred earlier this year, it was cited for multiple instances of inadequate veterinary care including at least eight rabbits who had serious veterinary conditions. Some rooms reached temperatures as high as 93 degrees without ventilation, and according to the USDA, some enclosures were: "covered in rust...Some were so severely rusted that the enclosures had holes in them."

The inspection report also cited the lab for a "build up of hair and excreta observed along the edges of numerous rabbit enclosure(s)," and "rabbit enclosures were not being sanitized as the standards require, every thirty days."

"It is clear that the USDA does not take the suffering of animals seriously," said Budkie. "Issuing an 'Official Warning' against Pro Sci is nothing more than a paper slap on the wrist."