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Penn State Negligence Kills, Abuses Dozens of Research Subjects - Animals Starved, Dehydrated, Denied Veterinary Care, According to Watchdog Audit

HERSHEY, PA – Dozens of animals were negligently killed and abused at Pennsylvania State University's Hershey Medical Center, according to an audit by a national watchdog group, who called the results "shocking."

SAEN, an Ohio-based nonprofit that monitors U.S. research facilities for violations of law and animal abuse, said its audit of the animal experimentation program Penn State University's Hershey Medical Center, revealed – according to internal correspondence – dozens of animals negligently killed or abused in just seven months.

SAEN said causes of death included starvation and dehydration. Sick, injured, and paralyzed animals were denied veterinary care, including euthanasia. Other animals were discovered with rotting tails, and living animals were discovered in a carcass freezer.

Eleven Penn State letters obtained by SAEN admit wrongdoing and negligence to a federal funding agency, although they apparently were never intended to be made public.

SAEN said it has contacted Penn State's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. A. Craig Hillemeie, to insist on an independent investigation and the termination of staff who are responsible for the negligence and abuse.

SAEN claims that Penn State's research administration has failed to do its job in a rush to approve grants and bring in funding, having acquired more than \$20 million in federal grants.

"This is shocking. And the reality is that Penn State has been more interested in attracting federal grant money than keeping animals alive," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., SAEN executive director and co-founder.

SAEN said that according to Penn State's website, the university claims to be committed to ". . . animal welfare" and ". . . the quality and integrity of animal-based research . . . comprehensive health care for six to 10 different species of laboratory animal patients."

SAEN said its investigation showed otherwise.

"I call BS. If what Penn State claimed were true, animals would not be dead from starvation, dehydration, and would not have been denied euthanasia, or found alive in a carcass freezer," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., SAEN co-founder and executive director. "There is no excuse for throwing living animals into a freezer as though they were a piece of meat."