

SAEN Watchdog Group: University of Wisconsin targeted in scathing complaint for repeatedly breaking federal law, and animal abuse - watchdog blames regulator for failure to enforce U.S. law

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MADISON, WI – The University of Wisconsin has piled up dozens of federal violations, injuring and killing multiple animals in less than four years, and federal regulators have done nothing, charged a national research watchdog group.

According to SAEN, an Ohio-based national watchdog that monitors the nation's research facilities for illegal activities and animal abuse, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture inspections from January 2016 through July 9 of 2019 have documented at least 20 incidents where UW negligence has injured or killed monkeys, or other animals.

SAEN said digits, limbs, and tongues have been partially or entirely amputated, and one monkey died of dehydration. Dozens of escapes have occurred – many because of UW negligence. USDA “discipline” against UW for breaking federal law include critical citations, repeat citations, and at least one critical repeat citation.

Additional violations found buried in UW correspondence include two more monkey injuries/escapes, failure to feed infant monkeys, preparing a monkey for a medical procedure – only to discover that the wrong monkey was being used; failure to provide pain relief to a monkey, giving medication to the wrong monkey for 19 days (thereby denying a monkey of treatment for 19 days).

SAEN's complaint, written by SAEN co-founder Michael Budkie, A.H.T. and available upon request, states in part:

"I know that your office considers major violations of the Animal Welfare Act to be very serious in nature, especially when these violations kill or seriously injure animals - the University of Wisconsin has done both. The treatment of animals at this facility illustrates attitudes of carelessness and negligence that are nothing short of astonishing in their breadth and depth," said SAEN in its federal complaint to Dr. Elizabeth Goldentyre, Eastern Region Director, USDA/APHIS/AC.

"The University of Wisconsin must be punished so that meaningful changes can be made - otherwise monkeys will continue to be injured and killed ad infinitum. Digits, legs, and tongues will continue to be amputated. Animals will suffer needlessly, and in some cases die, and if your office does not seriously prosecute this facility then you will be at least partially responsible. Lack of prosecution sends the message to this lab, as well as others, that you will allow them to abuse and maim animals without penalty..

"If your office has any concern whatsoever for animals, or any concept of the importance of the Animal Welfare Act, you will immediately open a case (if an open case does not already exist) against the University of Wisconsin, and prosecute these amazing examples of incompetence to the fullest extent of the law," the complaint continued.