

APHIS Animal Care creates team to inspect traveling elephant exhibitors

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APHIS' Animal Care program has formed a team of veterinary medical officers that will inspect USDA-licensed, traveling elephant exhibitors across the country. The members of this special unit have the necessary experience and skills to fully monitor the exhibitors' compliance with all pertinent Animal Welfare Act regulations.

Team members will conduct their inspections at consistent and appropriate intervals to ensure that the elephants are being properly cared for and handled according to federal standards.

Creating this team enhances our efforts to regulate this particular group of licensed animal exhibitors. We see several benefits from this enhancement: 1) the team will conduct timely inspections; 2) the Animal Care program will be able to identify problems earlier than in the past; and 3) Animal Care will be able to respond more quickly to complaints.

The welfare of the animals that we regulate remains at the forefront of all that we do in Animal Care. I think the work of this team will continue to bolster our efforts to be more consistent across the board with all our inspections, and we will be in a position to better monitor the accountability of these USDA licensees.

Dr. Chester Gipson
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