NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Announces Recent Animal Welfare Act and Horse Protection Act Enforcement Actions

WASHINGTON, April 27, 2012--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is continuing to move more swiftly and consistently to take enforcement action in response to animal welfare violations. As part of its effort to make its actions transparent and accessible to the public, APHIS is highlighting enforcement actions taken in response to violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and Horse Protection Act (HPA).

Copies of documents related to these actions, as well as copies of official warnings, are available in the APHIS FOIA Reading Room at www.aphis.usda.gov/foia/foia_reading_room.shtml.

During the month of March, APHIS filed administrative complaints alleging that the following persons violated the AWA or HPA:

AWA Docket No. 12-0277; Gus White d/b/a Collins Exotic Animal Orphanage.

HPA Docket No. 12-0291 [amended]; Gerale Martin; Derrick Brown.

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The following persons entered into pre-litigation settlement agreements (also known as stipulations) in connection with alleged violations of the AWA or HPA:

APHIS Case No. KS09029-AC; Lonny Berry.

APHIS Case No. KS09034-AC; Alvin Harrell; Shirley Harrell.

APHIS Case No. MO09063-AC; Jerri Vestal.

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APHIS Case No. MO10012-AC; Laura Schwartz.

APHIS Case No. NE09002-AC; Elizabeth Chloupec.

USDA's administrative law judges and judicial officer issued decisions and orders under the AWA or HPA involving the following persons:

AWA Docket No. 09-0196; For The Birds, Inc.; Jerry Korn; Michael Korn.

AWA Docket No. 09-0196; Raymond Willis.

AWA Docket No. 11-0223; Summer Wind Farm Sanctuary.

AWA Docket No. 12-0039; Animal Source Texas, Inc.

HPA Docket No. 11-0426; Bonnie McCoy.

HPA Docket No. 11-0426; Peggy Caldwell.

The AWA requires that minimum standards of care and treatment be provided for certain animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially or exhibited to the public. It excludes those animals raised for food or fiber. Persons who operate facilities in these categories must provide their animals with adequate care and treatment in the areas of housing, handling, sanitation, nutrition, water, veterinary care and protection from extreme weather and temperatures.

To ensure that its licensees are meeting the AWA standards, APHIS inspectors conduct routine, unannounced inspections of all licensed facilities. Violations of the AWA can lead to penalties, including official warnings, civil penalties and license suspensions/revocations. For more information on the inspection and enforcement processes, visit APHIS' animal care website at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/.

The HPA is the federal law that prohibits horses subjected to a practice called soring from participating in shows, sales, exhibitions and auctions. Soring is a cruel and abusive practice used to accentuate a horse's gait. APHIS works actively with the horse industry to protect against such abuse, ensuring that only sound and healthy horses participate in shows, sales, exhibitions and auctions. APHIS' ultimate goal is to end the inhumane practice of soring completely.

The HPA authorizes APHIS to issue civil penalties and to disqualify violators from participating in horse shows, exhibitions and sales. Both the AWA and HPA contain criminal penalties as well.

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