



PETA Factsheet

Hendrick Bros. Circus (Robert Childress)

USDA License #56-C-0121, P.O. Box 829, Easley, SC 29641

Hendrick Bros. Circus has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has repeatedly cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to provide enclosures adequate to prevent potential escape of animals, failure to provide adequate space and shelter to animals, failure to provide adequate ventilation during transport of animals, and failure to properly maintain the structural integrity of transport enclosures to ensure the safety and well-being of animals in its care. Contact PETA for documentation.

June 3, 2009: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of failure to follow a written program of veterinary care for tigers, failure to remove accumulated feces and waste from a goat enclosure, failure to maintain enclosures for the llama and seven goats in good repair to prevent possible injuries to the animals, and failure to maintain the travel trailer used for the tigers.

January 29, 2009: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of failure to provide a thin camel with adequate veterinary care and failure to follow a written program of veterinary care for tigers and the camel. The USDA also cited the circus for failure to correct previously identified noncompliances of failure to safely maintain housing facilities for the goats and failure to clean a filthy barn housing the camel, ponies, and a donkey. The barn was contaminated with an excess accumulation of feces and was a possible disease hazard.

August 27, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for providing inadequate veterinary care to a camel who appeared thin "as evidence[d] by easily visible and palpable ribs," feeding a diet to the tigers that was not approved by the veterinarian, improper handling of a llama who was wearing a halter with an attached floor-length rope that could get tangled and cause injury to the animal, improper record-keeping, failure to safely maintain housing facilities for the goats, failure to store food for the camel in a manner that protects the food against pest infestation, failure to provide adequate shade to a zebu and llama and adequate shelter to 13 goats, failure to provide clean drinking water to a camel and horses, and failure to clean a filthy barn housing a camel and two horses (the barn was contaminated with an excess accumulation of feces).

August 26, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to maintain a trailer used to transport a camel and ponies. The trailer had a leak in the ceiling where rain could enter.

July 21, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of failure to safely handle four goats who were tied to various areas without shade or protection from the public and three tigers who were left unattended. During the same inspection, the USDA cited the circus for failure to maintain the goats' housing facilities in good repair to protect the animals from injury.

July 10, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to provide an adequate safety barrier between tigers, goats, and the public; leaving unattended a young goat who was being roughly handled by the public; leaving tigers unsupervised; and failing to provide shade to the animals.

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July 2, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to have a responsible party present so that an animal welfare inspection could be conducted.

June 20, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of failure to maintain a transport trailer in which wires, bits of ceiling, and a metal strip were protruding into a compartment used to transport goats.

June 10, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to provide adequate shelter from sunlight for two goats and one camel who were tethered in a field with no shade in temperatures that ranged from 93°F to 107°F. Hendrick Bros. was also cited for failure to maintain a transport trailer in which wires, bits of ceiling, and a metal strip were protruding into a compartment used to transport baby goats.

April 24, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of failure to provide an exercise pen of adequate height to prevent animals' escape. The circus was also cited for incorrectly reporting animal inventories for several years.

January 9, 2008: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct previously identified noncompliances, including failure to appropriately modify a tiger enclosure, which an inspector determined remained "not secure enough ... and ... potentially not high enough to contain the tigers"; failure to provide barriers to prevent people—including children who lived in trailers in the immediate area—from approaching the tiger enclosure and having contact with the tigers; failure to provide a perimeter fence around the tiger enclosure and training pen, which the inspector determined was "a potentially very dangerous situation as the tiger pen is only a few hundred yards from a major road"; and failure to provide adequate space to three adult tigers who were still housed in a travel enclosure that measured 16 feet long by 7 feet wide by 5 feet tall (the tigers were only allowed out for training). Hendrick Bros. was also cited for failure to properly clean a tiger enclosure; the inspector wrote, "[The tigers] paced the small enclosure while [the floor was washed down] and walked continuously through the area being sprayed, exposing them to aerosolized feces. There are no platforms in the enclosure for them to use to stay out of the way, and the area is too small to keep from wetting them."

November 7, 2007: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to have the written Program of Veterinary Care available for review. Hendrick Bros. was also cited for improper food storage when "[e]xamination of the feed bin revealed an electrical surge protector outlet, diaper wipes, wire coat hanger, etc. being stored in the food bin on top of the sweet feed for the animals."

August 29, 2007: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to include three adult tigers on the Program of Veterinary Care as well as failure to attain written veterinary approval of the large cats' diet. Hendrick Bros. was cited for failure to adequately construct a tiger enclosure for exercise, training, and circus shows. The pen was only 9 feet high and had an open top, and the inspector determined that it was "not tall enough or contained enough to prevent the tigers from potentially escaping." Hendrick Bros. was cited for failure to provide proper ventilation in an enclosure used to transport three tigers. The transport enclosure had a solid metal front and back, solid wooden sides, and only two small holes in the ceiling. The inspector determined that this was "inadequate ventilation for travel to prevent potential overheating of the animals." Hendrick Bros. was cited for failure to provide adequate space to three adult tigers who were housed for at least three months in a travel trailer measuring 16 feet long by 7 feet wide by approximately 5 feet high as well as failure to provide a perimeter fence around the trailer. The USDA also cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to properly handle food to prevent contamination when the inspector observed that frozen bags of chicken parts were being thawed on the ground in the sun and observed ants on the bags.

June 13, 2007: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to correct a previously identified noncompliance of not providing acquisition records, this time for three adult tigers, new goats, and a miniature zebu; failure to provide adequate veterinary care to a goat whose hooves were overgrown; and failure to adequately clean a small trailer that housed three goats and had "an excessive accumulation of feces and dirty bedding."

February 24, 2007: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to have the written Program of Veterinary Care available for review as well as failure to provide acquisition records for the animals who were being exhibited.

August 28, 2006: A USDA inspector noted that Hendrick Bros. had not been inspected during travel this year because the circus had failed to submit a travel itinerary.

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August 29, 2005: A monkey with the Hendricks Bros. Circus was frightened by a train whistle and fled into a nearby wooded area in Springdale, Ohio. He was found the next day, damp and hungry, huddled in the roof area of a picnic pavilion at a park.

October 14, 2003: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to annually review and update its Program of Veterinary Care, which had not been updated for more than a year and did not include information detailing drug dosages and the method of administering euthanasia. Hendrick Bros. was cited for failure to maintain the structural strength of a fence in the llama and pony pasture. The fence had rusted through and had broken and protruding wires and a gate in need of replacement. Hendrick Bros. was also cited for failure to maintain accurate and complete records of the animals it currently owned.

September 9, 2002: The USDA cited Hendrick Bros. for failure to maintain the structural strength and safety of enclosures used to transport animals. The elephant transport enclosure had a damaged vent with sharp metal protrusions that could injure the animal, and the floor of the enclosure had an approximately 8-inch-diameter hole, which could allow waste material to leak to the outside of the trailer. The inspector reported that the wood in the floor was "decayed and crumbling" and "could give way" under the animal's weight. The inspector also noted that the elephant Tonya "was observed exhibiting stereotypical behavior for some time prior to the inspection."

March 13, 2002: An African elephant named Tonya, who belonged to Robert Childress and was used in various circuses, escaped the control of her handlers while she was being loaded into a trailer in Easley, South Carolina. She fled into nearby woods and was recaptured with the assistance of police. This was the fourth time that Tonya ran amok.