

Lydia Elephant Rides

3882 Lake Buffum Rd.
Meade, FL 33841
USDA License #58-C-0413

David Tesch has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Tesch for failing to provide veterinary care, shelter from the elements, adequate ventilation in the transport trailer, and proper food storage and for failure to maintain enclosures. Lydia was captured in the wild in 1943. She is afraid of other animals, including dogs. Lydia is considered potentially dangerous by the USDA and has attacked four elephants, killing two and crippling two. Contact PETA for documentation.

August 28, 2002: Tesch was cited by the USDA for failure to correct a previously identified violation of not maintaining facilities in good repair to protect the elephant from injury.

June 18, 2002: The USDA cited Tesch for failure to maintain facilities in good repair to protect the elephant from injury.

March 19, 2002: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary. The inspector was unable to conduct an animal welfare inspection.

July 5, 2001: Tesch was cited for failure to provide adequate veterinary care. The inspector wrote that Lydia was in need of foot care and that the owner was unable to produce any evidence of tuberculosis tests for elephant handlers.

June 29, 2000: Tesch was cited for failure to provide adequate veterinary care. The inspector wrote that Lydia was in need of foot care.

July 28, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for veterinary care violations. Mr. Tesch has not been tested for tuberculosis, and Don Wixom (Lydia's handler) has no documentation of a tuberculosis test.

June 8, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for veterinary care violations. Mr. Tesch has not been tested for tuberculosis, and Don Wixom (Lydia's handler) has no documentation of a tuberculosis test.

Tesch was also cited for poor housekeeping and failure to have records of acquisition.

May 26, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

April 29, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

April 19, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

April 2, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for veterinary care violations. The inspector wrote, "Mr. and Mrs. Tesch refuse to get a tuberculosis test as outlined in policy #21. Don Wixom [Lydia's handler] stated that he was tested for tuberculosis, but does not have any documentation as to the date of this test or the results."

Tesch was also cited for failure to provide Lydia with shelter from direct sunlight and adequate space. The inspector noted, "The elephant is chained inside the truck ... from approximately 8:00 p.m. until either 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m., depending on the ride schedule."

March 31, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

February 18, 1999: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

September 18, 1998: The USDA cited Tesch for inadequate veterinary care. The inspector noted, "The back right foot is in need of care. Inside edge of sole and inside nail [are] overgrown."

Tesch was also cited for a transport trailer in disrepair with potential to cause injury.

February 3, 1998: The USDA cited Tesch for inadequate veterinary care. The inspector wrote, "There are no records to document the veterinarian-recommended second deworming that was due in August 1997. The cuticles and soles are overgrown. There is no log to document when foot care is performed."

Tesch was also cited for improper food storage and poor housekeeping.

August 26, 1997: An elephant expert reviewed videotape of Lydia jerking her head back and emitting a short, sharp trumpet sound when Tesch raised a sharp, metal bullhook toward her head to force her to lie down. The expert wrote, "Lydia's rapid head movement is consistent with an elephant attempting to avoid something unpleasant. ... The short, sharp trumpet Lydia emitted ... is consistent with the sounds made when an elephant is frightened. ... Lydia's "response" is consistent with a trained elephant's response to a dominant handler who uses negative reinforcement as a means of control."

August 10, 1997: According to the *Star*, a Chicago Ridge, Ill., festival canceled elephant rides using Lydia because Tesch stated that his elephant does not interact well with other animals.

July 25, 1997: The USDA received a complaint from Iowa that Lydia was tied to a short chain in 98-degree heat on an asphalt parking lot with no shade. The inspector was unable to locate Tesch to investigate because he failed to submit the required itinerary.

June 25, 1997: An elephant expert reviewed Lydia's condition from video footage. She found her feet to be "in very poor condition," her skin to be "very dry and scaly," and her diet of "pounds of cookies each day" to be neglectful.

Lydia's handler stated in the videotape that Lydia attacked four elephants, killing two and

crippling two. The expert reviewing the tape wrote, "Lydia may be aggressive and domineering with other elephants, but outright brutality toward other elephants by a female elephant is unnatural (it does not happen in the wild) and brought on by the conditions captive elephants are kept [in]. Disgruntled elephants, many times, will not vent their anger at their captors but instead displace their aggression on others, including other elephants."

June 4, 1997: According to the *Belvidere Daily Republican*, the Love Park, Ill., City Council was sufficiently concerned with public health and safety issues to consider denying Tesch's permit application to bring Lydia. Tesch withdrew the application.

January 23, 1997: The USDA cited Tesch for inadequate veterinary care. The inspector noted, "The nails are overgrown. Feet need trimming." Tesch was also cited for unsanitary food storage and poor ventilation in the transport trailer.

February 15, 1996: Tesch was fined \$75 for failing to have a business license while giving rides in a North Chicago, Ill., video store parking lot during the summer of 1995. Charges of keeping a dangerous animal and failure to obtain an amusement license were dropped according to the plea agreement.

November 21, 1995: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

November 15, 1995: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

June 9, 1995: The USDA cited Tesch for poor housekeeping and inadequate maintenance of primary enclosure.

March 17, 1995: The USDA issued a warning to Tesch for repeatedly failing to store food in a safe manner to prevent contamination and for failure to maintain a complete perimeter fence.

February 13, 1995: The USDA cited Tesch for inadequate maintenance of transport vehicle, unsafe perimeter fencing, and unsanitary food storage.

January 20, 1995: In an internal USDA document, Acting Deputy Administrator Ron DeHaven identified Lydia as "potentially dangerous" and wrote that she had run "out of control through a nursing home."

January 25, 1994: The USDA cited Tesch for failing to submit the required itinerary.

November 17, 1990: A Polk County, Fla., deputy found Lydia after she broke through a concrete-block wall and escaped from her walking pen at Tesch's home.

March 2, 1987: Two children riding Lydia were frightened and suffered scratches when she broke loose from her chain, jumped out of the ring, and ran across a busy street into a wooded area a half-mile away while performing in Pensacola, Fla.

For more information, contact:

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