

November 17, 2020

Dr. Elizabeth Goldentyer, DVM
Director, Animal Welfare Field Operations
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care
920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27606-5210
Via Email: aceast@aphis.usda.gov

Dear Dr. Goldentyer,

On behalf of Rise for Animals, I am writing to file an Official Complaint against Riner & Associates, Inc. (certificate number: 73-R-0118) for severe and repetitive violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

As evidenced below, it is clear that the Attending Veterinarian at Riner & Associates does not have and has failed to gain the appropriate awareness and oversight needed to ensure adequate veterinary care at the facility.

Records Obtained and Reviewed

In formulating this letter, Rise for Animals reviewed seven years of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Inspection Reports for Riner & Associates. These records were made available through the USDA Animal Care Public Search Tool.

USDA Inspection Report Findings

As you are aware, Riner & Associates has repeatedly violated the AWA. The most alarming violations being the continuous failure to comply with Animal Welfare Regulations Section 2.33(b)(2) Attending Veterinarian and Adequate Vet Care.

“Each research facility shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that use the appropriate method to prevent, control, diagnose, and treat diseases and injuries.”¹

¹ *Attending Veterinarian*, Nat'l. Ag. Library, <https://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/attending-veterinarian> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

In 2020, your inspectors reported that Riner & Associates failed to provide veterinarian care for the following animals:

- A male beagle (ID 74349) was non-weight bearing on his left hind limb. The facility had noted the lameness, but the dog did not receive any medical treatment.
- A female cat named **Sophie** (ID 5819) had lost approximately 75% of her hair and had scabbed lesions on both flanks. The facility noted a small amount of hair loss but provided no medical treatment, and the lesions were more involved with increased hair loss and skin lesions.
- A male beagle named **Glenn** (ID 3871) had two red, inflamed areas of hair loss on his mid-dorsum. These lesions were approximately 1.5 inches long and 3/4 inch wide. The facility had not noticed this.²

In 2019, your inspectors reported that Riner & Associates failed to provide veterinarian care for the following animals:

- A cat named **Arthur** (ID 7417) had black debris in both ears, and there was no indication that the facility had noted this.
- A cat named **Sophie** (ID 5819) had a thin hair coat on her sides, back, and flanks, and there was no indication that the facility had noted this.
- A cat named **Cry Baby** (ID 7267) had a mucoid discharge in both eyes, and there was no indication that the facility had noted this.
- A cat named **Sam** (ID 5934) had black debris in both ears, and there was no indication that the facility had noted this.³

In 2017, your inspectors reported that Riner & Associates failed to provide veterinarian care for the following animals:

- Two beagles, **Cheech** and **Chong**, had "cherry eyes." The facility documented these, but there was no further instruction on monitoring, follow up, or management.
- Two cats, **Raven** (ID 6949) and **Cisco** (ID 7020), had opacity and apparent scarring in one eye. The facility documented these, but there was no indication of a veterinarian examining these animals or any treatment guidance.
- A male beagle named **Whitey** (ID 4176) had red skin lesions on the lower rear legs. The facility had treated the dog initially with an oral antibiotic for approximately one week. However, there was no follow-up treatment, and the lesions remained unresolved.

² Riner & Associates, Inc. 2020 APHIS Inspection Report, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO) 2020, <https://arlo.riseforanimals.org/entity/riner-associates-inc-1943/records/8081> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

³ Riner & Associates, Inc. 2019 APHIS Inspection Report, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO) 2020, <https://arlo.riseforanimals.org/entity/riner-associates-inc-1943/records/8086> (last visited Nov.17, 2020).

- **A beagle** (ID 3432) on row D has several live ticks inside the left ear. The dog was noted tilting and shaking its head, and the ear appeared sensitive when touched.
- **A beagle** (ID 2875) had several visible ticks on the side and flank. The facility had noted this dog as having ticks approximately two weeks earlier, but there was no indication of any treatment or preventative application.⁴

In 2016, your inspectors reported that Riner & Associates failed to provide veterinarian care for the following animals:

- **A male beagle** (ID 3253) had severe dental calculus and tartar. The gum was resorbing above the upper cheek tooth on the right side, leaving a small gap between the tooth and gum line.
- **A female beagle** (ID 3845) had severe dental calculus and tartar. There was an accumulation of hair and debris coating the rear teeth. Her gums were red and inflamed.
- **A male beagle** (ID 2850) had severe dental calculus and an accumulation of hair and debris on the rear teeth. His gums were red and inflamed.
- **A male beagle** (ID 2975) had a heavy accumulation of tartar and calculus on multiple teeth. A middle-upper right tooth was broken in half and very loose at the gum line.⁵

In 2014, your inspectors reported that Riner & Associates failed to provide veterinarian care for the following animals:

- A male beagle named **Julio** (Microchip 2576) was extremely thin. His ribs, spine, and pelvis were visible, and the dog had considerable muscle wasting throughout his body.
- A female beagle named **Lilly** (Microchip 0A02413257) had a large, red swelling located in the right eye's inner corner, on the lower eyelid's inner surface.
- A female beagle named **Ida Mae** (Microchip 0A02412566) was extremely wobbly and ataxic. She also seemed disoriented, responding slowly to verbal cues. She had great difficulty walking and seemed to have little control over her hind legs.⁶

On-site USDA inspectors recorded the instances above during their single visit to Riner & Associates per year. How many more incidents of failed veterinary care occur throughout

⁴ Riner & Associates, Inc. 2017 APHIS Inspection Report, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO) 2020, <https://arloriseforanimals.org/entity/riner-associates-inc-1943/records/8085> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

⁵ Riner & Associates, Inc. 2016 APHIS Inspection Report, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO). 2020, <https://arloriseforanimals.org/entity/riner-associates-inc-1943/records/8084> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

⁶ Riner & Associates, Inc. 2014 APHIS Inspection Report, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO) 2020, <https://arloriseforanimals.org/entity/riner-associates-inc-1943/records/8082> (last visited Nov. 17, 2020).

the year when the USDA is not present? It is time to stop letting Riner & Associates get away with such blatant violations of the AWA.

Request for the Maximum Fine

Rise for Animals hereby files an Official Complaint against Riner & Associates for violations of the AWA. Given the history of repeated AWA violations, we respectfully request your office conduct an immediate investigation into Riner & Associates' chronic misconduct. As these violations are serious and continuing, we recommend fining Riner & Associates the maximum penalty of \$11,883 per violation.

Thank you for your attention to this important request and your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Casey E. Webster

Casey E. Webster, J.D., CIP
Laboratory Records Analyst