



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003

June 5, 2020

Brent Robbins, D.V.M., M.B.A.
State Veterinarian
LDAF Office of Animal Health and Food Safety
Veterinary Health Division
5825 Florida Blvd., Suite 4000
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Dear Dr. Robbins:

I am writing on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) to convey our concerns about the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry's (LDAF) lack of enforcement of the state's animal care standards. La. Rev. Stat. § 3:2093; LA. Admin. Code Tit. 7 pt. XXI §§ 2101–2117.

Through the submission of records requests, AWI recently surveyed 16 states that have enacted on-farm animal protection laws. Our goal was to determine whether the provisions of these laws and/or regulations are being enforced, and if so, to what degree (see enclosed report).

As you are aware, Louisiana's Board of Animal Health adopted animal care standards under the approval of the LDAF, which went into effect in 2013. Last fall, AWI submitted a Public Records Act request to the LDAF for records relating to the enforcement of Louisiana's farm animal care standards. Unfortunately, the state informed AWI that it had no records relating to the enforcement of these standards.

Several states with comparable animal care standards provided AWI with evidence of enforcement, including Ohio and Indiana. Both of these states provided evidence of a formal process for dealing with complaints and inspections and/or investigations of farms where complaints had been received. Ohio conducted 56 animal welfare investigations involving farm animals between October 2017 and November 2019 and in over half of these cases, a Notice of Violation was issued. Ohio also followed up with these farms ensure violations were remedied. Indiana responded to 39 complaints involving farm animals between 2018 and the first half of 2017. Seven of these complaints resulted in written warnings and one complaint was referred to another agency for enforcement.

AWI would appreciate learning about any efforts Louisiana has initiated to begin enforcing these laws. AWI encourages Louisiana to ensure that its animal care standards are enforced, and to consider taking measures similar to its peers. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss, please contact me via email at dena@awionline.org or by phone at (202) 446-2146.

Sincerely,

Dena Jones, M.S.
Director, Farm Animal Program

Enclosure