



USDA Launches Investigation Into Ferret Farm

The United States Department of Agriculture launched an investigation into ferret breeder Triple F Farms of Sayre, Pennsylvania, following an inspection in August 2011.

By The SmallAnimalChannel News Division

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The USDA is investigating Triple F Farms, a ferret breeder.

A USDA inspection of Triple F Farms, a ferret breeder, in August 2011 revealed that it was in direct noncompliance with three federal regulations and indirect noncompliance with five federal regulations.

Triple F Farms said it corrected the noncompliance issues detailed in the report and is confident the USDA will give Triple F Farms "a clean bill of health," the company said.

The USDA performed a follow-up inspection of the facility in September, the results of which were not yet available to the public. Investigators will use information from the inspection reports, along with facts they will gather separately, to determine if Triple F Farms violated the Animal Welfare Act and if any legal action is necessary. Legal action can include a warning, a fine, or suspension or revocation of Triple F Farms' license. Details of the investigation will not be made public until it is complete.

The USDA performed the initial inspection after receiving a complaint from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals alleging animal abuse and neglect at the Triple F Farms facility.

The USDA report stipulated that no major surgeries, including spaying or neutering of animals, would be allowed at the facility until the conditions of surgical rooms were improved, proper closure techniques of surgical incisions were implemented, and employees began wearing sterile surgical gloves and following aseptic procedures when performing surgery.

The report required Triple F Farms to hire a "sufficient" number of employees at the facility in order to maintain an "acceptable" level of husbandry and animal care by September 24, 2011. It also required the ferret breeder to improve its food receptacles in nest boxes and repair at least two PVC pipe feeders that had separated, causing food to spill to the floor rather than be delivered to the animals.

The USDA required Triple F Farms to immediately correct its practice of allowing two nonveterinary employees to perform major surgical procedures. The report also stipulated that Triple F Farms must immediately comply with a regulation requiring the ferret breeder to make daily health assessments of all animals at its facility and immediately report any information on problems of animal health to the attending veterinarian. The ferret breeder was also instructed to immediately correct noncompliant practices involving the availability of water to animals at its facility.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Bradford County District Attorney's office are each conducting investigations into Triple F Farms' facility, as well.

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