

Indiana State Board of Animal Health Statement Regarding The Veterinarians' Blood Bank Investigations

1 April 2024

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has completed an animal welfare investigation of The Veterinarians' Blood Bank (VBB) located in Jackson County, Ind.

Based on state law, which dictates jurisdiction and authority, the investigation was split into two parts: One for VBB's cat facility and one for VBB's commercial dog-breeding facility.

BOAH's effort was led by Veterinarian Dr. Jodi Lovejoy, BOAH's animal care and well-being specialist and Director of the Commercial Dog Breeder-Broker Program (CBB). Dr. Lovejoy is a Certified Master Animal Cruelty Investigator and a Resident of the American College of Animal Welfare.

For the areas of the investigation where the agency has jurisdiction, BOAH has determined that no further action is necessary at this time. The following information outlines the components of the investigation along with relevant Indiana law.

Veterinary Blood Bank Operations:

Veterinary blood banks are not regulated or governed by Indiana law. Therefore, BOAH does not have the authority to regulate practices associated with the operation of the blood bank. Blood does not fall within the definition of veterinary biologics that are regulated by BOAH under **IC 15-17**. Likewise, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) does not regulate blood banks.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) *may* have jurisdiction. Investigation materials have been turned over to the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine by BOAH for further investigation.

VBB Cat Facility:

As the agency with jurisdiction under Indiana law, the Jackson County Sheriff's Department conducted the investigation of the VBB cat facility. At the request of the Sheriff's Department, BOAH's animal care and well-being specialist assisted in the inspection, serving as veterinary health subject matter expert. The cats and their environment were evaluated based on Indiana Code 'Offenses Relating to Animals' (**IC 35-46-3**).

- *BOAH does not have jurisdiction to investigate allegations of companion animal neglect or cruelty. Under **Indiana Code 15-17-3-13**, the agency is authorized to assist law enforcement agencies, at their request, in evaluating the conditions and circumstances of companion animals.*

Cats at the facility did not appear to be in jeopardy and appeared to be receiving care sufficient to provide for their health.

VBB Dog-breeding Facility:

The VBB dog facility is registered under Indiana's Commercial Breeder-Broker Program, giving BOAH clear jurisdiction for this portion of The Veterinarians' Blood Bank. In addition to the 'Offenses Relating to Animals' law (**IC 35-46-3**), BOAH's veterinarian evaluated the dogs and the facility under the higher standards of the CBB regulations (**IC 15-21**).

Dogs at the facility were found to be in, or near, normal body condition with adequate food, water and shelter. Issues noted included: significant dental issues, skin injuries, lack of solid flooring, and areas of rust on the primary enclosures. As is BOAH's standard policy for CBB facilities, corrective actions were provided to VBB owners and managers at the time of the inspection.

A follow-up visit to the VBB dog facility took place approximately 8 weeks after the December 2023 inspection. CBB violations noted in December had been or were being effectively addressed. For that reason, no penalties were assessed under the CBB program.

BOAH considers both the VBB cat and dog cases closed.

If new information becomes available, the need to conduct a new investigation or investigations will be evaluated at that time.

BOAH remains available should law enforcement request assistance with either facility.

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