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**USDA CHARGES THE COULSTON FOUNDATION WITH THREE NEW ANIMAL DEATHS**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 1999 As the result of a recent investigation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has added several new charges of Animal Welfare Act violations to a previous complaint against the Coulston Foundation, a registered animal research facility operating in Alamogordo, N.M.

"We have grave concerns regarding the circumstances under which several chimps have died at the Coulston Foundation," said Michael V. Dunn, the under secretary for USDA's marketing and regulatory programs. "The AWA is in place to protect animals from inadequate care and handling. We intend to pursue this case aggressively and continue to keep a close eye on the Coulston Foundation."

The original complaint was issued on March 19, 1998. That complaint was amended on Feb. 11, 1999, and contains new charges that the Coulston Foundation failed to:

-Establish and maintain a program of adequate veterinary care, including the prevention, control, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases and injuries by failing to make itself and its veterinarians aware of known side effects and complications of pharmaceutical compounds being tested, resulting in the unnecessary deaths of three chimpanzees known as Holly, Terrance, and Muffin;

-On three occasions, provide adequate rationale for the number of animals to be used in the proposed activity;

-On three occasions, provide a complete description of the proposed use of the animals within the protocol; and

-On five occasions, have the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the research facility review and approve proposed significant changes regarding the care and use of animals in ongoing activities.

APHIS inspectors conduct inspections of licensees to ensure compliance with the Act. Any violations that inspectors find can lead to civil penalties. The AWA requires that regulated individuals and businesses provide animals with care and treatment according to standards established by APHIS. The standards include requirements for recordkeeping, adequate housing, sanitation, food, water,

**transportation, exercise for dogs, veterinary care, and shelter. The law regulates the care of animals that are sold as pets at the wholesale level, transported in commerce, used for biomedical research, or used for exhibition purposes.**

**NOTE TO EDITORS: If you would like an interview concerning this or any other AWA related issue please contact Jim Rogers or Jamie Ambrosi at the numbers listed above.**