



# **WELFARE, RISK & GUZOO ANIMAL FARM:**

*A 2004 Review*

**WSPA**  
World Society for the Protection of Animals



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## Foreword

Zoocheck Canada is a national animal welfare charity established in 1984 to promote the interests of wildlife in captivity and in the wild. For the past twenty years, Zoocheck has carried out assessments of captive wildlife husbandry and housing conditions in a wide range of facilities; evaluated and addressed public safety and security issues related to wildlife in captivity; and evaluated the effectiveness of live animal-based education and conservation programming.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals Canada (WSPA) is the Canadian branch of an international network representing more than 400 humane societies and other animal protection organizations in more than 90 countries. Through direct field work, campaigning, legislative work, humane education and training programs, WSPA strives to raise the standards of animal welfare worldwide.

Zoocheck and WSPA have been monitoring the conditions in zoos across Canada for many years. Guzoo Animal Farm near Three Hills, Alberta has been a concern to both organizations for several years due to its substandard animal husbandry conditions and safety practices. Zoocheck and WSPA have documented many of these concerns in a variety of reports and papers.

The Province of Alberta, while it does govern the keeping of wildlife in captivity under the *Wildlife Act* (RSA 2000), has failed to provide specific standards for the housing and care of captive wildlife. As well, there are no federal laws mandating specific standards of housing and care for captive wild animals in Canada.

Under the *Wildlife Act*, all Alberta zoos must acquire a zoo permit and adhere to a few general conditions, such as acquiring liability insurance to cover injuries, submitting a development plan for the zoo, providing for veterinary care and having appropriate veterinary services, a quarantine facility and facilities appropriate to the species being held. Guzoo's current permit expires on November 30, 2004.

Guzoo's current permit also has some more specific conditions attached (*Schedule I*)<sup>1</sup>. These conditions, specific to Guzoo, were imposed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in June 2004, are designed to address specific concerns at this facility and are considered integral to the permit. Section 12 (3) of the *Wildlife Act* states: A person shall not contravene any of the terms or conditions of a licence or permit and Section 86 (2) indicates, a person who contravenes any provision of this Act is guilty of an offence.

Guzoo has also been subject to criteria established by the Alberta Health Authority. In 2002, Health Authority 5 summarized the biting incidents at Guzoo (Appendix II), provided a list of requirements to Fish and Wildlife Services that it

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<sup>1</sup> Guzoo permit conditions and Alberta Health Authority documents were obtained under the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

wanted incorporated into the zoo's operational plan (Appendix III) and sent an Order to the owner of Guzoo to make appropriate changes to reduce the risk of injuries at Guzoo (Appendix IV).

In an effort to fairly evaluate both zoo conditions as well as Alberta's current permitting regime, Zoocheck and WSPA have drawn on professional zoo association standards both in Canada and abroad. For example, both the United States and the United Kingdom have legislated standards and robust licensing schemes, including regular inspections, that serve as useful points of comparison.

In July 2004, Zoocheck and WSPA commissioned a report on the conditions at Guzoo, by Richard Farinato, Captive Wildlife Specialist, Humane Society of the United States. Mr. Farinato has more than 15 years experience managing zoos accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA). He is well versed in both husbandry practices of professionally operated zoos, as well as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards for captive wild animal housing and care.

During Mr. Farinato's inspection of Guzoo, which is the basis for this report, several violations of Guzoo's current zoo permit requirements were noted. As well, numerous other animal housing, care and safety concerns were observed. Many of the concerns outlined in the Farinato report have been identified previously in other Zoocheck and WSPA reports. Some of these are available at [www.zoocheck.com](http://www.zoocheck.com) and [www.wspa.ca](http://www.wspa.ca)

It is the hope of both Zoocheck and WSPA that Mr. Farinato's report will highlight the ongoing and unresolved problems at Guzoo Animal Farm. Deficiencies in animal care and public safety have been identified over many years without substantive improvements having been made to the facility. Given this, and the documented permit violations during the current permit period, we recommend that the Alberta Wildlife Management Branch not renew the zoo permit of Guzoo on December 1, 2004. Having done that, the Province needs to revise its zoo licensing regime by enacting comprehensive zoo standards so that these problems do not continue to occur in future.

**ASSESSMENT OF CONDITIONS AT GUZOO - Three Hills, Alberta, Canada**  
**By Richard Farinato, Director**

**Captive Wildlife Protection and Wildlife Advocacy**  
**The Humane Society of the United States**  
**November 15, 2004**

**Introduction**

On July 7, 2004, I visited Guzoo, a roadside zoo facility in Three Hills, Alberta. The comments below represent my evaluation of what I saw at the zoo that day. They are based on more than 15 years experience of managing native and exotic wildlife in the zoo profession in the United States, at facilities in Boston, MA, and Greenville, SC. Both these facilities are licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a legal requirement for any zoological exhibition in the U. S.; both are also institutions accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), of which I have been a member for the past 18 years.

**General Comments**

Guzoo is a facility commonly described as a privately-owned roadside zoo or menagerie. It is a varied collection of wild and domesticated animals housed in enclosures and cages that range from minimally adequate (some hoof stock) to dangerous and inappropriate (large carnivores) to inhumane and unhealthy (birds, small mammals, primates).

Based on the facility and conditions in which animals were kept that I witnessed on this visit, Guzoo would not be allowed to operate in the United States, as it would not meet the Animal Welfare Act federal standards for licensing as an exhibitor, administered by the USDA. The physical facilities, state of cleanliness, provision of food and water, visitor access to animals, and environmental enrichment issues were substandard for even the most basic of zoo facilities, regardless of location.

This report highlights the most egregious conditions and situations that I witnessed, which are the most in need of attention.

In my opinion, unless substantial changes are put in place to meet the basic husbandry needs of animals held in this facility, it should not be allowed to continue operations, as it places both the animals held there and the visiting public in unhealthy and dangerous situations, in addition to the obvious animal welfare and humane concerns

## Animal Enclosures

### 1. Cleanliness and Sanitation

With the exception of a few larger paddock areas which, simply because of size and the nature of the animals in them, are not particularly problematic in terms of sanitation, the overall state of hygiene and cleanliness of enclosures was very poor. In some cases, the conditions in which animals were living were, in my opinion, a threat to their health and survival, due to accumulations of feces, buildups of uneaten and moldy food, and bare earth floors that are difficult, and almost impossible, even under the best management systems, to keep clean and sanitary. It appeared that cleaning of enclosures was not being carried out on a regular basis, regardless of time interval.

Bare earth floors were found in almost all enclosures throughout the facility. Good management would mean that such floors were raked on a daily basis, and that areas soiled by feces or urine were dug out and replaced as necessary. The appearance of the cage floors and that state of the bare earth did not suggest that such routines were part of the activity of cage cleaning. As it is impossible to effectively disinfect a dirt substrate, the



above routine is critical for the maintenance of animal health. The small size of a number of enclosures also makes maintenance of the substrate critical. In the one instance where staff was observed cleaning a dirt-floored enclosure, the minimal amount of material being removed and the condition of that material suggested that substantial renewal of soil substrate is not a common practice.

### 2. Cage Shelters

Shelters for animals within enclosures were of such design, materials, and placement that maintaining them in a clean state is impossible. Shelters that were present were soiled and stained, in various stages of deterioration or rot, and impossible to sanitize. Their dilapidated state made them a threat of physical injury to animals using them.



Wooden boxes that were provided for animals other than ungulates were often inappropriate for the size or number of animals in the cage. In almost all cases, these boxes were filthy and falling apart. I saw no bedding of any kind in any shelter box.



Shelters in paddocks or pens for ungulates were no better. Again, the state of disrepair and the condition of the materials from which they were made rendered them ineffective in terms of protection from the elements.

Some cages had piles of brush or tree limbs or rocks that I assume were covering den or hide areas, but it was impossible to determine if such shelters were functional or appropriate.

### 3. Cage Furniture and Staging

There was little or no effort made to provide adequate and appropriate features to allow animals to make use of the space they lived in. Rocks, tree limbs, brush piles, perches, and climbing structures, although in evidence, were simply distributed about some of the cages in a seemingly helter-skelter fashion, with the result being the look of a trash dump. It appears that no plan or effort is in place to make these items as useable as possible to animals, based on their needs as determined by natural behavior.

### 4. Safety of Animal Enclosures for Animals

Many of the enclosures and cages in this facility pose a physical risk of injury to the animals contained in them. Poor or no ongoing maintenance, inappropriate materials or items placed in animal enclosures, and unsafe materials or designs of enclosures were noted in many areas.

- Dangerous and/or inappropriate items (old farm implements, metal pipe playground equipment, loose chains and ropes) were present in several enclosures and cages.



*Bear enclosure containing old playground equipment – inappropriate for species*

- Loose and/or damaged fencing, rusted wires, sharp objects, metal pipes, and other items in need of repair or removal were evident in many locations
- Fencing and/or construction of fences were insufficient to safely contain the animals within the enclosures

Overall, the construction, materials used, and maintenance of animal enclosures were unacceptable, and would not meet minimal professional standards for such facilities.

## **Foods/Feeding/Water**

### **1. Foods and Feeding**

Foods fed to animals appear to be left in cages for days at a time, judging from the amounts and states of food items in almost all enclosures. Food was often on the floor of the cage as opposed to in a container that could be sanitized between uses, adding to the overall lack of proper hygiene. In those cages where food bowls were present, their condition and appearance did not suggest that they were routinely cleaned.

Parts of carcasses were evident in almost all the carnivore cages, in various stages of consumption and deterioration. Wet and moldy bread, moldy grain, spoiled fruit, and foods contaminated by feces were evident throughout the facility.

### **2. Provision of Water**

There did not appear to be a consistent effort to supply all animal areas with water. There was evidence of small automatic water bowls serviced by an above-ground plastic waterline at some hoof stock yards, which would, of course, be non-functional for a portion of the year due to freezing temperatures. An odd assortment of containers were noted in roughly three quarters of the other cage areas. In most cases where water was present, both the container and the water were dirty, and again did not appear to be maintained on a regular basis, or chosen and placed with any consideration of what a species of animal might need. Metal water containers showed rust. In some cases, there were what I would consider inappropriately sized containers placed in enclosures (cattle tub in a yard with wolves, plastic half-barrel in snow macaque's cage); their large size allowed animals to sit or stand in them. I suspect such large





containers allow caretakers to avoid refilling them on a frequent basis, which is exactly what you do not want to do.

## **Animal Health Issues**

The following conditions and practices in evidence at Guzoo are problematic in terms of maintaining animals in good health.

- Basic requirements like healthy and fresh food and sufficient clean water are compromised or unmet.
- Poor or no cleaning of animal cages and lack of sanitation invites disease and parasite problems.
- Overcrowding of enclosures and cages can contribute to health and behavioral problems.
- Mixing species together (domesticated dogs, lions) increases potential for injury or disease transmission.
- Free-roaming domesticated dogs and cats in the zoo are vectors for the transmission of disease and parasites, as well potential causes for dangerous and destructive behavior from large carnivores and hoof stock.
- Inadequate shelter from the elements exposes animals to extremes of weather in all seasons (hoof stock, macaques, big cats), with little or no mitigation of their effects.
- Unrestricted feeding of bread provided free to the visitors by Guzoo to all animals compromises the nutrition of every animal at the facility, impacting on overall state of health.



Several examples of animals with apparent health issues or physical conditions in need of veterinary assessment were noted. They include a camel with no hair on its hindquarters shoulders, chest and neck; several domesticated goats and cattle with severely overgrown hooves in need of trimming; a tiger with front paw (possibly declawed) problems that was limping; and an Amazon parrot with extremely poor plumage. The single biggest issue, once again, was the filthy state of animals living quarters.

## **Public Safety**

Safety barriers to keep the visiting public away from animal cages are not present in all areas of the zoo, allowing direct contact between the public and

wild animals. Indeed, the public is encouraged to have contact with animals. In addition, the design, construction, and maintenance of several enclosures are inadequate to securely confine the animals contained in them, increasing the safety risk for visitors by their very nature.

### 1. Public/animal interaction and contact

Public interaction with wild animals is allowed and encouraged. In two sections of the zoo the public has free access to animals: one is an enclosed room with a sign at the door that says the visitors may handle any animal whose cage is not locked; the other is the “official” petting zoo section, where free roaming domesticated animals and hand-reared wild animals are available to handle or pet.

The enclosed room is one of the worst areas of Guzoo in terms of animal care, and public and animal contact. Cages, water bowls, bottles, and feed dishes are filthy, and appear to never have been cleaned thoroughly, judging from the layers of dirt and grime and dust everywhere. One cage in particular stands out in this area as an example of the care animals receive in this facility: a small corner cage housing lovebirds and cockatiels. The floor of this cage was covered with at least a 2 inch layer of bird feces, seed hulls, and other detritus. Feces covered everything in the cage including perches, feed bowls, waterers. Dust covered the wire from which it was made. There was insufficient perch space for the birds kept in it. The birds themselves were in poor plumage, and appeared unthrifty. What is so telling here is that these species of birds are staples in the pet trade. They are not difficult to care for or manage. Guzoo was incapable of or not interested in providing a clean environment, correct feed and feeding methods, and adequate structures for the birds to perch comfortably. At the same time, it was inviting the visitor in to an area that was a potential health hazard for zoonotic disease transmission, due to the filthy and crowded conditions in the room in general, and via the unsupervised handling of animals compromised by these conditions.

The petting zoo area was also problematic in terms of human-animal contact, as it went well beyond traditional livestock such as goats, sheep, cattle, llamas, and rabbits. In a series of kennel-like runs, there were a black bear cub, a wolf pup, and a lion cub housed with a singing dog. Another larger lion cub was in a small cage nearby shared by a domesticated dog. Three visiting children entered the run with the wolf pup, and proceeded to pick him up, carry him around, and chase him around the cage



with no supervision, despite the presence of three female zoo staff or volunteers involved in cleaning an empty run. I would guess that the bear and lion cubs have also been involved in this kind of public interaction.

The liability and safety implications for humans in this kind of activity, as well as the welfare and humane issues for young animals treated in this fashion, are numerous. I do not know of any legitimate zoo facility that would permit this kind of interaction because the risks are so great. No petting zoo, either independent or incorporated into a larger facility operates without a high degree of visitor supervision, or allows public contact with wild mammals that cannot be immunized against rabies.

## 2. Visitor Entry into non-public areas

In a similar situation, I observed a staff member take a group of visitors, including a small child, inside the safety barrier and then into the exhibit cage of a New Guinea singing dog, to allow the child to play with the dog. They then proceeded to the African lion cage, where they stood next to the chain link fence containing a male and two female lions. Along with the people were a Basset hound and a pug. The scene therefore included one small child and two small dogs in close proximity to three agitated lions, very focused on the child and the dogs, as would be expected. Adding to the unpredictability of the situation, the staff member stated that there were three cubs in a den box in the center of the lion cage, less than a week old.



*Photo extracted from video taken during the visit*

This incident to me is an example of the unprofessional and dangerous way in which Guzoo appears to function. In the course of this incident, people and animals were put in potentially fatal situations by the zoo's staff. It demonstrates a serious lack of judgment, and a failure to understand and carry out the basic components of animal care and zoo operations regarding animal care and visitor behavior.

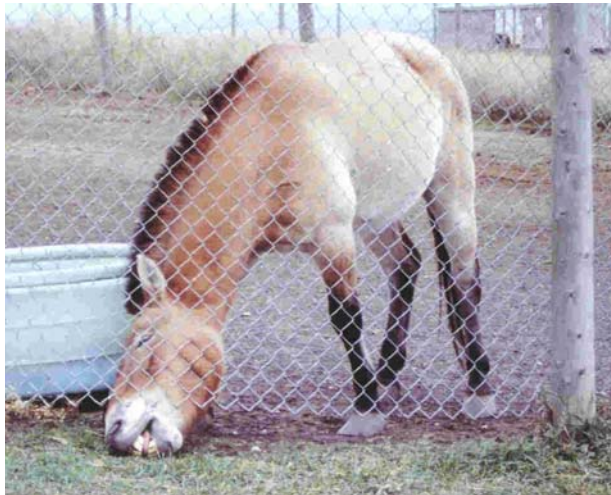
## 3. Structural Integrity of caging

Many cages and enclosures were, in my opinion, constructed and maintained in so poor a manner that animal escapes are a constant and serious risk in this facility. Poor condition of wire fencing, poor attachment of wiring to cage frames,



loose fence bottoms, gaps in gate panels or doors, severe rusting of components, jury-rigged overhangs, insufficient height of fences, no safety doors, and lack of tops in some cages raise the risk of escape and injury greatly. Although much of what successfully confines an animal in a zoo to its cage may be psychological, there are those moments when stress or excitement or a perceived danger allow animals to behave in ways that no one has foreseen. It is still the strength and integrity of the barrier that is the critical point in enclosure construction and ongoing maintenance. The following examples illustrate my concerns.

- Mongolian wild horses were able to push out the bottom of the chain link fence, getting their entire muzzle outside the fence. There is also no public barrier at this paddock.
- One of the tiger enclosures has an open top, with fencing and overhangs that are not sufficient, in my experience, to keep the animals safely inside
- The tiger and lion enclosures that are covered by peaked roofs have chain link fencing that is not secured at the roof line.
- Large ungulates (bison, musk ox) are held behind wire fence and uprights that are of insufficient gauge and strength to withstand the pressure such animals can exert.
- Black bears are kept in an open-topped enclosure that again is insufficient in terms of fence, and overhang.
- Lions and tigers in adjoining cages are separated by a single wall of chain link fencing.



Even if there has never been an escape incident in this facility, it is irresponsible and unprofessional to allow conditions to exist that jeopardize public safety and animal welfare in such a manner.

## **Environmental Enrichment**

The art and science of enrichment of environments for captive wildlife is accepted as a necessity, as opposed to a luxury, for humane and appropriate care for animals. It is part of the accreditation standards for professional

membership in the AZA (and in Canada by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums), and is mandated for some species by federal law in the US. It is recognized as the component in the husbandry of numerous, if not all, species kept in zoos that makes a critical difference in both physical and psychological welfare.

Guzoo does not make an effort to provide even the simplest forms of enrichment to its animals, based on what I observed while on the grounds. The featureless environments that most animals are kept in do not give inhabitants any choices or options for behaviors or activities that could mitigate the boredom of their lives.

Professional and appropriate animal management begins with the basic design of an animal's living space that allows for the expression of normal and natural behavior. Such expression is then promoted or supported by the environment, and enrichment items or processes further enhance that expression. In the case of Guzoo, just the opposite seems to be true. Design and staging (where it exists) does not take into consideration the physical needs of the species housed, or its behavioral capacity. The result is an overall depression of activity, and an exacerbation of stereotypic behaviors.





## **Conclusion**

Based on what I saw during this visit, this facility would not be allowed to continue operating as an animal exhibition in the U.S. due to the many deficiencies in basic animal care, standards for which are mandated by federal statutes. Since the standards for accreditation of zoos by the AZA are in fact more rigorous, neither would it be considered a professional operation.

What is most troublesome to me is the apparent disregard for the welfare of wild animals in captivity demonstrated by the filthy conditions in evidence at Guzoo. Such abysmal care, regardless of why it exists, indicates a lack of understanding of animals' needs, and an inability to meet the most basic standards of humane stewardship of wildlife in captivity.

Again, unless changes are made in the operation of this facility so that the welfare of animals and visitors are not at risk from the current conditions, I recommend shutting the facility down.

**SCHEDULE 'A'**  
**CONDITIONS OF ZOO PERMIT NO. 15068**  
**June 1-November 30, 2004**

**Kneehill Animal Control and Rehabilitation Centre [Guzoo]**

1. The permittee shall indemnify and hold harmless the Minister, his employees and agents from any claims, demands, actions and cost that may arise, directly or indirectly, out of the presence of animals in the Province of Alberta or arising out of any act or omission of the Permittee, its employees or agents.
2. The permittee must maintain adequate Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Insurance against claims for bodily injury or property damage arising out of their activities within the Province. The policy must contain a notification clause where by the Drumheller Fish and Wildlife District Office is notified by phone and then in writing upon cancellation of the policy AND A COPY OF THE POLICY MUST BE PROVIDED AT TIME OF ZOO PERMIT RENEWAL AND THE DISTRICT FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE IN DRUMHELLER MUST BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY IF INSURANCE IS NOT IN FORCE.
3. THE PERMITTEE, PRIOR TO ANY OFF-PREMISE DISPLAY OF ANIMALS POSSESSED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THIS PERMIT, SHALL REPORT THE TIME AND LOCATION OF THE DISPLAY AND THE ANIMALS INVOLVED TO THE DISTRICT FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE IN DRUMHELLER.
4. This Permit authorizes the Permittee to hold the numbers and species identified on Schedule B. Should the Permittee wish to add additional numbers or species to the collection, an amendment to the development plan must be submitted to Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife District Office in Drumheller. Possession is not authorized until Schedule B is amended.
5. The permittee shall, within the term of this permit and in the interests of public safety: repair all damaged fencing to ensure that it prevents the escape of any animal it is intended to contain, properly align, space and padlock all gates; erect and maintain guard fences (standoff barriers) and appropriate signage to ensure adequate buffer zones between animal cages and viewing areas (walkways) are provided.
6. THE PERMITTEE SHALL ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC IS NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH ANY DANGEROUS ANIMAL POSSESSED UNDER THIS PERMIT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE LION, TIGER, BEAR, WOLF, LYNX, MOUNTAIN LION, BOBCAT OR OTHER ANIMAL WHICH COULD HARM THE PUBLIC.

7. All facilities must be erected and maintained to prevent escape of animals. REPORT ESCAPE OF DANGEROUS ANIMALS INCLUDING LIONS, TIGERS AND OTHERS IMMEDIATELY TO BOTH THE DISTRICT FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE AND THE RCMP. Report OTHER ESCAPES to the District Fish and Wildlife office in Drumheller within 48 hours.
8. Implement enhanced daily LEDGER/RECORD-keeping system outlining inventory changes and other key information related to animal care and zoo operations, AND MAKE RECORD OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND DISPERSALS AVAILABLE AT TIME OF RENEWAL. IMPLEMENT A RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM TO RECORD DAILY FEEDING, WATERING AND CLEANING OF PENS BY JUNE 1, 2004 FOR ANIMALS HELD UNDER AUTHORITY OF THIS PERMIT.
9. Carcass handling/disposal to follow provincial legislation.
10. UPON RENEWAL, PROVIDE WRITTEN ASSURANCE CONCERNING PROVISION OF VETERINARY SERVICES TO MEET REQUIREMENTS OF ZOO DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ADVISE THE DISTRICT FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE IF THIS SERVICE IS TERMINATED.
11. A RENEWED DEVELOPMENT PLAN IS TO BE SUBMITTED TO ASRD BY JANUARY 15, 2005 FOR FINALIZATION BEFORE MARCH 31, 2005. THIS WILL COVER PLANS FOR THE NEXT 2-3 YEARS.
12. A MAJOR EMPHASIS IS TO BE PLACED ON ENRICHMENT FOR ALL SPECIES HELD UNDER AUTHORITY OF THIS PERMIT. ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES SHOULD BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. A REPORT OF COMPLETED AND PLANNED ENRICHMENT WITH A SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION IS TO BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 31, 2004.
13. EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE IS TO BE IN PLACE BY NOVEMBER 30, 2004 FOR ALL SPECIES HELD UNDER AUTHORITY OF THIS PERMIT. FOR SPECIES WHICH HAVE SIGNS AVAILABLE, THESE ARE TO BE PUT IN PLACE IMMEDIATELY.

The issuance of this permit pursuant to the *Wildlife Act Regulations* and does not exempt the holder from any Canadian law (i.e., federal, provincial, or municipal) that may otherwise apply.

The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development issues this permit with understanding that the permittee has read and understands its terms and conditions.





# Health Authority 5

## SUMMARY OF BITING INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE PUBLIC AT GUZOO ANIMAL FARM To March 31, 2002

**Head Office**  
Box 429  
Drumheller, AB  
T0J 0Y0  
Phone (403) 823-5245  
Fax (403) 823-7589

**Didsbury District**  
Bag 130  
Didsbury, AB  
T0M 0W0  
Phone (403) 335-9393  
Fax (403) 335-4816

**Drumheller District**  
Box 4500  
Drumheller, AB  
Phone (403) 823-6500  
Fax (403) 823-5076

**Hanna/Cereal District**  
Box 730  
Hanna, AB  
T0J 1P0  
Phone (403) 854-3331  
Fax (403) 854-3253

**Linden Nursing Home**  
Box 220  
Linden, AB  
T0M 1J0  
Phone (403) 546-3966  
Fax (403) 546-4061

**Strathmore District**  
200 Brent Boulevard  
Strathmore, AB  
T1P 1J9  
Phone (403) 934-4204  
Fax (403) 934-3948

**Three Hills District**  
Box 340  
Three Hills, AB  
T0M 2A0  
Phone (403) 443-2444  
Fax (403) 443-5565



**Partners  
In  
Health**

### November 22, 1997

An adult male from Sherwood Park, Alberta was bitten on the right hand by a lion cub (6-months old), causing puncture wounds on the palm and the dorsum (back-side of the hand). He went to the local hospital where the wound was cleaned, and a Tetanus shot was administered. Sutures were not required in this instance. The victim indicated that prior to being bitten, the lion cub had just come back from a short walk and seemed to be bit agitated or difficult to handle. The animal was not returned to a locked cage, but instead was tethered where he was accessible to the public – no staff were present when the victim was bitten.

### April 19, 1998

An adult female from Drumheller, Alberta was bitten on the left forearm (just above the wrist) by a 3-month old black bear cub, causing 2 small puncture wounds. She was treated at the Drumheller Hospital where the wound was cleaned, and a Tetanus shot was administered. The victim indicated that she was holding the bear, but it no longer wanted to be held, so it turned around and bit her on the arm. GuZoo staff were not present when the biting incident occurred.

### October 25, 1998

An adult male from Didsbury, Alberta was bitten on the right index finger by a Capuchin Monkey named "Max". The bite caused a puncture wound requiring antibiotics and a Tetanus booster. The victim explained that he had stuck his finger through the wire cage and the monkey bit it – the monkey cage was located in the "Petting Zoo Building" at the time (but has since been transferred to a new facility within the compound). Staff supervision was not present inside the Petting Zoo Building at the time of the incident.

### May 5, 1999

A young boy from Three Hills, Alberta was bitten on the left thumb by "Monica", the spider monkey. The child was taken to the local hospital where the wound was cleaned and a topical antibiotic ointment was applied. The victim's mother explained that her son has been visiting GuZoo Animal Farm for several years now, and has played with the monkey before. Both she and her son were aware that Monica had been transferred to the new facility (used to be in the "Petting Zoo Building"), but they entered the unlocked building anyway. GuZoo staff were not present or aware that they had had entered the monkey compound.

**June 5, 1999**

An adult male from Carstairs, Alberta received puncture wounds to the neck and head, and claw marks to his shoulders and back, after being attacked by a tiger cub (about 1-year old, and 300 pounds). The victim was treated at the local hospital where the wounds were cleaned and an antibiotic prescribed. The victim claimed that the gate was unlocked, so he went into the compound to pet the animal – no staff were present at that time. As he turned to walk away, the tiger jumped onto his back causing the injuries described. The victim explained that he had seen other people with the tiger earlier in the day, so he assumed that it was okay to pet the animal. Staff inside the office were only aware of the incident after the man's wife went in for help.

**July 5, 1999**

A teenaged male from Kelowna, British Columbia was bitten on the right ring finger by "Max", the Capuchin monkey. The bite caused a severe laceration (almost to the bone) requiring 10-12 stitches. The victim indicated that he was at GuZoo Animal Farm with some relatives, and the owner invited him into the locked monkey compound in order to feed Max a granola bar. The owner turned around to leave the compound when the monkey grabbed the boy's arm, pulling it towards the cage.

**July 17, 1999**

A male toddler from Camrose, Alberta was scratched and bitten on the right hand by a Barbary Macaque Ape. The resulting wounds required medical attention and extensive follow-up blood work. The victim's parents indicated that their child wandered through an unlocked barrier gate leading to the Ape compound. Once there, the Ape reached through the chain-link fence, grabbing the child's sleeve and pulling his arm through the fence. The father was able to free the child's arm as there were no GuZoo staff immediately present to help.

**April 29, 2001**

An adult male from Drumheller, Alberta was bitten by a Siberian Lynx, resulting in a ¼-inch puncture to his forehead. The victim explained that GuZoo staff encouraged him to enter the cage to pet the animal, but as he crouched down the Lynx jumped up and bit him.

**August 5, 2001**

A teenaged male from Calgary, Alberta was bitten the ZeeDonk, resulting in a complete severance of his right middle finger. The incident occurred while the boy was feeding the animal.

**August 22, 2001**

A young boy from Drumheller, Alberta was bitten by the Zee-Donk, resulting in lacerations to his right forearm. Six stitches were required to close the wounds. The incident occurred while the boy was feeding the animal, and as a result, the animal was subsequently euthanized.



**SUMMARY OF BITING INCIDENTS  
INVOLVING THE PUBLIC  
AT GUZOO ANIMAL FARM  
To March 31, 2002**

DATE	VICTIM	ANIMAL	WOUND
November 1997	Adult male from Sherwood Park, AB	Lion "Cub"	Bit on the hand resulting in punctures
April 19, 1998	Adult female from Drumheller, AB	Bear "Cub"	Bit on the left forearm, above the wrist resulting in punctures
October 25, 1998	Adult male from Didsbury, AB	Capuchin Monkey	Bit on the right index finger resulting in laceration
May 5, 1999	Young boy from Three Hills, AB	Spider Monkey	Bit on left thumb causing an abrasion
June 5, 1999	Adult male from Carstairs, AB	Tiger "Cub"	Bit about the head and neck resulting in puncture wounds, and scratched on the back
July 5, 1999	Teenaged male from Kelowna, BC	Capuchin Monkey	Bit on the right ring finger resulting in a severe laceration requiring 10-12 stitches
July 17, 1999	Male toddler from Camrose, AB	Barbary Macaque Ape	Bit and scratched on the right hand
April 29, 2001	Adult male from Drumheller, AB	Siberian Lynx	Bit on forehead resulting in a ¼-inch puncture
August 5, 2001	Teenaged male from Calgary, AB	ZeeDonk	Bit and severed right middle finger
August 22, 2001	Young boy from Drumheller, AB	Zee-Donk	Bit on the right forearm - 6 stitches required to close the wound



# Health Authority 5

January 9, 2002

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Alberta Environment  
Fish and Wildlife Services  
P.O. Box 1918  
DRUMHELLER, Alberta  
T0J 0Y0

**ATTENTION:** Mr. Byron Jensen  
Fish and Wildlife Officer

Dear Sir:

**RE:** Health Recommendations  
GuZoo Animal Farm  
Three Hills, Alberta

In reference to your recent request about the health and safety concerns at GuZoo Animal Farm near Three Hills, Alberta, I have attached a list of requirements that I would like to see incorporated into their operational plan.

These requirements, if implemented, will adequately address the issues that our Agency has with this particular facility. I would be interested in receiving a "final" copy of the operational plan for GuZoo Animal Farm once it is completed.

I hope this information is helpful. Should you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at 1-403-823-3341.

Yours truly,

Keith Lee  
Public Health Inspector

KL@HA5.AB.CA



**Partners  
in  
Health**

**Health Requirements for GuZoo Animal Farm  
Recommendations Provided to Alberta Environment  
January 2002**

Contact With Animals By The Public:

1. The public shall not be permitted to have direct contact with any non-human primates.
2. With the exception of domestic dogs and cats, the public shall not be permitted to have direct contact with any carnivorous animal except under the direct supervision of trained personnel.

"Direct supervision" shall mean that trained personnel are present and in direct control of the animal at all times.

"Trained personnel" includes those staff and volunteers who have received formal and/or practical instruction in the handling of animals, and who are capable of adequately controlling the animal.

3. The public shall not be permitted to have direct contact with reptiles or amphibians except under the direct supervision of trained personnel. Under no circumstances shall the public be permitted to have direct contact with a red-eared slider turtle or the contents of its enclosure.

The public shall be instructed to wash their hands with soap and water immediately after handling any reptile or amphibian.

4. The public may be permitted to have unsupervised contact with "typical farm animals" in the Special Care Barn and throughout the facility. Typical farm animals include goats, llamas/alpacas, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, ducks, geese, chickens, cats, dogs, pigs, etc., but does not include non-human primates, carnivorous animals (excluding domestic dogs and cats), or reptiles/amphibians.
5. All animals with which the public will have contact with (whether supervised or unsupervised) must be in good health, and they must be up-to-date with shots for diseases against which they can be vaccinated for. All animals must have a friendly disposition, and must be comfortable with extensive petting or handling.

Access To Animal Enclosures By The Public:

6. The public shall not be permitted to have access to all non-human primate enclosures. Such enclosures shall be equipped with stand-off barriers unless they are constructed of solid glass or acrylic viewing panels. Enclosures to all non-human primates must be kept locked at all times.

Stand-off barriers shall be designed to prevent children either from getting through them, under them or climbing over them, and the tops must be designed to discourage children from sitting on them, without providing features likely to cut or otherwise injure them.

7. With the exception of "typical farm animals" (as described above) in the Special Care Barn and throughout the facility, the public shall not be permitted access to any animal enclosure except under the direct supervision of trained personnel. These enclosures shall be kept locked at all times.
8. The public shall not be permitted to have unsupervised access to the enclosures of any reptiles and amphibians. These enclosures shall be kept locked at all times.
9. The Ferrets, Pygmy Hedgehogs, and Red-eared Slider Turtles shall be removed from the Special Care Barn, or else placed in enclosures where direct contact with such animals is not possible. These enclosures shall be locked at all times or else placed in such a manner that prevents contact by the public.
10. In the case of omnivorous animals, the owner of GuZoo Animal Farm shall determine, in consultation with the Regional Health Authority, public accessibility to such animals. Determination of public accessibility shall be based upon the species, and the animal's size, age and temperament.
11. The public shall not be permitted unsupervised access to any unauthorized areas. Such areas shall be closed and kept locked at all times when the facility is open to the public.

#### Hand Feeding of Animals By The Public:

12. The public shall not be permitted to directly hand feed any carnivorous animals (with the exception of domestic dogs and cats), non-human primates, reptiles/amphibians, and the following large mammals: ZeeDonk, Musk Ox, Elk, and White-tailed Mule Deer.
13. The public may be permitted to directly hand feed any "typical farm animal" in the Special Care Barn and throughout the facility.

#### Identification Of Staff:

14. All staff, while working, shall be clearly identified as GuZoo Staff. It is recommended that staff wear clothing that are brightly colored, can be easily worn over any type of apparel during summer or winter, and will clearly identify GuZoo Staff.

#### Signage On Animal Enclosures:

15. Signs shall be erected on all enclosures where the animal poses a significant biting, charging or injury hazard.

Such signs shall be strategically placed, in sufficient numbers on each enclosure and sufficiently large enough to be easily visible. In addition to this, such signs must be of a shape, color, print and size so as to be distinct from informational signs.

16. Where signs are erected to warn the public of a biting, charging or injury hazard, an additional sign shall be erected on the enclosure requesting that the public refrain from feeding or contacting such animals.

#### Protective Enclosures:

17. All damaged animal enclosures shall be repaired immediately, with the appropriate materials.
18. Stand-off barriers shall be placed either in front of, or inside, the enclosures of the ZeeDonk, the White-tailed Mule Deer, the Elk and similar animals. Such barriers shall be constructed of sufficient material or of sufficient separation distance so as to prevent injuries to the public by the animal's antlers or by biting.
19. Stand-off barriers that are currently in place shall continue to remain in place. These include the enclosures of the non-human primates, the "Big Cats", the bears, the various weasels, and the Musk Ox.

#### Handwashing Facilities

20. Handwashing facilities, equipped with hot and cold running water, soap, and single use towels (or hot air dryers) shall be available at all times when the facility is open to the public.
21. Signs encouraging the public to "wash their hands after handling animals" shall be strategically placed throughout the facility, and in particular, the Special Care Barn.

#### Reporting of Animal Bites and Exposures

22. The owner shall report all biting incidents involving any animal at GuZoo Animal Farm and the public to Health Authority 5 immediately after becoming aware of the incident. This is important to ensure the victim is properly treated and to assess the potential for the transmission of diseases – call (403) 820-0740 at any time.



## Handwashing Sinks and Temporary Handwash Stations

Signs on handwashing should also be placed in appropriate places (such as eating areas and entrances) reminding visitors to wash their hands when leaving animal contact areas, before eating, and when leaving the farm or zoo.

### Number of Handwashing sinks required:

Estimate number of visitors, e.g. 30 people will leave a contact area every 15 minutes and each person will take 1 minute to wash and dry hands. The facility will therefore need 2 handwash basins (30 people x 1 minute divided by 15 = 2)



There must be an adequate number of handwashing stations.

### Temporary Handwashing station setup:

Temporary handwashing stations can be set up on-site using a water jug (equipped with a spigot that allows the water to run freely, without having to hold on), a clean chair, a small dish basin, a five-gallon receiving bucket, and a garbage container. Fill the water jug with hot water, set it on the chair on a counter, and then set the dish basin directly beneath the spigot.

The procedure for handwashing using this temporary set-up is as follows:

Turn the water on, wash hands thoroughly with soap, and then rinse under the running water. The dish basin is located directly beneath the spigot thereby catching all of the water. Dry hands with paper towels and then empty the dish basin into the five-gallon bucket. Wipe the dish basin with the used piece of paper towel before discarding it into the garbage container. The handwashing station is now ready for the next person. (Note: The receiving bucket must be emptied into the sewer system when it becomes full).

If you have any further questions regarding petting zoos and farms please contact a member of the Environmental Health Service, staff of Health Authority 5.

**Wash  
Your  
Hands!**



*Make sure all children wash their hands after leaving the petting zoo or farm, and particularly before they eat any food.*

### Recent Outbreaks Relating to Petting Zoos and Farms

#### July 2001 - Red Deer, Alberta:

- 17 cases of Salmonellosis related to a petting zoo at an agricultural fair.

#### November 2000 - Worcester, Pennsylvania:

- 61 children aged one through ten were infected by *E. coli* O157:H7 after visiting a farm. Eight were hospitalized and six developed kidney problems.

#### August 2000 - Cleveland, Ohio:

- 14 cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection traced back to a petting zoo at a county fair.

#### August 1999 - London, Ontario:

- Up to 159 people may have been infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 after visiting a petting zoo operation in an agricultural pavilion.

#### July 1999 - North Wales, UK:

- 17 cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 were linked to a farm visit. Six required hospitalization.

Compiled by:

Capital Health Authority  
Health Authority 5  
Mistahia Health Region

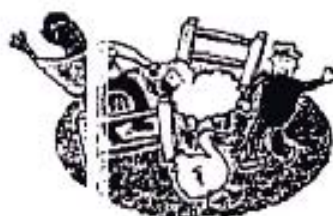


# *Health Authority 5*

## Environmental Health Services

### Let Children Enjoy Your Petting Zoo

#### A Message to Zoo Operators and Farm Owners



Your petting zoo is designed to provide children and students with the joy of coming close to animals. You must remember, however, animals can carry diseases that can make humans ill, and proper precautions must be taken to ensure that the health and safety of the children are protected.

For your operation, your Regional Health Authority recommends the following:

#### **HANDWASHING:**

- ♦ Staff and volunteers must encourage all visitors to wash their hands after handling the animals
- ♦ There should be a minimum of two handwashing stations (see back page) with hot/warm water, liquid soap and paper towels immediately adjacent to the petting zoo area
- ♦ Non-leak and operable or automatic taps and soap dispensers are recommended
- ♦ Temporary handwashing stations should be installed when permanent facilities are not available (see back page)
- ♦ It is recommended that a sanitizing alcohol handwashing gel be present in the petting zoo area for use by staff or visitors
- ♦ A one-way entrance-exit system is preferred to facilitate handwashing
- ♦ Handwashing facilities must be accessible by all visitors, i.e. at the right heights for both children and adults or with raised standing areas provided for children (check to ensure setup does not present tripping or falling hazards)

#### **OPERATION:**

- ♦ The public should not be permitted access to any animal enclosure except under the direct supervision of trained personnel. These enclosures should be kept locked outside of regular business hours.
- ♦ Ensure that any manure is quickly and thoroughly cleaned up, and appropriately discarded. Straw and sawdust should be removed daily
- ♦ At least once daily, ensure that the rails in the petting zoo are appropriately disinfected and that the floors in the petting zoo are thoroughly cleaned
- ♦ Petting zoo activities must be supervised. As a general rule, for group visits, there should be one supervisor to every eight children between the ages of 4 and 8, and children under 4 should be individually supervised. If supervision levels are less than this, consider whether you should not allow direct contact with the animals for children under eight
- ♦ Staff/volunteers must report all animal bites or scratches, or other injuries resulting from animal contact to your Regional Health Authority

#### **ANIMALS:**

- ♦ There must not be any carnivorous animals, non-human primates, reptiles or amphibians.
- ♦ All animals must be in good health, and any animals with diarrhea must be excluded from display
- ♦ All animals must have up-to-date vaccinations for diseases applicable to the region. Vaccination records must be readily available when requested by the Regional Health Authority.
- ♦ All animals must have a friendly disposition, and must be comfortable with extensive petting or handling.

#### **SIGNS:**

Ensure signs are erected at the entrance of the petting zoo or farm, which should include the following messages:

- ♦ Wash hands with soap and water after touching the animals and dry hands thoroughly
- ♦ Parents/adults should supervise the children's handwashing.
- ♦ Wash hands with soap and water before eating
- ♦ Avoid touching your face and mouth before washing your hands.
- ♦ NO food or drink is to be brought into the petting zoo or farm.





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**Partners  
in  
Health**  
24

## ORDER OF HEALTH AUTHORITY 5

To: Lynn Gustafson  
Box 898  
Three Hills, Alberta  
T0M 2A0

# COPY

Mr. Gustafson:

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 69 and 70 of the Public Health Act, being Chapter P-27.1 of the Statutes of Alberta, an executive officer of a regional health authority may inspect a public place or a private place for the purpose of determining the existence of a nuisance or a contravention of the Act or the regulations.

**AND WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 72 of the Public Health Act, an executive officer of a regional health authority may issue an order requiring the doing of work specified in the order in, on or about the place subject to an inspection.

**AND WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 1 of the Public Health Act, a nuisance means a condition that is or that might become injurious or dangerous to the public health, or that might hinder in any manner the prevention or suppression of disease.

**AND WHEREAS**, an inspection of GuZoo Animal Farm, located at SW 24-32-24 W4M, in Kneehill County was conducted on July 28, 1999.

**AND WHEREAS**, an executive officer found the following conditions to exist, which in her opinion did constitute conditions that are or that might become injurious or dangerous to the public health, namely:

1. visitors were encouraged to have direct contact with, and handle, animals that pose a scratching, biting or injury hazard;

2. visitors were encouraged to hand-feed animals that pose a scratching, biting or injury hazard;
3. warning signs, alerting visitors to potential hazards associated with direct contact with animals that might bite, scratch, charge or demonstrate aggressive behavior, were not present, were inadequate or were illegible; and
4. physical barriers between visitors and enclosures of animals that pose a scratching, biting or injury hazard were not present or were inadequate.

**AND WHEREAS**, you are the registered owner and/or the person in charge of the said property.

**NOW TAKE NOTICE**, that you are hereby **ORDERED** to perform the following actions:

1. Discontinue the practice of encouraging or allowing visitors to have direct contact with, or handle
  - carnivores; or
  - animals whose species are recognized to demonstrate aggressive behavior; or
  - animals that, in captivity, demonstrate aggressive behavior
2. Discontinue the practice of encouraging or allowing visitors to hand-feed animals,
3. Erect warning signs on enclosures of animals that pose a scratching, biting or injury hazard. The signs must be
  - strategically placed, in sufficient numbers on each enclosure and sufficiently large enough to be easily visible, and
  - of a shape, colour, print and size so as to be distinct from other, informational signs.

**AND TAKE NOTICE**, that you are hereby required to perform these actions on or before August 31, 1999.

**FURTHER TAKE NOTICE**, that you are hereby **ORDERED** to perform the following action:

4. Establish physical barriers between the visitors and the enclosures of animals that may pose a biting, scratching or injury hazard. The barriers must be of sufficient material or sufficient separation distance so as to prevent direct contact between the visitors and the animals.

**AND TAKE NOTICE**, that you are hereby required to perform this action on or before  
December 31, 1999

Dated at Drumheller, Alberta  
August 6, 1999

Dr. M.L. Russell  
Medical Officer of Health  
Executive Officer  
Health Authority 5