

March 22, 2007

Molly Aust
Animal Control
616 Big Bear Blvd.
Columbia, MO 65202

1 page via fax: 573-442-5416

Dear Ms. Aust:

On behalf of PETA and our more than 1.6 million members and supporters, as well as the hundreds of millions of Americans who share their lives with one or more dogs or cats, PETA is calling on you today to please launch an investigation into whether or not Sinclair Research Center and Menu Foods are in violation of state law.

As you may know, Sinclair Research Center is an animal testing laboratory in Columbia, Mo., which PETA investigated in 2002 and 2003 and which recently settled with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for alleged violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act. During our investigation, we learned that the lab's top two customers were Iams and Menu Foods. Iams subsequently dropped Sinclair, but we believe that Menu Foods has continued to pay Sinclair to conduct tests on animals. We are asking that you please investigate whether Sinclair was involved in one specific test, which involved deliberately feeding toxic food to animals. News reports state that this test allegedly took place on or about February 27.

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* is reporting that at least 15 cats and one dog have died from kidney failure as a result of eating Menu Foods products, although the death toll is likely to rise dramatically ("Pet food deaths hit home," 22 Mar.) Of the 16 animal deaths reported as of March 22, nine animals have now been confirmed to have been deliberately forced to ingest toxic and lethal food in a Menu Foods laboratory—perhaps Sinclair Research Center—and it appears that these tests occurred *after* the company had heard reports of animals' becoming sick and dying from eating the company's food.

To deliberately force animals to eat contaminated and potentially lethal food is cruel and unnecessary. Alternatives exist: Histological analyses and necropsies of people's animal companions who died after eating the food should provide ample information in determining the etiology of the contaminant and possible solutions to correcting the problem. Further, there are non-animal test methods that could be employed, such as the functional gastro-intestinal dog model (FIDO) or TIM-1 and TIM-2 (small and large gastro-intestinal models).

It appears to us that there is a statute in the Missouri criminal code, Mo. Ann. Stat. §§578.005-578.012, that directly pertains to this situation. Because the lethal testing may have taken place at Sinclair, one of Menu Foods' contract laboratories, we ask that you conduct a full investigation into both Sinclair and Menu Foods and that if either is found to have violated state law, the company or companies and everyone involved in this decision be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

I would be happy to discuss this complaint with you further and can be reached at ShalinG@peta.org or by phone at 757-962-8325.

Sincerely,



Shalin Gala, Researcher (Mr.)



PETA

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