

# Investigative Report

Inquiry 12VS1C2V-00K

September 2016

## Complaint

The Missouri Department of Agriculture, Animal Care Program received a complaint against Mike Moore and Man's Best Friend Pet Resort, license number AC000W3T. The complainant alleged that their dog was neglected during its stay at the boarding facility. On September 23, 2016, Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian and Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer conducted an investigation of the complaint.

## Investigation

### ***September 23, 2016, Review of documents submitted by the complainant, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian.***

The complainant submitted medical records for Tigger from Lee's Summit Animal Hospital in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The records were dated from September 8, 2016 through September 14, 2016. The dog's information after its check-in was entered by "GWA". According to other information supplied by the complainant, Dr. Gary Austin was the veterinarian caring for Tigger when he presented on September 8, 2016. The medical history notation stated that the dog was boarding at Man's Best Friend Pet Resort and had some incontinence problems. The history notation also included that the groin area was raw and the boarding kennel staff had found a few maggots on the dog. Dr. Austin noted that only a few maggots remained on the dog after it had been bathed at the boarding kennel. Dr. Austin noted skin irritation. Dr. Austin wrote that post clipping the groin was cleaned and Animax ointment was applied, a Capstar tablet and a dexamethasone injection were administered, and a blood urea nitrogen (BUN) and creatinine level were measured. Dr. Austin wrote that Tigger's kidney function was normal. The dog was placed on a mesh rack to prevent further urine scalding.

On September 9, 2016, a chemistry panel and complete blood count (CBC) were performed on Tigger. Dr. Austin wrote that the blood work showed a normal creatinine, the BUN had started to rise, the total bilirubin and amylase were slightly elevated, and the white blood cell count was 19,000. Dr. Austin wrote that he started the dog on intravenous fluids and antibiotics in addition to dexamethasone. Dr. Austin also noted that Tigger "is fairly dumpy today, still does not want to walk". A medical history notation entered by "STF" indicated that Mike Moore of Man's Best Friend Pet Resort wanted to pay for surgery.

On September 10, 2016, Dr. Austin noted that Tigger had some loose stool overnight. Dr. Austin wrote that Tigger's tail and rectal area were washed and Animax ointment was applied to the irritated areas and a dexamethasone and Polyflex injection were administered. Dr. Austin wrote that Mr. and Mrs. Woolf returned from their trip and took Tigger home. Metronidazole, Amoxitabs, and Gentaspray were dispensed.

On September 13, 2016, Tigger was re-evaluated by Dr. Austin. Dr. Austin wrote that pressure sores had developed over Tigger's left elbow and left hock, and an area just above the left large metatarsal pad was open and sloughing. A sample of the discharge from the left elbow was submitted for culture and the antibiotic was changed to Baytril. A CBC and chemistry panel was rechecked. Dr. Austin wrote that

the blood work showed slight anemia, elevations in alkaline phosphatase, GGT, and amylase, and renal function was better. Dr. Austin bandaged the left back foot and planned to re-check Tigger on September 16, 2016.

On September 14, 2016, Tigger was rechecked by Dr. Austin. Dr. Austin wrote that the sore on the left elbow was larger and a piece of necrotic tissue was sloughing. Dr. Austin wrote that he cleaned and bandaged the wound on the left elbow, changed the bandage over the wounds near the left hock and metatarsal pad, and flushed a purulent wound on the right hock. A Baytril injection was administered. Dr. Austin wrote that the sloughing areas would eventually need debridement and closing.

The complainant submitted an email dated Tuesday, September 13, 2016 from Dr. Gary Austin to the complainant. Dr. Austin wrote that today's examination revealed Tigger to have a drying lesion on the scrotum and groin area from the previous maggot infestation. Dr. Austin recommended Animax ointment for the lesion. Dr. Austin wrote about the lesions on the left elbow, left hock, and metatarsal pad like he had in Tigger's medical record for that day. The pending culture and results of blood work were also reported similarly to the medical record.

The complainant also submitted five photographs. A time stamp was not printed on the photograph itself, but the initial series of numbers transmitted with the photographs was a date. The first photograph, dated September 10, 2016, shows the hindquarters of a long-haired black and white dog laying in right lateral recumbency. The dog appeared to have been clipped from the base of its tail distal to the caudal aspect of its hocks. The scrotal skin and the skin between the anus and testicles are mildly reddened.

The second photograph, dated September 11, 2016, appears to be a caudoventral view of the same dog. The entire scrotal skin exposed in this view is severely inflamed and exudative. The skin lesion extends laterally to the left groin and cranially along the ventral aspect of the prepuce. A portion of the plantar surface of the left metatarsus is visible. Hair is missing from the plantar metatarsus and the skin is moderately inflamed, but does not appear exudative. The dog is not clipped cranial to the prepuce.

The third photograph, dated September 14, 2016, is a close-up of a wound. The left aspect of the wound consists of black necrotic skin with an adjacent strip of reddened skin. A full thickness defect in the skin is to the right of the necrotic skin. Purulent exudate surrounds the open portion of the wound.

The fourth and fifth photographs are dated September 16, 2016. The fourth photograph is a full thickness debrided wound with exposure of subcutaneous tissue. A strip of white tissue is present in the center of the wound. Orientation of this view is difficult, but a gloved left hand appears to be holding an appendage. The fifth photograph is the plantar view of the left metatarsus. The central metatarsal pad is missing with a full thickness circular wound in its place. Granulation tissue occupies this space which extends across the entire plantar surface of the metatarsus. A similarly sized full thickness wound is located on the plantar aspect of the hock. Both wounds appear debrided. The dog is laying on a stainless steel surface and the right metatarsus is bandaged.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Site visit, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian and Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer at Belton Police Department, 7001 E. 163<sup>rd</sup> St. Belton, MO.***

We arrived at the Belton Police Department around noon and met with Officers S. Trotter and J. Crawshaw. The Belton Police Department had received a similar complaint against Mr. Moore and agreed to accompany us to the facility and conduct concurrent investigations.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Site visit, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian, Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer and Officers Trotter and Crawshaw, at Man's Best Friend Pet Resort, 329 S. Mullen Rd. Belton, MO.***

Upon arrival to the facility we were greeted by an employee of Man's Best Friend Pet Resort. We explained we had a complaint and needed to investigate. The employee stated he was not comfortable assisting us and that the owners, Mike and Judy Moore were not present at the facility. He attempted multiple times to contact either owner but was unsuccessful. He left a message with Mike Moore and stated he would let us know if he called back or came in. We exited the building and Dr. Cook called Mr. Moore's cell phone number and left a message to call her back.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Phone conversation with Mike Moore, licensee, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian.***

Mr. Moore stated that he had returned to the boarding kennel and was available to meet with us. Dr. Cook informed Mr. Moore that we would return to the facility within the next hour.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Site visit and interview of Mike Moore, licensee, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian, Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer and Officers Trotter and Crawshaw, at 329 S. Mullen Rd. Belton, MO.***

We returned to the facility later that afternoon. Officers Trotter and Crawshaw met us back at the facility. Upon entering, Mike Moore greeted us and invited us back to the staff lounge area to discuss the complaint. He sat down and explained that Lt. Swanson and Animal Control Officer David Meyer, with the Belton Police Department had been there on September 14<sup>th</sup> and issued him a ticket for neglect and collected documentation and paperwork from him. He went to his desk and produced the ticket for our review. Mr. Moore confirmed that Tigger Woolf arrived to board at the kennel on Friday September 2, 2016, over Labor Day weekend. Mr. Moore then requested that we accompany him through the facility, stating that it would be easier to explain procedures while showing us his set up.

Mr. Moore walked us through the facility showing us the kennels, runs, and exercise yards. He explained his cage cards and how group play time and one-on-one interactions went. He stated Tigger was an older dog about 12 years old and did not do well in group play time so he had one-on-one play time with a staff member in the outside exercise yards. Mr. Moore stated that one-on-one play times usually lasted about 15 to 30 minutes. Mr. Moore stated that Tigger had boarded several times and previously participated in group play time. Mr. Moore stated that generally it takes effort for Tigger to get up. He stated that the owners brought a black mat with Tigger that was kept in the indoor portion of his run during his stay. Mr. Moore stated that the dog did not always choose to use the mat. The facility appeared clean. Flies were not observed within the facility. We returned back to staff lounge to continue our investigation.

Mr. Moore stated he was not present at the facility during the extent of Tigger's latest stay, but that he did work on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Moore gave his account of the events regarding Tigger on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Moore stated that Elizabeth, an employee, had noticed an odd odor from Tigger during the morning feeding. He stated that the owners had not requested a bath for Tigger, but that he authorized staff to give a bath. Mr. Moore stated that Samantha, another employee, was able to give Tigger a bath around 12:30 PM. Mr. Moore stated that Samantha reported that Tigger's back end was covered in feces. Mr. Moore stated that the maggots and inflamed genitalia were not noticed until approximately 2:45 PM when staff went to get Tigger out of the dryer. Mr. Moore stated that he contacted the owner's veterinarian, Lee's Summit Animal Hospital, and a 4:00 PM appointment was scheduled for Tigger. Tigger's owners were contacted on the way to the veterinary clinic, according to Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore stated that he had paid Tigger's initial veterinary bill and had intentions to pay for the follow-up care. Mr. Moore did state that he had some doubts that all of Tigger's follow-up care was initiated by the maggot infestation that occurred at the boarding kennel. Mr. Moore stated that two staff members who had cared for Tigger during his last stay were currently on site and available for interviews. Mr. Moore retreated to his adjoining office to make copies of Tigger's check-in paperwork, employees' statements, and other documents.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Interview of Elizabeth Davis, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian, and Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer, at 329 S. Mullen Rd. Belton, MO.***

Elizabeth Davis sat down with us in the staff lounge and discussed her interactions with Tigger during his stay over the Labor Day holiday weekend. She stated she provided his AM feeding and watering and interacted with Tigger on a single one-on-one playtime outside. Ms. Davis stated that Tigger had a hard time getting up and was carried outside a few times. Ms. Davis stated that Tigger was good about voiding while outside. Ms. Davis stated she did not notice any unusual behavior from Tigger until she noticed he smelled bad on Thursday September 8, 2016.

***September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016, Interview of Samantha Taylor, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian, and Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer, at 329 S. Mullen Rd. Belton, MO.***

Samantha Taylor joined us in the staff lounge after Ms. Davis left and discussed her interactions with Tigger. Ms. Taylor stated she was only responsible for feeding the dog the evening before he left and had a single one-on-one playtime with Tigger, though she could not remember which day. Ms. Taylor stated that Tigger walked out to the exercise area on that day. She stated that she remembered Tigger did not eat his food or treats from earlier in the day on Wednesday September 7<sup>th</sup>. She also stated that he refused his medication that evening. Ms. Taylor stated that she was a new employee and did not have experience with Tigger on his previous stays.

Ms. Taylor stated she was asked to bathe Tigger on the morning of Thursday, September 8, 2016 because he smelled. She stated he seemed a little sore but stood in the bath tub with no problems. She stated she did not see or feel any injuries or maggots during his bath. Ms. Davis stated that Elizabeth and Nicole noticed the maggots later and notified Mr. Moore.

***September 27<sup>th</sup> 2016, Review of cage card obtained from Belton Police Department, conducted by Christine Mohr, Animal Health Officer.***

One of the documents provided to the Belton Police Department by Mr. Moore on September 14<sup>th</sup> was the original cage card from Tigger's stay. I obtained a copy of this from the Belton Police Department on

September 27<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the cage card, a copy of the employees' work schedule for the week of September 5- September 11, 2016 was provided.

The cage card indicated that Tigger was boarding in a standard suite from Friday September 2, 2016 through Sunday, September 11, 2016. Upon check-in (Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>) the cage card indicated the owner fed Tigger that morning and afternoon. Evening feeding is initialed with KC. Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> there are no initials on AM or Lunch feedings. For the evening feeding, there are initials of NO. On Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup> there are illegible initials noted for AM feeding and a note with illegible initials or an acronym and the word "fresh". That evening feeding is initialed with KC. The cage card indicated Ms. Davis (by the initials ED) fed Tigger Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup> for AM and Lunch feedings. Evening feeding on Monday is initialed with ST, indicating Ms. Taylor. There are also Ms. Davis' initials under the header Lunch: Meds. Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> Ms. Davis' initials indicate she fed AM and Lunch feedings again. There is a notation under AM: Feed that "ED gave a pain pill". Evening feeding is noted with "NR/SF frsh". According to staff SF stands for Still has Food. Again under Lunch: Meds Ms. Davis' initials are recorded. Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> Ms. Davis' initials are recorded for AM and Lunch feedings and Lunch: Meds. Ms. Taylor's initials are under the evening feeding along with the acronym SF. Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> Ms. Davis' initials are under the AM feeding along with the acronym SF and an illegible noted of "gave ...". No further notations are records for the remainder of Thursday.

There is no clear indication on the cage card what medication is given during Tigger's stay. There is a typed note on the cage card under MEDS that states "Lunch: 1 pill in the afternoon (with the word Zyrtec handwritten above) if he its acting is in pain and cant get up please give him ½ a pain pill and inital you did so". The cage card does not indicate when or with whom Tigger had his one-on-one interaction time, or that anyone noted having to carry him to or from his kennel.

***October 4, 2016, Review of documentation submitted by Mike Moore, licensee, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian.***

Mr. Moore submitted several documents to investigators on September 23, 2016. These documents included Tigger's medical record from Lee's Summit Animal Hospital (dated from November 17, 2014 through June 3, 2016), a list of employee phone numbers with two names of employees that cared for Tigger highlighted, a signed boarding agreement, a written statement regarding the events of September 8, 2016, an invoice from Lee's Summit Animal Hospital, a check stub, and several pages from a computer program containing Tigger's information.

An invoice for Tigger from Lee's Summit Animal Hospital for services from September 8, 2016 through September 10, 2016 was also submitted. The invoice totaled \$441.05. A note at the top gave instruction to send the bill to Man's Best Friend Pet Resort. What appeared to be a check stub for check number 3305 indicated that a payment of \$441.05 had been made on September 18, 2016.

A two page boarding agreement was signed by Linn Woolf on December 19, 2014. Mrs. Woolf had opted for playtime outside, but had declined participation in group play.

A two page account of the events of September 8, 2016 was submitted. The author and date the document was created was not noted on the document. It is estimated that this document was written on September 14<sup>th</sup> or later since it refers to the animal control officer's interviews of staff. Per Mr. Moore's interview the animal control officer was at the facility on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Work schedules and

job duties for three employees: Elizabeth, Nicholas, and Samantha were listed at the top of the first page. The first page contained a single paragraph summary of the day's events. The paragraph begins by stating "That morning was very busy. Daycare was full, someone was in there at all times. Dogs checking in all morning." The account states that Elizabeth asked Samantha to bathe Tigger at 9:00 AM. Samantha gets permission from Mr. Moore for Tigger's bath after she returns from her lunch break at 12:30 PM. When Nicole arrives at work that afternoon, Samantha, who has returned to daycare, asks her to check on Tigger. Elizabeth returns and she and Nicole discover the maggots and notify Mr. Moore who proceeds to contact Tigger's veterinarian and transport him to the veterinarian. At the bottom of the first page a third person summary of Elizabeth's interview with the animal control officer begins and continues onto the second page. An account of Samantha's interview with the animal control officer follows.

Several pages from the kennel's computer program containing Tigger's information were also submitted. One set of pages had a heading for the owner, Tom Woolf, on the top of each page and the other set of pages had a heading for Tigger on the top of each page. Some of Tigger's information was repeated on the two sets of pages. Collectively the pages contained dates of Tigger's vaccinations required for boarding, owner contact information, veterinary contact information, feeding instructions, and medication instructions. A list of the kennel's rates was also included. Several categories for disabled animals were listed.

***October 28, 2016, Phone Interview of Nicholas, employee, conducted by Dr. Rachel Cook, ACFA District Veterinarian.***

Nicholas stated that he works part-time at the boarding kennel. Nicholas stated that he fed Tigger once during his stay. Nicholas stated that Tigger typically didn't have a hearty appetite and that he ate when he wanted. Nicholas stated that he took Tigger out for a one-on-one play session when he was working on the weekend and believes it was Saturday. Nicholas stated that Tigger was slow to get up. Nicholas stated that he did not recall Tigger's urination or defecation on that day. He also stated that he did not recall any health issues other than Tigger's impaired mobility.

An attempt was made to contact Nicole for an interview, but she did not respond to the voicemail that was left on October 28, 2016.

**Findings**

The allegation that the dog was neglected during its stay at Man's Best Friend Pet Resort was substantiated. Multiple employees of the boarding kennel, Mr. Moore, and Dr. Austin all acknowledged that Tigger had an infestation of maggots which were discovered on September 8, 2016. There was not any documentation available to indicate that staff recognized that Tigger had incontinence issues which were assumed to have caused the maggot infestation prior to September 8, 2016. There was no documentation indicating a possible change in Tigger's behavior other than food remaining in his bowl possibly on the morning of September 4<sup>th</sup> (partially illegible), on the evening of September 6<sup>th</sup>, and on the evening of September 7<sup>th</sup>.

It could not be established from the documentation provided that kennel staff was informed of Tigger's mobility and incontinence issues. Pages from the boarding kennel's computer program and Tigger's cage card did not indicate any special care instructions other than administration of Zyrtec and/or an unspecified pain medication. The staff members interviewed appeared aware of Tigger's mobility issues

since they acknowledged that Tigger was slow to get up and occasionally had to be carried during his stay. Dr. Austin initially recorded Tigger's incontinence issues in the medical history notation on September 8, 2016. The duration, onset, or type of incontinence was not recorded. It also could not be determined from the medical record that Dr. Austin had diagnosed Tigger with incontinence. Boarding kennel staff seemed unaware of any incontinence issue as they did not report any abnormalities when questioned about Tigger's urination and defecation.

This investigation is closed.

**Authors**

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