

Appendix 1

Inspection of winter quarters of the Great British Circus (GBC) on the 24 January 2008

Background

The 'wild animals' kept on site are nine tigers (in three groups) ,four (1.3) lions (in one group), a male red kangaroo, a male and female common zebra, various reindeer and bactrian and dromedary camels. There are also domestic animals on the site, lama (which can be regarded as domestic or 'wild') goats, pigs, ponies and donkeys. All animals appeared, on visual inspection, to be in excellent physical condition with no signs of injury or disease. The quarters were clean and well insulated. These 'winter quarters' are occupied for some three months each year (late November to late February) and for the rest of the year the stock is on the road - remaining for about two weeks at each venue. Only about two reindeer are part of the circus, the others are kept on site and moved to various locations for Xmas venues. Lamas and camels are also used for other animal experiences. Housing in the 'winter quarters' was of a high standard with plenty of good dry bedding.

Provision of food and water: the cats are fed on meat which is stored in a good quality freezer. All food storage and water supplies were in order and of a good standard, hay was plentiful and of good quality. There is no problem with applying the same standards as used for zoo licensing to this category

Provision of a suitable environment: The cats live in their beast wagons which were of good quality, sheltered and with plentiful supplies of dry bedding. However the outside caged exercise area,

although enriched with cypress cuttings and a platform, were smaller than would be acceptable for a zoo environment. We were advised that the facilities on site travelled with the animals; this implies that the facilities for the large cats are in use throughout the year. If this is indeed the case then it would be reasonable to expect that they could be further upgraded to include a larger exercise area with more enrichment e.g. a pool. There were two of these areas, and as the lions and tigers comprised four social groups only two could use this area at one time. The groups were alternated so that each one had 0.5 of a day in the exercise area. There is also a ring training area (which is the cage that is taken for performance when on the road) and animals can be rotated into this. Each group has two sessions a day in the ring area, where training takes place. Using zoo standards this would be deemed unacceptable. However training can be interpreted as enrichment and the question is – does the rotation of the animals between these three shared areas provide sufficient stimulus so that the environment can be considered suitably enriched with sufficient opportunities for exercise? It is difficult to answer this but it would make an excellent research project. Behavioural scientists could record the behaviour of animal in the ‘winter quarters’ and on the road and come up with meaningful data and results. We would recommend that a study such as this takes place. As part of any assessment in an inspection process it would be sensible to request diary records of the times spent by each group or individual in such shared enclosures. There is also an area in a barn with three good big cat spaces, but animals have to be boxed to enter these and they were not in use during the inspection. The owner stated that pregnant cats could be moved into these to birth and rear young, but this would not cover births on the road, where the only seclusion would be separation into a part of one of the beast wagons therefore it is questionable if the conditions for cats cover ‘the special needs of pregnant and newly-born animals’. This is a problem area and would require detailed

standards i.e. animals must have access to suitable birthing areas. The non-felid stock is stabled in winter quarters (which are of a good standard) and exercise is provided during training sessions, which take place daily. Fields are available, but are not adjacent to the housing and therefore used only for exercise sessions. However the stock was in good physical condition and did not show obvious abnormal behaviour. Again the question has to be asked is training exercise sufficient to categorise a suitable environment. The inspectors did not like the tiered accommodation for rabbits, which was considered of poor quality. This highlighted the fact that it would be difficult to carry out a circus inspection and ignore the domestic kinds. In a zoo inspection the domestic kinds are included.

Provision of animal health care: regular veterinary inspections take place during the time in 'winter quarters'. We met with the veterinary surgeon and veterinary cover seemed adequate as did health monitoring and prophylactic regimes. However it is strongly recommended that the practice concerned have more CPD in exotic species, such as joining the British Veterinary Zoological Society, a specialist division of the BVA. The GBC does not travel over a vast area and has veterinary contacts throughout its range. In general a Circus would have to show that it had good veterinary contact throughout its travelling area and that these vets were in regular contact with the main home veterinary practice. No controlled drugs are kept by the proprietor and the vet keeps records of all drugs dispensed. The proprietor has firearms, which are also taken when travelling, which are sufficient to kill dangerous animals should the need arise. Animals were all kept in satisfactory social groupings and did not appear to be stressed.

Provision of an opportunity to express most normal behaviour: much behavioural expression takes place during training sessions, training is geared to take account of the individual likes and dislikes of each

animal. Outside of training sessions the environments that we saw would not have been sufficient to express most normal behaviours, e.g. the male red kangaroo was solitary, kept in a stable and exercise would be restricted to training sessions. The two zebra were kept separately in stables, but with non-specific animals, therefore could not live in the normal herd situation. Camels and reindeer were kept in groups, but during the winter period did not have access to fields and pasture. Therefore the premise of 'social species should have access to con-specifics' would need to be seriously examined. The cats were in social groups but access to sufficient space to express behaviour was restricted as described above. The cats could have 'private' space but the provision of accommodation, which provided social, visual and olfactory insulation was severely limited. However training sessions probably do provide animals with exercise, which allows a full range of locomotion and considerable stimulus but this would need to be observed and tested.

Provision of protection from fear and distress: there were no obvious indications of either fear or distress in any animals. However, if standards were to be drawn up some measurement of differences in behaviour of animals when in 'winter quarters' and 'on the road' would be useful. Enclosures do not, as stated above, provide sufficient areas, and in some cases social stimulation to express normal behaviour, nor do they provide sufficient areas for animals to escape or seek refuge from other animals.

Animal records: although records are kept and are probably sufficient for "day to day" management, they are not sufficient for recording stock movements. Daily diaries are kept and but basic animal records did not appear to be detailed enough to allow the preparation of a six/seven column system as required by the Zoo Licensing Act. There is also some doubt as to how well veterinary records can be cross-referenced to animal records. A system should be in force where

detailed records of each individual animal are maintained, including arrival and departure information, cause of death where appropriate, health and movement information. It is noted that the ACP guidelines do state that copies of all veterinary records must be maintained and travel with the animals. It is also noted that ACP guidelines state that animals' records should contain this sort of detail, it is recommended that the system should be similar to that detailed in the SSSMZP.

Staff training: at the time of the visit staff numbers were at a minimum but the staff present were well trained. When on tour additional staff, are taken on. These are usually non-British Europeans with a varied skill base. It is strongly recommended that all staff caring for and training animals have formal training in animal husbandry and training, such as the qualification proposed by PAWSI or be enrolled in the training schedule for such qualifications, although it should be noted that most vocational training requires "on the job" assessment, which could be difficult for staff in a mobile environment. Where formal training is not possible for the reasons stated above, some transparent and effective record of the competence and "species skills" of seasonal and temporary staff should be kept by the proprietor.

Transportation and movement of live animals: it was not part of the brief of the inspectors to cover transportation but this should be an essential part of circus licensing and inspection. This would be a major section for inspection of animals on tour.

Conservation and education: in a circus licensing system it should be decided if these areas are relevant. The PAWSI guidelines suggest that they are, this was not part of the inspection but should be part of a full circus inspection. The ethics of keeping wild species purely to perform and entertain with out any conservation or positive educational messages needs to be seriously questioned. The inspectors consider that it would be reasonable to expect some degree

of conservational and educational input in a circus environment, and certainly some behavioural traits could be well illustrated in such environments and included as a part of the performance. We already do this in zoos particularly with adaptable species like elephants, sea lions and birds.

Health and safety: as previously stated this was not part of the brief of the inspectors, but would obviously have to be included in a full inspection process. This would also help ensure that Local Authorities, unsympathetic to circuses, did not use H&S issues unreasonably to prevent them carrying out at legal trade.

Training methods: these appeared to be satisfactory from a welfare perspective, but no shows were observed, and it would be advisable for inspectors to view a training session as part of the inspection process. Note all training should provide a net welfare benefit to the animal.

Compliance check: this would have to be part of the process only CITES documents were checked on this visit.

Appendix II.

Inspection the Great British Circus (GBC) on the 28 August 2008

The inspection was carried out with a view to assessing welfare practices relating to the wild animals held by the circus while on tour and to apply such an inspection process to touring circuses. It should be noted that the brief of the inspectors was to assess welfare, therefore health and safety issues have not been addressed unless they were felt to be relevant to the welfare of the species kept on the premises.

This report follows on from the inspection of winter quarters of the same circus in January 2008.

The circus was inspected while in four acres of farmland for a period of four weeks. It was based just outside Rochford near Southend-on-sea, Essex. There are two shows a day, six days a week. Distances moved are short so that animals can be offloaded from transport vehicles on arrival in the evening at a new site.

Background

The 'wild animals' on tour were nine tigers ,four (1.3) lions (in one group), a male red kangaroo, two reindeer and 6 bactrian camels and 2 llamas. There are also domestic animals on the site various ponies, horses and dogs. All animals appeared, on visual inspection, to be in excellent physical condition with no signs of injury or disease. The quarters were clean with plenty of dry bedding. Two tiger cubs and 1.1 zebra were not on tour and were kept at the winter quarters, as were a number of reindeer (about 20). The reindeer are mainly used for Christmas events.

Provision of food and water: the cats are fed on meat, which is stored in a good quality freezer. Fresh supplies are obtained by weekly journeys back to the home base.

Provision of a suitable environment: The housing for the large cats was actually slightly more spacious than in the winter quarters with the lions and tigers having separate exercise cages. It was considered good, given the travelling conditions. The inspectors were impressed with the efficient use of the space available, animals were off public view except for permitted access which was well supervised. Bedding materials were clean, waste was properly disposed of, the site was reasonably quiet except for aircraft but there was no evidence of animals being disturbed by the aircraft. Although there was no pool provided for the tigers there was a shower for hot weather. The lions were not currently part of the actual show but were being trained. Camels were in quite a small penned outside area, but were put in the electric fenced field at night. The red kangaroo was travelling with the circus and in a reasonably sized outside pen. The animal was not part of the show. However, it was still solitary and the ethics of keeping such an animal, and taking it on tour, has to be questioned.

Provision of animal health care: when on tour vets are called when required and there appeared to be a well-established list of contacts in the range of tour venues. These vets are in communication with the main company vet. A regular worming programme is in operation. All animals looked in excellent condition. However the veterinary records kept with the animals were minimal. (See later section on animal records).

Provision of an opportunity to express most normal behaviour: once again this is difficult to analyse without quantitative data. No stereotypic movements were observed, either before or after the show. The cat enclosures were smaller than would be acceptable in a zoo, and the question is whether the exercise in training sessions

compensates for this. The enclosures were well furnished and the animals seemed relaxed and active.

Provision of protection from fear and distress: there were no obvious indications of either fear or distress in any animals. The only animal giving cause for concern was the red kangaroo. Tiger cubs had been born on tour but were now in the winter quarters – this area of giving birth on the road probably needs to be examined in more depth – it may be a welfare concern.

Animal records: there is still a problem with inadequate animal records. Daily species check lists (the equivalent of daily diaries) are kept well and completed in detail but there are no individual animal records. This means that the records were sparse in details of individuals. As noted in (3) veterinary notes were minimal and should be kept in more detail. The records should also give an indication as to which animals are used for media or advertising work and which are hired out (e.g. reindeer). This information should travel with the animals.

Staff training: permanent staff, had very high standards of animal husbandry and management and were enthusiastic and committed. Further training was being undertaken and this is to be applauded. There were well-established lines of responsibility, which seemed to work and sufficient staff available to translate regimes to non-English speaking employees. There is a high turnover of labouring staff, but these appeared to be well supervised by experienced staff. However, like all circuses, there was a dependence on the experience senior staff working 24/7 and the reliance on these unreliable temporary staff may prove problematic.

Transportation and movement of live animals: the circus does not move long distances and stays from 1 to four weeks at each venue. Transportation documents appeared to be in order.

Conservation and education: the signage had reasonable educational content and there was an educational booklet available for children and an animal spotting sheet. However the tiger show contained no conservation messages and this should be addressed along with some explanation of why the proprietors consider training beneficial to the welfare of the cats. However, the inspectors were impressed with the act involving the Friesian stallions where training methods were explained to the audience and the information provided to the audience on high welfare standards. More information on training of cats should be provided to the public.

Health and safety: one area of concern was the movement of the tigers from their caging to the circus ring:

When moved into the preliminary entrance cage one member of staff (although experienced) entered the cage outside the big top without any other person observing for safety.

The length of the rope mesh run into the ring was considerable (25–30ft) and two of the cats had a slight tussle half way down which may have had the effect of loosening ground clamps had it continued and could have resulted in tangling of the tunnel. It would be preferable to have more of the length of the steel bar construction with less rope tunnel.

One trainer is left in the ring with the tigers when the animals are being moved back to their dens through the rope tunnel.

Training methods: these appeared to be satisfactory from a welfare perspective.

Compliance check: these seemed in order