

CALLING ON WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP) TO REVOKE RIDGLAN FARMS' COMMERCIAL DOG BREEDER LICENSE AND PLACE DOGS IN CUSTODIAL CARE DURING ONGOING INVESTIGATION

The Dane County Code of Ordinances, under Chapter 32: Animal Welfare, adopts in full Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 951: Crimes Against Animals, making violations of Chapter 951 enforceable as county-level offenses (Dane Co. Ord. §§ 32.02(2)(a) and 32.03).

Ridglan Farms, located in Dane County, operates under a commercial dog breeder license issued by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 173.41, which authorizes DATCP to regulate and—where appropriate—revoke such licenses.

Ridglan Farms is currently under criminal investigation for potential violations of Wis. Stat. § 951.02 (Mistreating animals) and Wis. Stat. § 951.14 (Providing proper shelter), following the appointment of a Special Prosecutor by the Circuit Court under Wis. Stat. § 978.045 to conduct an independent inquiry into animal cruelty allegations.

DATCP has charged Ridglan Farms with 311 violations of Wisconsin Administrative Code, including 308 violations of § ATCP 16.20(2)(a) (failing to handle dogs as carefully as practicable and in a humane manner that does not cause physical harm or unnecessary injury) and three (3) violations of § ATCP 16.20(2)(b) (failing to provide daily body, mobility, and behavior checks of dogs).

DATCP holds independent regulatory authority pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 173.41(4)(a) to revoke a breeder's license if the licensee is not fit to operate a dog breeding facility or has violated any applicable law, order, or regulation. DATCP has stated, however, that it does not have the legal authority to seize animals and that decisions related to animal welfare violations fall under local jurisdiction. Several non-profit animal welfare organizations have offered to assist with rehoming the Ridglan Farm dogs.

Ridglan's lead veterinarian and facility manager has had his veterinary license suspended by the Wisconsin Veterinary Examining Board for various violations of the rules and laws pertaining to veterinary medicine.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that dogs are sentient beings that deserve care, respect, and ethical treatment and, therefore, Dane County must ensure the legal treatment of animals such as these within its jurisdiction, and must hold both local and state agencies accountable for enforcing the law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges DATCP to review Ridglan Farm's practices and the allegations of violations of law and determine if they are fit to operate a dog breeding facility or have violated or failed to obey applicable law, order, or regulation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if DATCP determines that Ridglan Farms is unfit to operate a dog breeding facility or has engaged in violations of applicable laws, it should immediately revoke

46 Ridglan Farms' commercial dog breeder license under Wis. Stat. § 173.41.

47 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to Dane County's
48 state legislative delegation, DATCP, the Dane County Sheriff's Office, the Dane County District
49 Attorney's Office, Public Health Madison & Dane County, and the Office of the Special Prosecutor
50 appointed in the Ridglan Farms matter.