



October 29, 2024

Rene Van Acker  
Acting President & Vice-Chancellor  
University of Guelph

Via e-mail: [vanacker@uoguelph.ca](mailto:vanacker@uoguelph.ca)

Dear President Van Acker:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—to share some very disturbing information about breeder Marshall Farms Group Ltd., a company from which the University of Guelph has purchased dogs. Since you may have a policy that prohibits doing business with companies that have violated federal laws and regulations, we believe you will want to consider this as you make decisions. We also ask that if your institution uses dogs or other animals in inhalation tests, you consider the use of superior animal-free methods, such as those outlined below.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Marshall Farms several times for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) because it was not meeting even minimal standards of care for animals. It has been cited for housing dogs and ferrets in filthy, decrepit wire cages in buildings teeming with mice and flies and for failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care. Although U.S. regulations require that cages holding dogs only be large enough to permit them to stand up, sit down, lie down, and turn around, Marshall Farms has failed to provide them with even that inadequate amount of space—and dogs have sustained injuries as a result. Additionally, its facilities have been the site of massive disease outbreaks among animals, including canine distemper and bacterial infections.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to being plagued by animal welfare issues, Marshall Farms has demonstrated that it's unable to ensure the safety of humans at its facilities. It was the subject of an Occupational Safety and Health Administration case in which it received two serious citations, with a penalty of \$18,282, for an incident that had caused an amputation of an employee's hand.<sup>2</sup>

Now, **[disturbing photos and videos](#) have surfaced depicting young beagles being “acclimated” to wear inhalation masks**, in anticipation of selling the dogs for use in experiments in which they're forced to inhale experimental agents. In a video, a beagle is strapped to a short tether while being forced to wear a mask that covers their entire snout. The dog pulls against the tether as they struggle against the mask and rapidly paw at it. The footage shows no sign

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<sup>1</sup>A complaint to the USDA detailing disease outbreaks is available at <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-04-24-complaint-from-peta-to-usda-re-marshall-farms.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>OSHA Inspection: 1684868.015—Marshall Farms Group Ltd. is available at [https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/establishment.inspection\\_detail?id=1684868.015](https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/establishment.inspection_detail?id=1684868.015).

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- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

of any training practices occurring. Rather, it indicates that the dog has been left to struggle until they give up. This is neither acclimation nor training—it's learned helplessness.

We ask that if your institution uses animals in inhalation tests that you instead employ animal-free methods that will achieve your testing goals, provide accurate data, and spare animals a great deal of suffering. [MatTek](#) and [Epithelix](#) offer airway tissue models produced from human cells that can replace the use of dogs. Our scientists with the [PETA International Science Consortium Ltd.](#), who have expertise in this area, would be happy to speak with you about it.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this important matter, you can contact me at [AlkaC@peta.org](mailto:AlkaC@peta.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alka Chandna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alka Chandna, Ph.D.  
Vice President  
Laboratory Investigations Cases  
PETA