

**Subject:** Control of Tuberculosis in Regulated Elephants Policy #21

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**References:** AWA Section 13  
9 CFR, Part 2, Section 2.40(b)(2)

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**History:** This is a new policy statement.

**Justification:** Tuberculosis is a contagious disease that affects elephants, other animals, and humans. If left untreated or if treated improperly, it can cause death. Several elephants owned by licensed exhibitors have either tested culture positive for tuberculosis or have died due to this disease. In addition, elephants with tuberculosis can transmit the disease to other elephants, other animals, and, potentially, to humans. The Animal Plant & Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Animal Care (AC) is requiring the periodic testing of all Animal Welfare Act regulated elephants. Testing will help us to identify those elephants that are infected and ensure that appropriate quarantine and/or treatment measures are instituted.

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**Policy:** As part of the adequate veterinary care standard in the U. S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) animal welfare regulations, all captive elephants in the United States must be periodically tested for tuberculosis. Any animals found positive on culture will be required to undergo quarantine and/or treatment.

In conjunction with this policy, USDA, APHIS, AC is offering a protocol, *The Guidelines for the Control of Tuberculosis in Elephants*, that specifies criteria for the testing, surveillance, and treatment of elephants for tuberculosis. Copies of this protocol are available from all AC Regional Offices and on the AC homepage at [www.aphis.usda.gov/ac](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac).

Licensees must either follow the recommended guidelines or provide a comparable testing and monitoring program that is consistent with AC's goals of ensuring the welfare of captive elephants and minimizing the potential spread of tuberculosis.

Any protocol other than the recommended guidelines must be reviewed and approved by AC prior to implementation. Alternate plans should be submitted to the appropriate AC Regional Office.

During the course of routine inspections, AC inspectors will review

documentation that assures that elephants are being tested, and, if the animals test positive or are diseased, are treated according to the recommended guidelines or other APHIS approved protocol.

In addition, in order to protect the health of elephants that have not been exposed to the disease from humans who may be infected with tuberculosis, AC is requiring that all attendants, handlers, and/or trainees which have direct contact with elephants be tested for tuberculosis on at least an annual basis. It is the responsibility of each licensee, in consultation with a physician or other appropriate medical authority, to determine how this requirement will be satisfied.

