October 24, 2025

The Honorable Tim Gruenke
District Attorney
La Crosse County District Attorney's Office
333 Vine Street, Room 1100
La Crosse, WI 54601

Re: Ridglan Farms Criminal Investigation

Dear District Attorney Gruenke,

We write on behalf of Animal Wellness Action, the Center for a Humane Economy, and the Dane County Humane Society to respectfully urge your office to consider the pursuit of criminal charges against Ridglan Farms for violations of Wisconsin's animal cruelty laws, and to exercise your authority to seek custody and protection of the dogs currently held at the facility.

We recognize the discretion and judgment required in your role, and it is with respect for that authority that we bring forward this request. Available evidence, including inspection records, veterinary statements, and eyewitness accounts, indicates ongoing violations of Chapter 951 of the Wisconsin Statutes (crimes against animals).

Under Wisconsin law, animals who are victims of cruelty may be seized and held for their protection as provided for in Chapter 173 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Specifically, under the penalty provisions of Chapter 951 and the seizures provisions of Chapter 173, courts may order that animals be seized and delivered to local authorities when the owners of those animals are found to be involved in animal cruelty crimes. This mechanism was created to prevent further harm and to allow animals to be placed in safe custody.

A recent and relevant precedent comes from the federal action against Envigo's beagle breeding facility in Cumberland, Virginia. Following extensive evidence of inhumane treatment, more than 4,000 dogs were removed by court order, and criminal charges were filed against responsible parties.[1] That case demonstrated that large-scale breeding operations can and must be held accountable when systemic cruelty is identified.

Accordingly, we respectfully ask that your office consider pursuing criminal felony charges under Chapter 951 of the Wisconsin Statutes that are supported by the evidence and petition the court for seizure and protective custody of the dogs under Wis. Stat. § 951.18(4)(b) and Wis. Stat. § 173.13(1)(a)8 to prevent continued suffering and to allow for humane placement.

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[1] *United States v. Envigo RMS LLC*, W.D. Va. (2022) (over 4,000 beagles seized, and criminal prosecutions followed evidence of systemic cruelty).

We are grateful for your time, careful consideration, and dedication to fair enforcement of the law. Ensuring protection for these animals would reflect Wisconsin's deeply held values of compassion, justice, and accountability. Our organizations stand ready to assist.

With sincere respect,

Joseph S. Goode
Board Member
Animal Wellness Action

Paul Collins
Wisconsin State Director
Animal Wellness Action

Wayne Pacelle
President
Animal Wellness Action
Center for a Humane Economy

Pam McCloud Smith
Executive Director
Dane County Humane Society

Maggie Premo
President
Dane County Humane Society Board of Directors