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## **First-Ever Lawsuit Under California Cruelty Law Filed Against Animal Research Lab in Santa Cruz; Animal Protection Groups Charge Federal Investigations Reveal Severe Neglect of Animals**

**SANTA CRUZ** – The first-ever lawsuit against an animal research lab under California's state cruelty law and unfair competition laws was filed here in early January in a complaint with the California Superior Court of Santa Cruz County against Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc., for violating state animal cruelty and unfair competition laws by failing to properly care for their animals according to numerous Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) inspections.

National nonprofit Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) filed the suit on behalf of Animal Exploitation Now (SAEN). In 2012, the settlement in ALDF's lawsuit against the Santa Cruz chick hatchery Cal-Cruz Hatcheries, Inc., marked the first time the state's unfair competition law was successfully used in an animal cruelty case. **Copies of the lawsuit are available upon request.**

According to ALDF, SAEN is committed to ending the abuse of animals in laboratories. An extraordinary effort from SAEN and diversion of the advocacy group's funds has been required to publicize Santa Cruz Biotech's illegal activities in order to protect the animals. This mistreatment of animals allows the company to reduce production costs and violates California's Unfair Competition Law as well as the state's animal cruelty law, said ALDF.

Santa Cruz Biotech, a for-profit Delaware corporation that supplies antibodies and other research materials to laboratories worldwide, operates a 200-acre animal research facility in Santa Cruz, California, where it confines 10,000 goats and 5,000 rabbits.

APHIS investigations have documented multiple violations over the past six years at Santa Cruz Biotech, and have repeatedly cited the corporation for unlawful neglect of goats. Emaciated and severely malnourished animals were discovered with untreated skin conditions and painful respiratory ailments, and one goat had an untreated broken leg. Another goat was found visibly suffering from an untreated coyote bite. Under California cruelty laws, facilities must not take blood from unhealthy animals, nor overdraw blood from any animal.

Investigations also cite the facility for keeping a seriously ill animal alive for more than 21 days for blood harvesting despite a veterinarian's recommendation of euthanasia. Earlier this year, APHIS filed a complaint against Santa Cruz Biotech for 20 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the company could face a \$200,000 penalty.

"The USDA has been unable to end the suffering of animals at Santa Cruz Biotech," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., executive director of SAEN. "This lawsuit is the only way to make this criminal lab follow the law."

"Laboratories like Santa Cruz Biotech are not above the law," said Stephen Wells, executive director of ALDF. "Thousands of animals are suffering from illegal neglect and abuse in this lab to bolster corporate profits. Allowing SC Biotech to get away with breaking the law and harming animals sets a dangerous precedent for the safety of all animals exploited in testing facilities."

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