



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

BETHESDA 14, MD.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

APR 11 1961

Dear Mr. Fogarty:

In response to your request of March 31, 1961, I am pleased to comment on the letter from Mr. James W. Stimpson concerning the National Institutes of Health farm near Poolesville, Maryland.

Mr. Stimpson is certainly correct in his view that unnecessary expenditures should be avoided by all governmental agencies, including the National Institutes of Health. He is to be commended for his concern about the NIH farm, and I appreciate the opportunity to clear up any possible misunderstanding on this particular matter.

The farm near Rockville, Maryland, which has been used by NIH since 1949, is entirely too small and lacks the necessary facilities to service the greatly expanded research efforts of the various Institutes. Moreover, our use of that farm has been entirely at the discretion and through the courtesy of its owner, Mr. Eugene Casey. It is not Government property, and NIH could not use Government funds to erect adequate facilities there, even if the acreage were sufficient for such purposes.

On the other hand, we have absolutely no intention of making a "showplace" of the farm near Poolesville. Buildings and other facilities will be designed and developed only to meet the actual needs of NIH research programs and to achieve the most reasonable combination of suitability for program needs with economy in construction costs, maintenance, and operations. As you know, plans and projected uses for all new NIH facilities are carefully reviewed at several points both in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and in the Bureau of the Budget before funds are actually released for design and construction purposes.

Briefly, current plans for use of the farm include: eventual breeding and production of many thousands of small laboratory animals each year; the quarantine and conditioning of in excess of 1,500 dogs, cats, and monkeys; the development of an area where several species of birds and animals will be set free to breed and live in a natural habitat under observation by

W. J. ...

scientists of the National Institute of Mental Health; and the maintenance of several hundred large farm animals for use in research projects and to provide blood and tissue extracts. The major budget items in our anticipated \$10 million expenditure include principally the facilities required for (1) holding large numbers of dogs, cats, and monkeys, (2) the very large program for production of small laboratory animals, and (3) needed utilities to safeguard the health of NIH animals and the citizens and animal populations of the surrounding community. These last mentioned include facilities for sewerage disposal, fire protection, adequate water supply for cage washing, incineration of dead animals and the perimeter fence (see below). All these plus an adequate road system to service the many program areas are requirements much in excess of those needed for ordinary farm operations.

While the investment in buildings and facilities will be substantial, it is apparent that the value of the animals will be many times greater, particularly in view of the inestimable value of the research dependent upon them. Such an investment will require adequate security measures. Experience at many governmental installations has demonstrated the long-term economy of high, strong perimeter fences to control both incoming and outgoing traffic by man and animals, as opposed to the immense guard force which would otherwise be necessary to maintain a comparable degree of security.

For example, protection will be required against predatory dogs (one goat has already been killed by dogs during the first six months of very limited operation on this farm). The animals and property must be protected against unauthorized traffic by children, hunters, or possible thieves--it is easy to imagine the havoc that could be wrought in the "natural habitat" area in one night, undoing the work of months or years by the scientists concerned. Incidentally, this area will be located in a part of the "wooded and scrub land" mentioned by Mr. Stimpson.

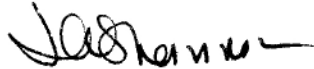
Therefore, it is planned to have a chain link fence, seven feet high with barbed wire at the top, completely surrounding all of the farm except the small wooded portion north of Elmer School Road. Contracts have not been let for construction of the fence, but it is estimated to cost about \$145,000.

In summary, the NIH farm will not be the ordinary farm with which Mr. Stimpson may be familiar, either in purpose, utilization, or value. The cost of the land and of perimeter fencing will be

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quite small in relation to the overall investment. And the entire cost of physical facilities will likewise be relatively small in comparison to the value of the animals and related services which will be provided in support of the broad NIH research endeavor--an endeavor which, I most sincerely believe, benefits all persons in the United States in a measure that far more than justifies the expenditures involved.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Ashburner", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Director

Hon. John E. Fogarty
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.