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Dr. Graham Crawshaw, B. Vet. Med. MS, MRCVS, DACZM
Senior Veterinarian Toronto Zoo
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November 19, 2012

Dear Dr. Crawshaw,

This letter is written in reference to the two phone conversations we had pertaining to the elephants in your care at the Toronto Zoo, and their potential move to another facility. As a clinical zoological specialist and researcher studying elephant tuberculosis, I find your situation very interesting.

I generally agree with your assessments and understanding of elephant tuberculosis in the United States. Furthermore, I understand and absolutely agree with your position to err on the side of precaution for the Toronto Zoo elephants.

From what you told me about your elephants, there is no evidence of tuberculosis exposure in the Toronto Zoo elephant collection. If this is correct and the results of this testing are consistent, you have good evidence that the Toronto Zoo elephants have not been exposed to tuberculosis in the past and probably do not have latent or active tuberculosis. In contrast, from the information you shared with me, the institution that wants to accept the elephants had elephants that cultured positive for tuberculosis, and serological evidence of exposure in several of the elephants currently housed at the facility.

If these elephants were under my care, I would make the clinical and managerial decision to not send them into a situation where they might be infected with tuberculosis. Such an exposure may result in disease with significant welfare implications. The exposure would also complicate future transfers of the elephants to other collections. As clinicians for zoological collections, our responsibility is to make decisions that protect the interest and health of the animals in our care.

Sincerely,



Ramiro Isaza, DVM, MS, MPH, DACZM
Associate Professor of Zoological Medicine