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VETERINARY CONSULTING SERVICES**

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22 February 11

Ms. Denise Prefontaine
Director
Valley Zoo
P.O. Box 2359
Edmonton, Alberta T5J2R7
Canada

Denise,

Thank you for the opportunity to examine your Asian elephant, Skanik (aka Lucy) on 31 January 2011. It was a pleasure to work with Dr. Ness, his staff and the Elephant staff. Everyone has done an excellent job with her since I examined her in September of 2009. At that time, her respiratory problem prohibited her from being in stressful situations or excessive exercise. Your staff should be commended for developing a husbandry program that has reduced her weight and increased her health and overall fitness with a daily exercise program. Unfortunately, her respiratory problem continues.

As before, Dr. Ness's concerns regarding her respiratory problems are well founded. Her mouth breathing and the need to catch her breath at times are very abnormal for an elephant. They are obligatory nasal breathers, so seeing this, combined with the nasal sounds that she produces when she does breathe through her trunk, are quite alarming.

Examination of her trunk with a 3 meter endoscope by equine specialist, Dr. Ingram, demonstrated that her nasal passages continue to be constricted. The reduction of the exudates is a good sign and it allowed us to better visualize her nasal passages. The identification of a possible mass may be key in identifying the underlying cause of her breathing difficulties. Unfortunately, equine instruments are not strong enough to get a biopsy from the suspect area.

Despite these problems, Skanik continues to be a sweetheart of an elephant. She is calm and comfortable around her keepers, and strangers do not seem to bother her at all. Also, I did not observe any behavioral issues with her today—despite my examination of her, a foot care session and then the sedation and scoping of her trunk.

I know that some folks are insisting that you send Skanik to some other facility. Her current respiratory problem continues to preclude any thought of moving her and in fact it would be life threatening for her to be placed under that kind of stress. I continue to feel that it would be unethical for any veterinarian to recommend moving her in her current condition.

The full report of my inspection of Skanik on 31 January 11 is attached. It includes the complete description of my findings regarding Skanik, my assessments and recommendations.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,



James E. Oosterhuis, DVM