

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release: April 30, 2026

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Deal Inked to Transfer 1,500 Beagles from Ridglan Farms to Animal Protection Groups

This mass movement of dogs is an indicator of larger trend to wind down the use of beagles and other animals in archaic, painful experiments

BLUE MOUNDS, Wis. — The Center for a Humane Economy and Big Dog Ranch Rescue today announced an agreement with Ridglan Farms, a Wisconsin-based breeder of dogs for laboratory research, to acquire 1,500 beagles and then work with partner organizations to treat and socialize the dogs before adopting them out to families in Wisconsin and throughout the nation.

Big Dog Ranch Rescue and the Center for a Humane Economy understand that Ridglan Farms will continue to house approximately 500 other dogs. The two animal welfare organizations are committed to continuing to work in good faith with leaders at the 60-year-old company and look forward to finding a pathway to secure ownership of those animals at a time that is appropriate for the company. The terms of the agreement between the parties are confidential.

“This is a moment to celebrate that 1,500 dogs will soon know only the kindness of the most caring people and will be treated for the rest of their lives like little kings and queens,” **said Wayne Pacelle, president of the Center for a Humane Economy.** “This life-saving project comes as we also charge ahead with our work to wind down the archaic, and inhumane era of animal testing and embrace innovative 21st-century strategies that do no harm and deliver more palliatives and cures to people.”

The movement of dogs will begin soon, and continue until the transition is complete, with several hundred beagles finding homes in Wisconsin and more than 1,000 becoming family members in other states.

Lauree Simmons, president and founder of Big Dog Ranch Rescue, which specializes in dog rescue and maintains state-of-the-art, dog-centered facilities in Florida and Alabama, said, “This is a dream come true—to hug and hold these dogs and prepare them for their forever homes. It was very important to me, and to all of us at Big Dog Ranch Rescue, that there be a structured, responsible plan to ensure every one of these dogs is safely transitioned into our care and the care of our trusted rescue partners.”

Under the agreement, Big Dog Ranch Rescue will take responsibility for approximately 1,000 dogs, while the Center for a Humane Economy will work with Beagle Freedom Project, the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project, Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies, and the Dane County Humane Society to handle and then place 500 dogs.

“This is exactly the kind of moment we have been working toward for years,” **said Shannon Keith, founder and president of the Beagle Freedom Project.** “We have built the infrastructure to not only rescue these dogs, but to give them full lives beyond the laboratory system. Every one of these dogs will be treated as an individual deserving of care, healing, and a home.”

Local organizations are playing a critical role in the rescue effort, working alongside the Center for a Humane Economy and Beagle Freedom Project to assist with coordination, logistics, and on-the-ground support to ensure the safe and humane transition of the dogs.

“We are proud to stand with national organizations to help bring these dogs to safety,” **said Eilene Ribbens, executive director for the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project.** “This is a moment that shows what’s possible when local expertise and national resources come together for the animals.”

“This effort reflects the strength of collaboration across the animal welfare community,” **said Pam McCloud Smith, executive director of the Dane County Humane Society.** “Our focus is on ensuring these dogs receive the care, stability, and support they need as they begin their new lives.”

The rescue will be conducted in phases to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the animals, with veterinary teams, transport specialists, and partner organizations coordinating care, relocation, and adoption across the country. The organizations are asking for financial support to help fund the rescue, including opportunities to sponsor individual dogs, transport missions, and medical care.

A Turning Point in Science and Policy

This plan represents one of the largest coordinated rescues of dogs from the research supply system and reflects a broader transformation underway in science and public policy—one that is steadily reducing reliance on animal testing in favor of more modern, technologically savvy, and human-relevant methods.

The agreement comes amid accelerating federal efforts to modernize drug development and reduce reliance on animal testing. The passage of the FDA Modernization Act 2.0 in 2022, led by the Center for a Humane Economy, removed the longstanding requirement that new drugs be tested in animals prior to human trials, opening the door to advanced methods such as organ-on-chip systems, computational modeling, and human cell-based assays.

Building on that progress, lawmakers are now advancing FDA Modernization Act 3.0 to further accelerate the transition toward non-animal testing approaches and ensure federal agencies fully implement these reforms. The Senate passed this bill in December, but U.S. House leaders are lagging in putting it on the floor for final passage.

The Center for a Humane Economy and Big Dog Ranch Rescue are also collaborating with Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and other public health leaders to speed the drawdown the use of beagles, primates, and other animals in testing. While today's transition of dogs from the Ridglan facility is a major step in moving away from the use of beagles in animal testing, Marshall BioResources, based in upstate New York, still has as many as 20,000 beagles. Recent USDA reports noted as many as 50,000 dogs used in research and testing nationwide.

"The science is moving toward more predictive, human-based methods, and public policy is beginning to catch up," said **Tamara Drake, director of research and regulatory policy at the Center for a Humane Economy**. In April 2025, FDA Commissioner Marty Makary released a "[Roadmap to Reduce Animal Testing in Preclinical Safety Studies](#)" that aims to phase out animal testing as a regulatory requirement in drug development. The organizations are calling on NIH to stop funding any beagle or primate experiments and to ban imports of primates into the United States for testing.

ABOUT

Big Dog Ranch Rescue. Founded in 2008, Big Dog Ranch Rescue has saved more than 88,000 dogs and is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and placing dogs into loving homes. The organization also focuses on education, animal welfare policies and legislation, keeping pets in homes, reducing shelter overpopulation, disaster response, responsible pet ownership, and spay/neuter initiatives. A key program is its Veterans Service Dog Training Program, which has successfully placed over 230 service dogs with veterans living with disabilities, helping them lead more independent lives. Support the Rescue Effort for transportation and immediate care for the beagles, visit: <https://www.bdrr.org/beagle-fund>

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter