



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737

August 6, 2018

Dear Attending Veterinarians:

I'm reaching out to you in my role as the Deputy Administrator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Care program because we both share the same goal of ensuring animal welfare, and I see you as an important partner.

Animal Care administers the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which protects certain animals that are exhibited to the public, sold for use as pets, used in research, or transported commercially. We have roughly 100 inspectors on the ground conducting unannounced inspections of more than 8,000 regulated facilities across the nation. Each of these facilities relies on veterinarians, like you, to ensure their animals receive appropriate care and treatment.

Maintaining programs of adequate veterinary care and employing an attending veterinarian are cornerstones of the AWA regulations. In fact, facilities must ensure their veterinarians have appropriate authority to oversee the animals' care, and we trust and rely on your opinion.

This means you may receive occasional calls from our inspectors either during or after an on-site inspection to follow up on a facility's program of veterinary care. For example, an inspector may need to ask about a particular treatment protocol for an animal who is ill or has been injured. The information you provide on behalf of your client will help us ensure the animals are receiving adequate care in accordance with your guidance.

We know many of you are on the road on a daily basis visiting clients, and we promise to be respectful of your time. You may also prefer to leave more detailed written records of veterinary care with your facilities so our inspectors can answer most questions by reviewing your paperwork. We encourage you to have a conversation with your clients to determine what approach works best.

I realize you may not be used to hearing from our Animal Care inspectors directly, and that's why I wanted to write you. We've also prepared a short video message about this new initiative that you can watch at <https://youtu.be/17dMUTaLioE>. We are sharing a copy of this letter and the video link with our facilities as well so they know what to expect. Finally, we have updated our Inspection Guide (Chapter 6, page 6-10), which documents that partnering with attending veterinarians is an important part of the inspection process.

We look forward to building a strong and long-lasting relationship with the attending veterinarian community. If you have any questions about this or any other aspect of our Animal Care program, I encourage you to reach out to the Supervisory Animal Care Specialist in your area. Please see the attached list for more information.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Juarez

**Supervisory Animal Care Specialist
Contact List
July 2018**

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