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Animal Care

Last Modified:



Animal Care works to ensure the humane treatment of more than 1 million vulnerable animals, nationwide. Through inspections and outreach, we oversee thousands of groups, from breeders to managers of horse shows, to make sure their animals receive care and treatment that meets Federal standards. We also provide national leadership on the safety and well-being of pets and other animals during disasters.

Learn more about our organization and the authorities under which we work.

Priorities

Ensuring the Humane Treatment of Animals

Regulations established under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) set standards for the humane care and treatment of certain animals exhibited to the public, sold for use



Protecting Animals in Emergencies

We work closely with other government organizations under the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Response Framework to develop an integrated approach to disaster relief for pets and other animals.

Learn About Our Emergency Programs



Ending the Practice of Soring Horses

The Horse Protection Act and its associated regulations seek to put an end to soring—a cruel and inhumane practice in which chemical or mechanical irritants are applied to a horse's legs to enhance their gait. We monitor for sore horses which may lead to a disqualification from participating in exhibitions, shows, sales, or auctions.

Learn About the HPA



Animal Welfare Resources

Are you part of our AWA-regulated community, interested in becoming licensed or registered, or just looking to learn more? We offer many publications and guidance documents on the AWA and related topics.

Explore Resources



Trending Topics

Attending Veterinarians

Attending veterinarians are essential to the success of AWA-regulated facilities. Learn about their authority, duties, and more.

AWA Standards for Birds ("Bird Rule")

This page gives an overview of the new welfare standards for birds published in the Federal Register on February 21, 2023.

Import Permits (Dogs for Resale and Adoption)

We work with partners at U.S. ports of entry to make sure dogs imported into the United States for commercial sale or adoption meet the AWA's health, age, and vaccination requirements. Find out about import permit requirements for these dogs

or apply for a permit.

Latest Updates

11/12/26
USDA Announces Proposal To Strengthen Enforcement of the Horse Protection Act
8/06/26
APHIS Posts Investigative and Enforcement Services Annual Enforcement Data Reports
6/17/26
USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs Announces Targeted Organizational Improvements and Leadership Changes to Strengthen Service Delivery
3/19/26
USDA Seeks Public Input on Updating Dog Welfare Regulations; Comment Period Extended to April 20, 2026
2/18/26
USDA, DOJ, DHS, and HHS Launch Coordinated Effort to Crack Down on Chronic Dog Welfare Violators
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