Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

About Animal Care

Last Modified:

APHIS' Animal Care program enforces two important laws: the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act. Our specialized team includes veterinary medical officers, animal care inspectors, and other experts in the field of animal welfare.

Together, we work from field locations across the country to:

- Ensure the humane care and treatment of animals covered by the Animal Welfare Act, as described in our blue book of animal welfare regulations (3.67 MB)
- Eliminate soring and promote fair competition at events covered by the Horse Protection Act
- Provide national leadership on the safety and well-being of pets and other animals in disasters

Animal Care At-a-Glance

Here's a snapshot of our accomplishments in 2023 (13.95 MB).

- Worked with Federal, State, and local partners to confiscate or facilitate the surrender of 853 animals to relieve their suffering and provide them with humane care

- Oversaw more than 16,000 licensees and registrants--including nearly 3,000 new registrants--ensuring the humane care and treatment of AWA-covered animals
- Conducted over 10,000 AWA site inspections--including more than 900 unannounced inspections at research facilities--to assess the health, care, and treatment of animals covered under the AWA
- Attended 80 horse events, inspected 2,740 horses, and identified 532 instances of HPA noncompliance. In collaboration with industry representatives, samples 1,235 horses for prohibited substance testing and found that nearly half the samples tested were positive for prohibited numbing agents
- Issued 2,706 import permits covering 7,000 dogs entering the United States for resale, ensuring they are healthy, vaccinated, and over 6 months of age
- Hosted or assisted with more than 20 education and outreach events, including a State and Federal Veterinarian Meeting, Animal Transportation Symposium, and Small Pet Welfare Symposium. Field and species specialists attended or presented at 17 veterinary, breeder, or species-focused meetings and connected with more than 3,600 individuals across 36 states and 8 countries

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