

APHIS Animal Care Stakeholder Update Proposed Rule on Contingency Plans

October 23, 2008

As part of its mission, the Animal Care (AC) program of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with providing leadership in determining standards of humane care and treatment of animals.

Today in the Federal Register, you will find a proposed rule to amend the Animal Welfare Act regulations to add requirements for contingency planning and training of personnel by research facilities and by dealers, exhibitors, intermediate handlers, and carriers. We are proposing these requirements because we believe all licensees and registrants should develop a contingency plan for all animals regulated under the Animal Welfare Act in an effort to better prepare for potential disasters. This action would heighten the awareness of licensees and registrants regarding their responsibilities and help ensure a timely and appropriate response should an emergency or disaster occur.

We are proposing licensees and registrants develop contingency plans that:

- Identify situations the facility might experience that would trigger the need for a contingency plan.
- Outline specific tasks required to be carried out in response to the identified emergencies.
- Identify a chain of command and who (by name or by position title) will be responsible for fulfilling these tasks.
- Address how response and recovery will be handled in terms of materials, resources, and training needed.

We are also considering the development of a guidance document (or other means) to provide examples of elements that may be included in contingency plans. We welcome public comment on Web sites, articles, or other sources that may be used to develop such guidance, in addition to suggestions as to what elements should be included as examples for an adequate contingency plan.

Consideration will be given to all comments received on or before December 22, 2008. To learn more about this proposed rule and the public comment process, please visit our Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare.

If you have received this email and do not wish to receive future notices, please e-mail us at: ac_stakeholders_update@aphis.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Chester Gipson, DVM
Deputy Administrator