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USDA Establishes New Health Requirements for Dogs Imported to the U.S. for Resale

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15, 2014—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has amended Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations to require that dogs imported to the U.S. meet stronger health and safety standards to protect Americans and Americans’ pets. The new rule ensures that dogs imported for resale are vaccinated and in good health, and required to be over six months of age.

The new regulations are authorized under section 18 of the AWA, which Congress added in the 2008 Farm Bill. In September 2011, APHIS published and took comments on a proposed rule in the Federal Register addressing the requirements of the new section of the AWA.

“This rule implements new requirements in the Animal Welfare Act to ensure dogs imported for resale are healthy and vaccinated,” said Kevin Shea, Administrator for APHIS. “This will help safeguard the imported dogs, the public, and our pets and other animals.”

The final rule applies to dogs imported into the continental U.S., (including Alaska) and Hawaii, from other countries and from U.S. territories to the continental U.S.

This final rule applies to dogs intended for resale. It does not apply to dogs that are imported for research purposes, veterinary medical treatment, or for personal companions.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack’s leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America’s farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to help safeguard the nation’s agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America’s agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

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