



The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.

"World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats"

Cat Lovers Cheer New Help for Abused Animals

The Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) is applauding an announcement by the USDA's enforcement arm, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), to "allow animals confiscated from situations detrimental to their health to be placed with non-USDA licensed persons or facilities." This change in agency regulations will allow local humane agencies and dog and cat rescue organizations to care for the abused animals. It will be effective February 2, 2001.

The USDA, under authorization by the federal Animal Welfare Act, licenses and regulates commercial wholesale animal breeding facilities and dealers. Confiscation occurs when a licensed but is in noncompliance. Previously any animals confiscated by APHIS could only be placed "with a person or facility that is licensed by or registered with APHIS," the announcement said. Rescue organizations or local humane societies, though not required to be licensed under the AWA, are capable of caring for confiscated animals.

With this new federal regulation, APHIS inspectors will be able to move more quickly and efficiently to remove animals when necessary for their health and get them into the hands of shelters and rescue organizations that can care for their needs.

Chances of a sudden rash of USDA confiscations overwhelming dog or cat rescue groups or local humane societies under this rule change is unlikely. In its Supplementary Information, the USDA said, "APHIS confiscates animals only once or twice a year." Inhumane and substandard conditions in a small handful of licensed breeding facilities/dealers, and those that should be licensed and are not, have often meant an unwarranted black eye for both responsible breeders and the USDA.

"Because it is not cost-effective, and relatively difficult to raise kittens compared to puppies, commercial breeders have little interest in cats," said Pam DelaBar, CFA Animal Welfare Committee Chairperson, adding that "any cats at all kept in inhumane conditions are cause for concern." Cooperation among cat rescue groups, shelters and foster homes can ease any hardship that might occur should a confiscation cause a sudden influx of cats.

CFA and cat fanciers support the USDA's decision, and feel that this step is important to help cut down on licensed dealers/commercial breeders who are in non-compliance with the Animal Welfare Act due to inhumane conditions or cruelty. CFA, through its Breed Rescue and Animal Welfare Committees and with an established national network of caring cat fanciers is ready to assist when needed.

February 2001

To correspond with the CFA Legislative Committee, please email Legislation@CFA.org