



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs  
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## **USDA PROPOSES TO AMEND ANIMAL TRANSPORT REGULATIONS TO INCLUDE MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COVERED ANIMALS**

WASHINGTON, May 9, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced a proposal to amend the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations by adding minimum age requirements for the transport of all covered animals in commerce. The regulations currently contain such requirements only for dogs and cats, and not for other regulated animals such as nonhuman primates and marine mammals, among others.

Establishing minimum age requirements for the transport of all animals covered by the AWA helps to ensure their humane treatment. Under the proposed rule, animals would have to travel with their mother or be weaned and at least 8 weeks of age in order to be transported in commerce.

Unweaned animals and animals under the age of 8 weeks are generally not yet able to eat and drink independently of their mothers and have a need for frequent nourishment and water. For this reason, shipping young animals increases their risk of illness and death. This risk may be further increased if the animals are delayed during transport to their final destination.

The proposal provides an exception for transport to a licensed veterinarian for medical care when animals are less than 8 weeks of age and/or unweaned. The proposal also provides an exception for animals to be transported to registered research facilities for use in specific approved research protocols, provided a transportation plan is submitted and approved by the appropriate APHIS animal care regional office.

The AWA authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to set standards and regulations governing the humane handling, care, treatment and transportation of certain animals by dealers, research facilities, exhibitors, carriers and intermediate handlers.

Notice of the proposed rule is published in the May 9 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 8. Send two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2006-0024, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, Md. 20737-1238. If you wish to submit a comment using the Internet, go to the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2006-2004>; then click on "Add Comments." This will also allow you to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and may also be viewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., SW., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:40 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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