

# Animal Welfare Rule Changes

Research Paper – October 2019

## Rescinding and replacing Chapter 67, “Animal Welfare,” of the Iowa Administrative Code

### ***Top priority of new IDALS secretary***

Since being appointed to the office in March 2018, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Secretary Mike Naig has publicly stated his interest in improving laws and regulations relating to the welfare of companion animals.

Naig began by creating a new position of assistant state veterinarian. Practicing small-animal veterinarian Katie Rumsey was hired and tasked with the welfare of small animals. She led the rewrite of outdated administrative code rules in Chapter 67, entitled “Animal Welfare.” Her focus was the health and welfare of companion animals: veterinarian care, proper food and water, and shelter.

IDALS licenses and inspects about 2,000 commercial breeding operations, rescue shelters, pet dealers, boarding kennels and animal daycare establishments.

### ***The purpose of rule making***

- Ensure that all dogs and cats handled by commercial establishments receive humane care and treatment.
- Regulate the transportation, sale, purchase, housing, care, handling and treatment of dogs and cats by those who transport, buy or sell them.
- Provide that all vertebrate animals consigned to pet shops receive humane care and treatment, by regulating the transportation, sale, purchase, housing, care, handling and treatment of them by pet shops.
- Authorize the sale, trade or adoption only of animals that appear to be free of infectious or communicable disease.
- Protect the public from zoonotic disease.
- Establish subclassifications for licenses and further clarify requirements.

This rulemaking does not apply to livestock as defined in Iowa Code section 717.1, or any other agricultural animal used in agricultural production as provided in Iowa Code chapter 717A.

### ***Overview of changes***

The proposed changes would give pets (primarily dogs and cats) more room in cages, and would prohibit leaving animals in hot rooms without water for hours.

They promote stricter temperature and humidity requirements: no animals should be left in rooms warmer than 85 degrees; and they should be watered at least twice a day.

Animals must have room to sit, lie down and stand up fully. Owners of kennels, rescues, daycares and stores must ensure a cage’s wire floors are coated to protect paws and provide a solid place for rest.

New rules also focus on cleaning and sanitation, and require space for sick animals to be isolated to prevent the spread of disease.

### ***Animal industry stakeholders vetted***

The Iowa Pet Breeders Association, Animal Rescue League, American Kennel Club, Iowa Pet Alliance, Iowa Chapter of the National Humane Society, Iowa Farm Bureau and legislators were presented with a draft of the rules for their comment.

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## **Public hearing held October 30**

The hearing was attended by approximately 40 people, including by pet breeders, pet daycares, AKC members, hobby breeders and groomers.

The most vocal group were the pet daycare providers. They are opposed to the 75-square-foot per-animal play area requirement, and to limiting the number of animals per play group to 15. This is not a change, and most daycares are in violation. Inspectors are working with each provider on a case-by-case basis. The daycares are concerned they'll need to increase the size of their facilities and their staff.

American Kennel Club members expressed concern that the isolation time for imported dogs should be shorter than the 14 days IDALS suggests. They also want clarification of spay/neuter language and temperature of kennels.

The pet groomers asked IDALS for better education for the new generation of pet groomers.

IDALS has received more than 450 written comments on the filed rule change.

## **Last action**

The proposed Animal Welfare rules for Chapter 67 went before the Administrative Rules Review Committee on November 12.