

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



## Department of Agricultural Resources

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www.mass.gov/agr



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September 11, 2024

**Re: Animal / Barn Inspection Books 2024 Inspections**

[Please read these instructions!](#)

**THIS BOOK MUST BE COMPLETED AND MAILED BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT BY  
JANUARY 1, 2025.**

Greetings:

Enclosed is the barn inspection book(s) to be used for your 2024 inspections. The annual barn inspections are overseen by MDAR and performed by the Municipal Animal Inspector. For those of you who have been the Inspector of Animals in your city or town for quite some time, you know that the Division of Animal Health has been doing its best to collect information on the numbers of domestic animals and their locations around the state. If you are new to the job, I can't stress enough how essential the collection of these data becomes to developing a response plan to an emergency and implementing it. The information contained in these books has been used by our Department and cooperating agencies on several occasions while assisting people who found themselves unable to get their animals clear of potentially dangerous situations. Our ability to efficiently allocate resources to the most vulnerable areas during a time of need relies on the accuracy of the information you provide. The more accurate and complete the information you give us, is the more prepared we will be to respond when necessary.

You are asked to inspect every premises where any number of livestock or poultry, including horses, are being housed. We do not include bees or household pets, like dogs and cats, but potbellied pigs should be included as they can harbor the same illnesses as swine raised for food. Rabbits only need to be counted if they are being raised for sale or meat; one or two being kept as a pet does not need to be included in the inspection. An inspector is not able to perform an inspection on their own property. If you or your immediate family keeps animals in your inspection jurisdiction, then the municipality will require an additional inspector to perform that inspection. Ashley Kraft will work with your town on these matters, please contact her in such a case.

For each property you inspect, we need **the specific street name and number where the premises is located**. Please fill out all the information at the top of the page for each location, including the zip code. Many municipalities have more than one zip code; for us to get the most out of the data you collect, it is important that we have complete and correct address information for every property you inspect. This information is critical to pinpointing locations of animals on computer-generated maps of towns and counties to assist in planning any disease control or natural disaster response. **Please indicate the specific date the inspection was conducted**, so we will know exactly when the animals and their conditions were last observed. We also need the phone number and other relevant contact information of the animal owner. Though it may not be readily available, we ask you to do your best to complete all of the information requested. And as always, we ask that you **print as neatly as possible**. There are three copies for each premise, white, pink and yellow. The pink copy is given to the owner. The yellow copy is retained with your own records. **The white copy is left in the book.** We ask that you complete all of your inspections and return **the entire bound book (with state copies intact)** to the Department **by January 1, 2025.**

If you see something during your inspections that doesn't look right to you, please contact MDAR immediately so we can start working to solve the problem right away. Any premises that appears to have a disease problem must be your last stop of the day – we do not want to compound problems by bringing them from one farm to the next. If you have animals of your own at home, make sure to clean and disinfect yourself before having any contact with other animals. In

order to decrease the possibility of spreading a disease, we want you to take reasonable bio-security measures by either wearing disposable shoe covers or cleaning and disinfecting footwear between farms. Lastly, make your inspections from a reasonable distance from the animals. Be sure you're close enough to see any signs of illness in the animals, but far enough to prevent any unnecessary contact.

You are required to get permission from the owner before conducting the inspection but try to avoid too much advanced notification. **If the owner would like you to inspect without themselves being present, you need to get their authorization in writing.** You do not need to check ID but ask a simple question to ensure you are meeting with the owner, like "Are you the owner that takes care of the animals?" Boarding facility managers will be able to provide permission to inspect their property and animals readily seen. When inspecting a boarding facility please make efforts to open communication between the facility manager and animal owners. We want to be sure we're seeing the animals as they are normally maintained. These inspections are designed to ensure the safety of everyone's animals. Feel free to remind owners that the information written in the book is strictly confidential and will only be used to further develop our emergency response plans. **Owners that are unwilling to consent to an inspection should be reported to MDAR.**

We'd like for you to share some information with any poultry owners in town. The Department currently has a program that provides free Salmonella Pullorum and Avian Influenza testing for all chickens, turkeys and game birds in the state. This **testing is required** on any flock whose owner sells, gives away, or otherwise moves any live poultry or hatching eggs **within the Commonwealth**. Any poultry owners who are interested in scheduling testing should contact the Division of Animal Health at (617) 626-1795.

While performing the annual Barn Inspections we are not asking to check animal ID tags or note ear tag numbers, but we ask to verify that the animals do have ear tags or appropriate ID. Cattle, swine, sheep, and goats should be individually identified with ear tags if they are 18 months of age or older. We wouldn't be looking for proof of age beyond asking the owner how long they've had them. If it's over a year, they'll likely be old enough to require tags. If they don't have tags, please get a reason from the owner as to why this is the case and let them know the animals are supposed to have tags. The owner should call Carry Shulock-Sexton at (857) 348-3922 for tag information and the animal inspector should report this to MDAR.

We are also requesting your help in improving compliance with the state requirements for the licensing of horse-riding stables and riding instructors. **MGL Chapter 128, section 2B states: "Every person engaged in the business of operating a riding school or a stable where horses are kept for hire, shall obtain a license..."** Additionally, any person providing any type of instruction to the general public aboard or attached to any equine must have a Massachusetts Riding Instructors License. We would greatly appreciate your help in educating horse owners about these requirements. Please contact the Department by calling Michael Gold at (857) 348-3940 or e-mail [Michael.Gold@mass.gov](mailto:Michael.Gold@mass.gov) for further information or with any questions regarding riding stable or riding instructor licensing.

These inspections are **confidential (just like the rabies quarantine orders) the data collected is not shared** and you cannot provide your inspection slips to anyone, including other Town officials, for any reason. For the same reason, you may not conduct these inspections with other town officials, including the animal control officer. If someone is approaching you and asking for this information, they should be referred directly to MDAR. We ask that you not confuse the property owners by discussing municipal permitting issues, other town concerns, etc. while conducting these inspections. **You are representing MDAR on these inspections, not the municipality. Contact MDAR immediately with any questions or concerns.** The annual inspections are **for emergency preparedness purposes such as disease outbreaks or evacuations**. Our protection of this data is why we have such a high rate of voluntary access to these properties.

I fully understand the difficulties that can arise when doing these inspections. I know that scheduling conflicts can cause an individual inspection to drag on for weeks. However, I want you to understand how important this information is to us. The data contained in these books allows us to quickly make risk assessments for neighborhoods, towns or counties should we find ourselves facing a natural or man-made disaster. Having an understanding of where help needs to be concentrated in such a case gives us the ability to use our resources more efficiently. I greatly appreciate all the hard work you do for us.

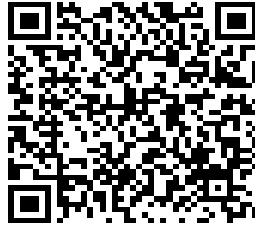


Michael Cahill, Director  
Division of Animal Health  
Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources

## **New Barn Inspection Owner Handout:**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/annual-barn-inspection-the-why-who-and-what-to-expect/download>

Scan QR Code:



### **MDAR BARN INSPECTION CONTACTS**

Please contact MDAR immediately with questions/concerns.  
Inspections are at the direction of MDAR, not the municipality.  
Failed inspections will require follow up.

Barn Inspections Questions or Concerns  
Rabies Program Coordinator  
Ashley Kraft  
Call 617-626-1810  
Email [Ashley.Kraft@mass.gov](mailto:Ashley.Kraft@mass.gov)

Animal ID/Tags and Import/Export  
Disease Traceability Coordinator  
Carry Shulock- Sexton  
Call 857-348-3922  
Email [Carry.Shulock-Sexton@mass.gov](mailto:Carry.Shulock-Sexton@mass.gov)

Poultry Questions  
Poultry Program Coordinator  
Megan Megrath  
Call 617-626-1798  
Email [Megan.Megrath@mass.gov](mailto:Megan.Megrath@mass.gov)

Horse Stable Questions  
Michael Gold  
Call 857-348-3940  
Email [Michael.Gold@mass.gov](mailto:Michael.Gold@mass.gov)

### **Beehives are NOT included on the inspection.**

For questions, please refer owners to contact:  
MDAR Apiary Program  
Call (508) 281-6784  
Email [bees@mass.gov](mailto:bees@mass.gov)

### **MDAR Return Mailing Address:**

EOEEA, MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health, 100 Cambridge St. 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Boston, MA 02114