

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF ANIMAL HEALTH RABIES QUARANTINE TRANSFER POLICY STATEMENT

January 27, 2010

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' Division of Animal Health promulgated regulation 330 CMR 10, "Prevention of the Spread of Rabies", to help control the spread of the rabies virus within the domestic animal population. These regulations are based on national recommendations established by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians and distributed by the Centers for Disease Control. The national recommendations and our regulations describe the adequate lengths of quarantine required to mitigate the risk of exposure to humans and other animals. Additionally, a detailed description of how an animal must be housed during the quarantine period is included. What is absent from the national recommendations and intentionally omitted from the Department regulations is language regarding any transfer of quarantine between locations.

Once an animal has been quarantined to a specific property, in the interest of preventing the spread of disease, the animal is required to remain on that premises until the end of the designated quarantine period. For various reasons, and as a result of unforeseen circumstances, the Division has received requests to transfer an animal under quarantine to an alternate location. Some of these requests have been granted and some have been denied. The Department has implemented the following policy to ensure a fair and consistent approach to these matters.

Owned Animals:

It is the responsibility of the owner of an animal to provide an adequate location for quarantine. Normally this is the owner's home. If the owner is unable or unwilling to maintain the quarantine within their home, they may choose to have the animal quarantined at an animal hospital or boarding facility approved by the animal inspector of the town where the facility is located. Owners that are in the process of moving to another municipality within the Commonwealth will need to speak with the animal inspector who issued the quarantine so arrangements can be made with the inspector in the town where the owner is moving to. These arrangements must be made prior to moving the animal. Owners that are moving to another state must notify the animal inspector who issued the quarantine. The animal inspector will work with the Department to make the appropriate contact in the state where the owner is moving to. It will be up to the animal health official of that state to allow the animal to be imported while under quarantine. Approval from the animal health official in the state of destination must be received prior to moving the animal.

Unowned Animals:

Upon exhausting all reasonable efforts to locate an owner, acquired stray or feral animals that have been exposed to rabies or show signs of exposure to rabies may, with the approval of the animal inspector, be quarantined by the person who found the animal. If that person is unable or unwilling to maintain the quarantine within their home, they may choose to have the animal quarantined at an animal hospital or boarding facility approved by the animal inspector of the town where the facility is located. Alternatively, the animal may be surrendered to a registered Massachusetts animal shelter facility approved by the animal inspector of the town where the facility is located, provided the animal remains in the shelter for the full duration of the quarantine. Animal hospitals, shelters, boarding kennels and other facilities shall not transfer animals under quarantine to private homes, foster care or adoptive homes under any circumstances.