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Press Release

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DEC to Host Workshop on Animal Care Standards

(JUNEAU, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of the State Veterinarian will be hosting a public workshop to gather input for the development of animal care standards. The workshop will be held Thursday, Oct. 27, from 3:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. All interested persons are invited to attend by telephone at 1-800-315-6338, pass code 8213, or in person at the State Environmental Health Laboratory at 5251 Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., Anchorage, Alaska.

Using information from the workshop, the department may develop animal care standards that provide more detail on what constitutes adequate feeding, watering, and care for common livestock and domestic animals. The public is invited to discuss what they believe should be included in animal care standards for Alaska.

The impetus for this effort was the passage of legislation several years ago tasking the department with the development of animal care standards. Nearly every other state has adopted similar standards to guide private veterinarians and law enforcement as they investigate animal cruelty cases. Without standards, it is difficult to determine what constitutes abuse and neglect. Both the Alaska Farm Bureau and the Alaska Veterinarian Medical Association (AKVMA) are encouraging DEC's efforts.

"Alaska's farmers and ranchers understand the importance of caring for their livestock" says Bryce Wrigley, President of the Alaska Farm Bureau. "Humane treatment of the animals under our care reflects our role as stewards and is an important aspect of any successful livestock operation."

"The Alaska Veterinary Medical Association is pleased to support the efforts of DEC to define appropriate animal care for both farm animals and companion animals," the AKVMA Executive Board recently stated. "We look forward to assisting in any effort that ensures the animals of our state receive appropriate care."

DEC is working on a comprehensive revision of the state animal health regulations. Standards for animal care will be one aspect of those regulations revisions. There will be a formal comment period on those regulations once they are ready for public review.

A working draft of some initial ideas for animal care standards is available at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/vet/index.htm>.

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