

## Public Workshop for Proposed Animal Care Standards

### Workshop Minutes

November 29, 2011, 3:30 – 5 PM

Scope of Workshop: The purpose of the workshop was to discuss specific animal care standards for birds, including poultry and pet birds.

Attendance: Approximately 15 participants; private citizens, veterinarians, Borough animal control representatives.

Comments listed below are from stakeholders (unless noted) and do not necessarily represent the eventual decision of the DEC on any particular issue.

Items or comments with marked with a footnote are designated as needing further actions/research by stakeholders or the Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) and will be readdressed at future workshops. “OPEN” items will be discussed at future meetings.

#### 1. Housing and cage standards.

- Smaller cage sizes than currently listed as minimum for housing may be safer and more appropriate for transportation; need to clarify.<sup>1</sup>  
*OSV/USDA comment:* Commercial transportation services such as airlines may impose their own restrictions on cage size for traveling animals. These rules may be different than any adopted state regulations.
- Several participants stated that they preferred the general cage minimum as drafted to a specific measurable dimension, due to variation in bird sizes. Alaska has no large scale poultry production facilities; therefore, birds are much more variable in size.
- An e-mail participant recommended that the cage size minimum (which is directed more toward poultry) may not be appropriate for pet birds, because they live many years and behavioral abnormalities that cause physical distress may occur. Cage size recommendations exist for pet birds. (OPEN)

- Cage size minimum should include verbiage regarding tail feathers not touching the cage.

2. Induced molting. No comments.

3. Do the general care standards in section 36.560 provide adequate provisions for all bird species (poultry, exhibition/exotics and pet birds) and livestock categories (i.e., commercial poultry categories: chicks, fertilized eggs, layers, broilers, turkeys, ducks, game birds)?

- Several participants thought that there should be separate sections for pet birds vs. poultry. Mat-Su Animal Control authorities stated that they tend to see most complaints about parrots and similar birds, and occasionally about raptors. Fairbanks authorities described more problems with backyard poultry losing limbs and other extremities to frostbite, showing a need for better shelter provisions. (OPEN)

*OSV comment:* The OSV recognizes the possible need for different rules for different types of birds. A sub-section or separate section may be warranted to make the rules clear. The eventual organization of the regulation will be determined by the DEC and the Department of Law and the organization will be consistent with other state regulations in order to ensure enforceability and clarity.

- Can bird owners perform routine husbandry procedures or treat their own birds? Veterinary services may be difficult to obtain.

*OSV comment:* Yes, this is covered in the draft regulation by section 36.560 (g).

- Should there be specific rules for butchering birds for consumption vs. general euthanasia?

*OSV comment:* The AVMA guidelines referenced in the draft regulation allow for several different types of euthanasia methods in birds. Birds used for food cannot be euthanized with chemical

injection. The methods allowed are considered humane for birds specifically.

#### 4. Feed, water.

- A suggestion was made to specifically require that Water provided should be “clean” or “potable”. Birds should have fresh clean water.
- Response from several participants was that Water should not be further defined as required to be clean or potable because free ranging birds can maintain hydration water from a lake or other surface water sources. “Potable” is a very high standard and “clean” is difficult to define or enforce.
- Sometimes water and feed may need to be withdrawn for veterinary reasons under the supervision of a veterinarian.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. Handling, transportation, shipping

- Pet birds being shipped to pet stores often die in transit. People at pet stores say that a % of death is expected.<sup>3</sup>
- Sometimes birds in transit peck or tear their way out of their cages.<sup>4</sup>

#### Notes:

<sup>1,3,4</sup> OSV will research federal rules regarding transportation of birds to assess suitability for referencing within the animal care standards.

<sup>2</sup> OSV will draft verbiage to allow for veterinary supervision of controlled withdrawal of feed/water for medical reasons.