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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

February 7, 2007

Mary Bender, Director  
Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement  
2301 N. Cameron St., Room 102  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Ms. Bender:

We are the Lawrence County Humane Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, in New Castle, PA. We are the **only** shelter in Lawrence County. We operate with an open door policy of not turning away any animal. We accept all stray dogs and cats in addition to any abused, abandoned and owned animals. So, our space and resources are limited.

We are hopeful that the proposed changes and clarifications of the Pennsylvania Dog Law Regulations will address inhumane treatment that so many animals endure housed in so many kennels.

We would like to comment on the fact that most of the proposals we have read are good, but feel some would not be appropriate for all kennels. Some kennels, where dogs in long-term breeding facilities are kept, need more living space, more attention, more veterinarian care, especially if the breeders are guaranteeing good health. This would also include mental stimulation and anything that would provide a sense of well-being for the dogs that are bred repeatedly for profit.

We also feel that foster homes should be considered extensions of the releasing agency with which they are affiliated. They should be inspected and held responsible for every aspect of the care of the animal. Both the releasing agency and the foster home together should be held responsible for any wrongdoing.

Rescue groups also need these regulations and good enforcement as anyone can currently refer to themselves as a "rescue" group. They need certification, also, as should "foster homes."

The temperature inside a kennel is important and should fit the climate in which the kennel is located. Pennsylvania has a variety of temperatures and the dog should always be comfortable.

Our shelter manager expressed a concern about the quarantine regulation. If we understand it correctly, shelters that take stray and seized dogs from the Department, stray and owned dogs from the general public as well as from other law enforcement agencies in the county, would be exempt from this regulation. We feel that this should not change. We do not have the space to quarantine **every** dog that we take into our shelter. We do our best to keep new animals away from current animals housed in the shelter and we vaccinate and de-worm them. After 48 hours they are available for adoption unless they show signs of illness.

Another issue that our shelter manager would like to be clarified is the issue of a stray dog that comes into the shelter with a dog license. We currently are required to send notification via a certified or registered letter to the name and address that the license is traced to. This is not a problem for us except when the license is not a current one or is more than four years old. When we contact the Lawrence County Treasurer's Office, we are told that the records are down in the basement in the archives and they will not be able to get them for us. We would like to know if this information is available from any other source like a central data base. We understand it is the owner's responsibility to have a current license on their dog. The law, as far as we know it, does not address the issue of old licenses on dogs or ones that are not legible (many tags are very worn and the numbers are rubbed off). Are we responsible for contacting owners whose dogs have expired licenses and we can't get or read the information?

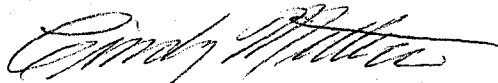
Is there a section in the dog laws addressing the question of "When is a stray no longer a stray?" Is there a length of time that a person can take care of a stray dog until it becomes theirs? Can they take care of a stray dog for a day, a month, three months, a year? When does it become **their** dog to be responsible for licensing it, getting it veterinary care and ultimately owning the dog?

It is difficult for one set of regulations to provide all the requirements for the safety and well-being of the animals in so many different situations. Considerations for the animals' welfare should be put above everything else and the organizations should be held responsible for their actions.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our ideas, concerns and questions.

Sincerely,

Lawrence County Humane Society



Cindy Mittica, President  
Board of Directors