USDA Seeks Public Input on Updating Dog Welfare Regulations; Comment Period Extended to April 20, 2026

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is seeking public comments, scientific data, and stakeholder input to help determine whether updates are needed to Federal regulations governing the humane care of dogs. These standards—which apply to licensed breeders and other regulated entities under the Animal Welfare Act—have not undergone a major revision in more than three decades.

This effort reflects USDA’s commitment to strengthening dog welfare nationwide, a top priority for Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins. The review will focus on care standards for breeding females, as well as requirements for exercise and socialization—areas where science and best practices have advanced significantly since the early 1990s.

APHIS is requesting public input on topics such as:

- What veterinary and nutritional care breeding females require
- How age, litter frequency, and genetics affect health outcomes
- Best practices for exercise and socialization to promote dog welfare

The comment period opened on February 17, 2026, with an original closing date of March 19, 2026. To ensure stakeholders have sufficient time to provide thoughtful input, APHIS has extended the deadline to April 20, 2026. Comments can be

submitted at www.regulations.gov by searching for Docket No. APHIS-2025-1000.

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