

USDA POLICY CHANGES

- **Failure to comply with the Freedom of Information Act** – When the Agency responds to FOIA requests for copies of inspection reports of dog breeding operations, the Agency blackens out the entire report, the excuse being that such reports are *equivalent to personnel and medical records* which are exempt from FOIA.
- **“Teachable Moments”** – Certain violations are no longer to be documented on the inspection reports but are instead to be treated as “teachable moments” that are to be documented separately (out of public view).
- **Self-Identifying and Self-Reporting** – If the breeder informs USDA of his/her violations of AWA and makes a promise to correct them, the Agency’s inspector will not document the violations on the inspection report.
- **Limited Inspections** – USDA will now inspect only those kennel buildings and dogs that the breeder consents to let USDA inspect and will document violations only in areas permitted by the breeder.
- **Announced Inspections** – USDA has implemented a “pilot project” to evaluate the use of “announced” inspections whereby USDA calls the breeder in advance and schedules an appointment for the inspection. USDA plans a nationwide implementation of this announced inspections policy if such warnings result in reduced violations during the pilot project.
- **Limitations on Number of Non-Compliant Items** – The Agency is limiting the number of non-compliant items that can be cited by an inspector to *one* per category of regulations. For example, if 10 dogs are sick and/or injured and have been denied veterinary care, the breeder can be cited for only one non-compliant item for lack of veterinary care even if all 10 dogs are suffering.
- **Identification of Suffering Animals No Longer Necessary** – The section on how to identify suffering animals has been eliminated from USDA’s Inspection Guide.
- **Veterinarian Oversight No Longer Necessary** – The requirement to ensure oversight by a veterinarian has been eliminated from USDA’s Inspection Guide.
- **Preventive Veterinary Care No Longer Necessary** – The requirement for care by a veterinarian to provide vaccinations and parasite control has been eliminated from USDA’s Inspection Guide.

- **Ignoring of Serious Conditions in Dogs** – Infected or rotting teeth, overgrown toenails that curl into the pads of feet, eye and ear infections, and other so-called “minor” illnesses and injuries are no longer to be documented by USDA.
- **Elimination of All Incentives to Provide Veterinary Care on a Continuing Basis** – If the inspector is able to contact the breeder’s veterinarian about sick and injured dogs discovered during the inspection, **then no violation is documented regardless of how much the animals have suffered and how long they have gone without treatment.**
- **Reporting of Criminal Abuse and Neglect No Longer** – USDA inspectors are prohibited from reporting abuse and neglect discovered during the inspection process to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.
- **No Unannounced Inspection to Take Place If the Breeder Objects** – USDA will now accept any number of excuses for a refusal, which can be as general as the breeder having a “personal event” to attend. Instead, USDA will schedule an inspection appointment in advance if a breeder continues to refuse unannounced inspections.



Bernadette Juarez, USDA Deputy Administrator for Animal Care

Bernadette Juarez, USDA Deputy Administrator for Animal Care, was **concerned that too many violations were being documented on USDA inspection reports detailing breeders’ failure to provide proper veterinary care to their dogs.** In response, **Juarez eliminated numerous veterinary care requirements** and now boasts that 70% of commercial dog breeders have zero non-compliant items on their inspection reports.

[What You Can Do](#)