



Virginia Animal Control Association
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Membership Alert

May 25, 2011

On July 1, 2011, **§3.2-6503.1; Care of Agricultural Animals** will be added to the Comprehensive Animal Care section of the Code of Virginia. This new section will establish minimum care standards for agricultural animals and is the result of two bills that were introduced during the 2011 legislative session of the Virginia General Assembly. This legislation, House Bill 1541 and Senate Bill 1026, was sponsored by Delegate Bobby Orrock and Senator Phillip Puckett respectively. In addition, the bills add a definition of “farming activity” to **§3.2-6500** and clarify the right of shelters and pounds to adopt or transfer agricultural animals to a rescue under **§3.2-6569**.

Both bills were supported by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), the Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA), the Virginia Farm Bureau, the Virginia Agribusiness Council and the office of Governor Bob McDonnell.

Initially, VACA had concerns about the language in both bills, so we went to work with the various stakeholders to make some amendments. Our collaborative efforts were successful, resulting in an additional tool for animal control officers when investigating the care of agricultural animals. Violation of this section will be a class 4 misdemeanor. Owners will be required to provide for agricultural animals:

- Water to prevent dehydration
- Feed to prevent malnourishment
- Veterinary care to address impairment of health or bodily function when such impairment cannot be addressed through animal husbandry or humane destruction

This new law does not repeal or make inapplicable the cruelty to animals statute already in existence, **§3.2-6570**. This law is still in effect and should be used after a thorough investigation and when appropriate.

Animal Control Officers are encouraged to contact VACA if questions arise or if problems are encountered when enforcing this new law. As information is gathered, VACA will team with the various stakeholders to recommend improvements once this new law goes into effect and is utilized.

Providing a united voice for Animal Care and Control Professionals throughout Virginia!
www.vacaonline.net