

NOTICE FROM THE TOWN OF HARDWICK

The following Statute (Act 30) changes the way the Town will handle kennel licenses and will be implemented by the Town on April 1, 2014. If you have questions about this new law contact the Agency of Agriculture at 802-828-1056.

Act 30, passed during the 2013 legislative session, it amended the Pet Merchant licensing program that was historically managed by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM). In its prior form, the Pet Merchant licensing program mandated that all hobby breeders and retail pet shops license with VAAFAM.

Effective July 1, 2013 - Act 30 now mandates that all qualified hobby pet breeders obtain a Pet Dealer permit from their town of residence, rather than a license from VAAFAM. **Act 30 defines a “Pet Dealer” as any person who sells or exchanges, or who offers to sell or exchange, cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids, or any combination thereof, from three or more litters from cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids in any 12-month period.** Pet Dealers must apply to the municipal clerk of the town or city in which the cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids are kept for a Pet Dealer permit, the annual permit fee is \$25.00. Pet Dealer facility inspections may be performed at the town’s discretion or by the Agency of Agriculture. The Pet Dealer licensing requirement does not apply to pet shops, animal shelters or rescue organizations.

Retail and wholesale pet shops, formerly licensed as Pet Merchants, are now required to license with VAAFAM as Pet Shops. **Act 30 defines a “Pet Shop” as a place of retail or wholesale business, including a flea market, which is not part of a private dwelling, where cats, dogs, wolf-hybrids, rabbits, rodents, birds, fish, reptiles, or other vertebrates are maintained or displayed for the purpose of sale or exchange to the general public. Businesses that sell horses or livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and domestic fowl, are exempt from the pet shop licensing requirement.** The Pet Shop license period is from April 1 to March 31 of each year, and the annual license fee is \$150.00.

Towns will now have to provide the pet dealer with: a copy of Part 3 of the Animal Welfare Regulations promulgated by VAAFAM, provide the pet dealer with contact information for VAAFAM’s animal health office, and provide the pet dealer with contact information for the Department of Taxes regarding the sales tax obligation for the sale of pets.

Those with concerns about alleged companion animal welfare violations should contact the humane officer with jurisdiction in the pet owner’s town of residence. To access the appropriate humane officer, concerned citizens may lodge a complaint by phone or on line by visiting the Vermont Humane Federation’s website at:

<http://www.vermonthumane.org/cruelty.php>