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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 3

[Docket No. APHIS–2025–1000]

Standards for the Care of Breeding Female Dogs and Exercise and Socialization of Dogs

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Request for information (RFI).

SUMMARY: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture is soliciting comments regarding appropriate standards for the care of breeding female dogs at dog breeding facilities and exercise and socialization of dogs subject to the Animal Welfare Act. Information obtained from public comments will help identify outdated standards, new science, and stakeholder interest.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before March 19, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Enter APHIS–2025–1000 in the Search field. Select the Documents tab, then select the Comment button in the list of documents.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Please send one copy of your comment to Docket No. APHIS–2025–1000, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., #AP760, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at <http://www.regulations.gov> or in our reading room, which is in room 1620 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through

Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 799–7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Christine Jones, Acting Animal Care Chief of Staff, 2150 Centre Ave., Bldg. B, Mailstop 3W11, Fort Collins, CO 80526; (970) 494–7478.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131–2159, hereafter the AWA) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to promulgate standards and other requirements governing the humane care, treatment, and transportation of certain animals by dealers, research facilities, exhibitors, carriers, and other regulated entities. Among other things, section 2143(a) provides that the aforementioned standards must include minimum requirements for the exercise of dogs as determined by attending veterinarians in accordance with general standards promulgated by the Secretary.

The Secretary has delegated the authority for enforcing the AWA to the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Regulations established under the AWA are contained in 9 CFR parts 1, 2, and 3.

The regulations governing the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of dogs are contained in 9 CFR part 3, subpart A. Within that subpart, animal husbandry standards for dogs are found in §§ 3.7 through 3.13. Section 3.7 of the subpart contains compatible grouping standards for dogs; § 3.8 contains exercise standards; §§ 3.9 and 3.10 contain feeding and watering standards respectively; § 3.11 contains cleaning, sanitation, housekeeping, and pest control standards; and § 3.13 contains standards for veterinary care for dogs. (Section 3.12 does not contain standards for dogs and is focused on employees involved in husbandry practices and care.)

Sections 3.1 through 3.11 were last substantially revised in a final rule published in the **Federal Register** on February 15, 1991 (56 FR 6426–6505; Docket No. 90–218, referred to below as the February 1991 final rule); the standards for veterinary care for dogs found in § 3.13 were added to the regulations in a final rule published in the **Federal Register** on May 30, 2020 (85 FR 28772–28799, Docket No.

APHIS–2017–0062, referred to below as the May 2020 final rule).

We are aware that advances continue to be made, new information developed, and new concepts implemented with regard to the handling and care of dogs. For example, APHIS is aware of advancements in and special considerations provided by State laws regarding the care of breeding females at dog breeding facilities, including “adequate rest” between breeding cycles, minimum and maximum breeding ages, and pre-breeding examinations and caps on the maximum number of litters female breeding dogs may have over the course of their lifetime. In addition, the Croney Research group at Purdue University’s College of Veterinary Medicine (<https://www.purdue.edu/vet/discovery/croney/>) has advanced science-based standards for breeding dogs through their applied research and outreach education programs which inform their voluntary breeding canine welfare certification program, a program that addresses behavioral needs of dogs and informs limits for breeding ages and litter numbers, health requirements, and retirement and rehoming plans.

We are also aware of enhanced exercise requirements for dogs in several States that include minimum daily exercise unless contraindicated and/or otherwise directed by a veterinarian, as well as socialization requirements, such as positive physical contact with humans and compatible animals. The American Kennel Club, a canine welfare and advocacy organization, has also advanced kennel improvements to enhance dog welfare, including additional space, enhanced exercise and environmental enrichment, and outdoor access.

In light of these developments, we consider it appropriate to review and seek data and scientific information on care considerations for breeding females at dog breeding facilities and the exercise and socialization needs of dogs, and are soliciting public comment on the issues outlined below. We invite the submission of data and reviewed scientific information, and where possible, request citations for any referenced studies and scientific evidence to support your comments.

Care Considerations for Breeding Females

- Do breeding female dogs require additional veterinary or other care considerations over those for non-breeding dogs? What are the most common health issues documented in female breeding dogs?
- Are there studies regarding the specific nutrition requirements during pregnancy and lactation for breeding females?
- What scientific evidence is there regarding the impact of breeding age on the health of breeding females?
- What, if any, impact does the number and frequency of litters have on the health of female dogs? Are there studies evaluating the impact of breed size on the health and breeding of female dogs?
- What scientific evidence is there regarding the impact of heritable defects on the health of breeding females? What are the costs and benefits of genetic testing in breeding females for dog breeding facilities?

Socialization and Exercise of Dogs

- Are there studies assessing the socialization needs of dogs, including interactions with humans and compatible dogs?
- Are there studies assessing the health and wellbeing of singly housed dogs?
- What scientific information is available regarding the exercise needs of dogs, including considerations of the animal's age, breed, and health, the type of exercise, and exercise frequency and duration?
- Are there studies evaluating the effects of human interaction on the health and welfare of dogs in breeding facilities?

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2131–2159; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.7.

Done in Washington, DC, this 12th day of February 2026.

Jeremy Witte,

Deputy Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA.

[FR Doc. 2026–03077 Filed 2–13–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

12 CFR Part 4

[Docket ID OCC–2026–0001]

RIN 1557–AF48

Bank Appeals Process

AGENCY: Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Treasury.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) is issuing a notice of proposed rulemaking to establish revised procedures and policies for appeals of material supervisory determinations by OCC supervised entities. The proposed changes would reflect the OCC's experience administering the bank appeals process and are intended to enhance the independence and efficiency of the appeals function.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 20, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to the agency as follows:

Commenters are encouraged to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Please use the title “Bank Appeals Process” to facilitate the organization and distribution of the comments. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal—***Regulations.gov:* Go to <https://regulations.gov/>. Enter Docket ID “OCC–2026–0001” in the Search Box and click “Search.” Public comments can be submitted via the “Comment” box below the displayed document information or by clicking on the document title and then clicking the “Comment” box on the top-left side of the screen. For help with submitting effective comments, please click on “Commenter’s Checklist.” For assistance with the *Regulations.gov* site, please call 1–866–498–2945 (toll free) Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST, or email regulationshelpdesk@gsa.gov.

- **Mail:** Chief Counsel’s Office, Attention: Comment Processing, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 400 7th Street SW, Suite 1E–216, Washington, DC 20219.

- **Hand Delivery/Courier:** 400 7th Street SW, Suite 1E–216, Washington, DC 20219.

Instructions: You must include “OCC” as the agency name and Docket ID “OCC–2026–0001” in your comment. In general, the OCC will enter all comments received into the docket and

publish the comments on the *Regulations.gov* website without change, including any business or personal information provided such as name and address information, email addresses, or phone numbers. Comments received, including attachments and other supporting materials, are part of the public record and subject to public disclosure. Do not include any information in your comment or supporting materials that you consider confidential or inappropriate for public disclosure.

You may review comments and other related materials that pertain to this action by the following method:

- **Viewing Comments Electronically—***Regulations.gov:* Go to <https://regulations.gov/>. Enter Docket ID “OCC–2026–0001” in the Search Box and click “Search.” Click on the “Documents” tab and then the document’s title. After clicking the document’s title, click the “Document Comments” tab. Comments can be viewed and filtered by clicking on the “Sort By” drop-down on the right side of the screen or the “Refine Results” options on the left side of the screen. Supporting materials can be viewed by clicking on the “Documents” tab. Click on the “Sort By” drop-down on the right side of the screen or the “Refine Documents Results” options on the left side of the screen checking the “Supporting & Related Material” checkbox. For assistance with the *Regulations.gov* site, please call 1–866–498–2945 (toll free) Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. EST, or email regulationshelpdesk@gsa.gov.

The docket may be viewed after the close of the comment period in the same manner as during the comment period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joanne Phillips, Counsel, or Daniel Prieve, Counsel, Chief Counsel’s Office, (202) 649–5490, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 400 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20219. If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, please dial 7–1–1 to access telecommunications relay services.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background and Policy Objectives

A. History of the OCC Appeals Process for Material Supervisory Determinations

The OCC first created a process for the appeal of material supervisory determinations in 1993 under Comptroller Eugene Ludwig.¹ In 1994, Congress passed the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory

¹ OCC Banking Circular 272, “National Bank Appeals Process” (June 11, 1993).