

Dog Regulations to Farm Bill Scaled Back

New dog breeder and pet store regulations were removed, but a restriction on U.S. puppy imports remains.

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A proposal to require new inspection and license regulations for some small dog and cat breeders, Internet sellers, and pet stores that breed pets for resale, was dropped this week due to continuing controversy.

In November, Senator Dick Durbin proposed attaching the amendment to the federal Farm Bill under debate now, but groups such as the Cat Fancier's Association opposed it saying it was unnecessary and would unfairly target hobby breeders with as few as four or five breeding cat pairs.

Also dropped was a suggestion to allow third-party inspections of dog and cat breeders licensed under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Third-party inspectors were to be approved by the USDA and required to adhere to standards "at least as protective of animal welfare" as the agency's regulations.

Both proposals were reminiscent of the Pet Animal Welfare Statute (PAWS), which was defeated last year.

A related amendment from Durbin's office to ban U.S. imports of dogs less than six months old if slated for sale, however, remains.

"We filed both of these two amendments ... There were objections that were quietly raised against both," Joe Shoemaker, director of communications for Durbin, said. "We felt that if we push both amendments, we stood a chance of losing both, so we opted to get at least one passed now and lay down a marker for future action on the second one."

The puppy import ban (amendment No. 3619), which would amend the Animal Welfare Act, also requires that importers only accept dogs in good health that "have received all necessary vaccinations."

Exceptions to the age restriction are allowed for research purposes or veterinary care if approved by the USDA.

-Rose Gordon, Associate News Editor for DogChannel.com