



GOVERNOR LINGLE SIGNS RULES TO ELIMINATE QUARANTINE FOR QUALIFIED PETS

Five-day-or-less program to go into effect on June 30

HONOLULU - Governor Linda Lingle today signed administrative rule changes that essentially eliminate quarantine for pets whose owners complete pre-arrival requirements and submit all required documents in a timely manner. The Governor signed the rule changes today while participating in the Hawaiian Humane Society's Pet Walk at Magic Island. The new five-day-or-less quarantine option will become effective on Monday - June 30, 2003.

"I am very pleased that we were able to devise a system that allows pets to enter the state without quarantine and still provide the islands with a high level of protection from the introduction of rabies," said Governor Lingle. "I have heard from many responsible pet owners who realize the importance of keeping Hawai'i rabies-free, and they are excited about the new rules."

Under the new program, pets may be released within five days or less, ideally at Honolulu International Airport, depending on the time it takes owners to provide all the required information regarding pre-arrival requirements, which include:

- Two rabies vaccinations, with the last vaccination administered no more than 12 months prior to arrival if it was a one-year vaccine, or no more than 18 months prior to arrival if it was a three-year vaccine. (The two vaccinations may not be administered within 90 days of each other; and the last vaccine must be administered no less than 90 days prior to the pet's entry into the state);
- Microchip implantation for identification purposes;
- Blood serum test results with sufficient level of rabies antibodies;
- 120-day pre-arrival waiting period between the time the lab receives the blood sample and the earliest date the pet may enter the state under the new program. (The pre-arrival waiting period is necessary due to the long and variable length of rabies incubation, where the virus may hide in an animal before clinical signs of the disease become apparent.); and,
- Pet owners must also submit required paperwork at least 10 days prior to the pet's arrival.

The program also allows Hawai'i residents to travel with their pets and return to the state without quarantine if they follow the specified procedures before they leave.

The five-day or less quarantine program is a new option. The 30-day and the 120-day quarantine programs remain in effect for pets that do not satisfy the new requirements. Fees for the five-day-or-less program will be \$165 if the pet qualifies for direct release from the airport and \$224 if the pet must be held for up to five days of quarantine. The cost of the 30-day and the 120-day quarantine programs will remain at \$655 and \$1,080, respectively.

"The staff at our Animal Industry Division is working to make the arrival procedures as seamless and stress-free as possible," said Sandra Lee Kunimoto, chairperson of the Hawai'i Board of Agriculture. "To help facilitate expeditious release of arriving pets, we encourage pet owners to be diligent in complying with the requirements and submitting the necessary documents in a timely manner."

The HDOA has developed a checklist to assist pet owners in qualifying their pets for the 5-day-or-less program. The checklist may be obtained on the department's website at: <http://www.hawaiiag.org/hdoa/> .

Also under the new rules, dogs and cats from Guam will be exempted from rabies quarantine due to their rabies-free status and establishment of import requirements as stringent as those in Hawai'i. Such status is already given to dogs and cats from Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain.

Hawaii is the only rabies-free state in the nation. In 2002, there were 4,681 dogs and cats that completed quarantine in Hawai'i. About 75 percent of those pets qualified for the 30-day program. The expectation is that the new option will effectively end quarantine in Hawai'i for about half of arriving pets.

For more information on Hawai'i's rabies exclusion programs, go to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's website at: www.hawaiiag.org/hdoa/ Click on "Importing."

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