

Animal License Program Information Document

During the 2013 and 2016 legislative sessions, state lawmakers implemented changes to the companion animal licensing programs that were historically managed by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM). The Governor signed Act 30, *An Act Related to the Sale, Transfer, or Importation of Pets*, on May 14, 2013. Passage of the Act 30 language into law resulted in a restructuring of some aspects of the former pet merchant licensing program. Please review the following information:

1. Retail and wholesale pet shops are required to license with VAAFMM. Although Act 30 eliminated the Pet Merchant licensing category, it requires that pet shops license with VAAFMM. Act 30 defines a “Pet Shop” as a place of retail or wholesale business, including a flea market, that 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.

2. Feed and agricultural supply stores that seasonally offer baby and/or adult rabbits for sale to consumers must obtain a pet shop license from VAAFMM.

3. Some hobby pet breeders are required to obtain a pet dealer permit from their municipality. Act 30 eliminated the requirement for hobby pet breeders to license with VAAFMM as Pet Merchants, but Act 30 mandates that hobby breeders who meet the Pet Dealer definition obtain a Dealer Permit from their town of residence. 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.

4. The requirement for rescue organizations to register with VAAFMM was eliminated in 2016. “Rescue Organization” means any organization that accepts more than five dogs, cats or wolf-hybrids in a calendar year for the purpose of finding adoptive homes for the animals. Rescue organizations are required to be recognized and approved as a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Rescue organizations that qualify as Pet Dealers as per #3 above should follow up with their town of residence to determine which if any requirements apply to them.