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Gazette

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ANIMAL WELFARE ACT. 1992

DETERMINATION NO. 139 OF 1993

CODE OF PRACTICE - APPROVAL

LR 16/4/09

UNDER section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992, I
APPROVE as a Code of Practice the A.C.T. Code of Practice
for the Care and Management of Animals in Pet Shops.

Date: 27.9.93

BILL WOOD
Minister for the Environment,
Land and Planning

A.C.T. CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS IN PET SHOPS

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2 September 1993

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code of Practice sets standards for the care and management of animals held in pet shops in the Australian Capital Territory.**
- 1.2 The standards apply to the welfare of dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice, birds, fish or any other vertebrate animal sold as a companion animal through retail trade.**
- 1.3 The keeping and sale of all animals, including native and introduced wildlife, must comply with relevant ACT legislation.**

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PET SHOP MANAGER

- 2.1 The nominated manager of a pet shop is responsible for:**
 - 2.1.1 Provision of accommodation and equipment which suits the physical and behavioural requirements of the animals held;**
 - 2.1.2 Provision of protection for animals, as necessary, from adverse natural or artificial environmental conditions, other animals and interference from humans;**
 - 2.1.3 Provision of sufficient space for animals to stand, move around freely, stretch fully, rest, swim or exercise, depending on the species;**
 - 2.1.4 Provision of sufficient quantities of appropriate feed and water to maintain good health;**
 - 2.1.5 Protection of animals from disease, distress or injury;**
 - 2.1.6 Provision of prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment in cases of disease or injury;**
 - 2.1.7 Maintenance of hygiene of the premises and health of the animals held;**
 - 2.1.8 Supervision of regular feeding, watering and inspection of animals adequate to ensure their welfare;**
 - 2.1.9 Supervision of staff, whether working full or part-time and whether or not working for fee or reward;**
 - 2.1.10 Collation and maintenance of relevant records;**
 - 2.1.11 Maintenance of records including the suppliers and purchasers of dogs and cats.**

3. ANIMAL HOUSING

3.1 Location

3.1.1 The location and construction of pet shops is subject to approval by ACT Government authorities.

3.1.2 Pet shops should be located:

3.1.2.1 away from sources of excessive noise or pollution that could cause injury or stress to animals;

3.1.2.2 out of areas that are prone to flooding and/or bushfires.

3.2 Construction

3.2.1. Animal enclosures must be designed and maintained to ensure that animals avoid injury, disease, theft, escape or interference by unauthorised persons.

3.2.2 Animal enclosures must be designed to permit regular cleaning, ready checking of animals within, and ready supply and checking of feed and water.

3.2.3 All surfaces of animal enclosures must be impervious, or painted with non-toxic paint so that they may be cleaned and disinfected effectively.

3.3 Temperature

3.3.1 Temperature should be maintained so as to minimise stress to animals, with heating provided for very young animals if necessary.

3.3.2 Animal enclosures should be placed out of draughts and have adequate shade when exposed to direct sunlight.

3.4 Noise

Loud or sudden noise which may stress animals must be kept to a minimum.

3.5 Lighting

3.5.1 Light provided should be as close as possible, in duration and intensity, to natural conditions.

3.5.2 At night, shop lights should be subdued or turned off, or animal enclosures protected by other means from exposure to excessive light.

3.5.3 Lighting must be sufficient to enable thorough inspection of animals when required.

- 3.5.4** Care must be taken to ensure that lights do not generate excessive heat.

3.6 Ventilation

Ventilation must be adequate to keep premises free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts.

3.7 Security

- 3.7.1** Premises must be securely lockable and any outside animal enclosures fitted with security doors.

- 3.7.2** Measures should be taken to prevent escape of animals and entry of pests.

- 3.7.3** All animal enclosures except aquaria must be able to be securely fastened.

- 3.7.4** Appropriate fire fighting equipment must be readily available and staff trained and practised in its use. Provision should be made for the swift removal of animals where possible from the premises in emergencies.

4. HYGIENE

4.1 Cleaning and disinfection

- 4.1.1** Animal enclosures, their surrounds and any enclosed equipment must be kept clean so that the comfort of animals can be maintained and disease prevented.

- 4.1.2** Enclosures other than aquaria should be cleaned before introduction of replacement animals.

- 4.1.3** All animal enclosures, other than aquaria, should be treated with effective and appropriate disinfectants at least weekly.

- 4.1.4** Cleaning and disinfecting agents should be chosen on the basis of their suitability, safety and effectiveness. They must only be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, since too dilute a solution may be ineffective and too concentrated a solution may be toxic to animals.

4.2 Pest Control

- 4.2.1** Efforts must be made to effectively control pests including fleas, flies, lice, mosquitoes and wild rodents.

- 4.2.2** Chemicals used for pest control should be registered under the ACT Pesticides Act 1989 and used only in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

- 4.2.3 Since some animals may be adversely affected by pest control agents, expert advice should be sought before pest control operations are carried out.

4.3 Waste disposal

- 4.3.1 Droppings, bedding, food wastes and animal bodies must be disposed of promptly and hygienically, and in accordance with the requirements of the ACT Government authorities.

5. MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS

5.1 Care of animals

- 5.1.1 Animals are to be protected against stress or injury caused by other animals, and from excessive handling or interference by customers, and also groomed as appropriate.
- 5.1.2 With the exception of compatible species of fish and birds, different animal species should not be housed together.
- 5.1.3 Animals that may be stressed by the presence of other animals should be housed so that they are out of visual contact with them.
- 5.1.4 All equipment which may affect the welfare of animals held should be designed and maintained to avoid injury and disease.

5.2 Record keeping

As part of good business management, as a legislative requirement of licensing and as part of a preventative veterinary care program appropriate records must be kept of:

- 5.2.1 acquisition and disposal of animals.
- 5.2.2 illness and mortality.
- 5.2.3 veterinary treatment given.
- 5.2.4 any native animal species traded.

5.3 Staff

- 5.3.1 All staff should respect animals, should be aware of their responsibilities towards them and be competent to carry them out.
- 5.3.2 At least one full-time member of staff should be experienced and knowledgeable in the care of the species of animals kept.

6. HEALTH CARE

- 6.1** All animals held are to be inspected at least daily to monitor their health and comfort.
- 6.2** The person checking animals should note whether each animal:
 - 6.2.1** is eating normally.
 - 6.2.2** is drinking normally.
 - 6.2.3** is defaecating normally.
 - 6.2.4** is urinating normally.
 - 6.2.5** is behaving normally.
 - 6.2.6** is of normal appearance.
 - 6.2.7** is able to move about freely.
- 6.3** Any changes in health status must be reported promptly to the manager so that appropriate action may be taken.
- 6.4** Wherever possible, newly acquired animals should not be mixed with existing stock until animals are acclimatised.

7. VETERINARY ATTENTION

- 7.1** The manager and staff should be familiar with the signs of diseases that are common in the species of animals held.
- 7.2** Veterinary attention or advice from a nominated source should be sought when signs of illness are present.
- 7.3** No animal known to be or suspected of being injured or diseased is to be offered for sale.
- 7.4** When signs of disease or injury are observed, prompt appropriate treatment must be provided to protect the health of individual animals and prevent the spread of disease.
- 7.5** Animals which die should be disposed of immediately, except where it is necessary to seek veterinary opinion as to the cause of death.
- 7.6** Sick or injured animals must be isolated from healthy animals and where possible removed from public display to reduce stress.
- 7.7** External and internal parasites should be controlled with appropriate measures.
- 7.8** Young animals that are unable to feed themselves should only be accepted from the public where adequate facilities and expertise exist for their feeding. Young animals including birds shall not be offered for sale until they are able to feed themselves unaided.

8. EUTHANASIA

- 8.1 Where treatment to restore health or repair injury is not possible, practicable or successful, animals should be destroyed humanely.
- 8.2 Euthanasia of dogs and cats should only be performed by a veterinary surgeon.
- 8.3 For other species, veterinary advice should be sought on the most humane technique of euthanasia.

9. FOOD AND WATER

- 9.1 Animals must be provided with appropriate food sufficient to maintain them in good health.
- 9.2 Food must be fresh, free from contamination, mould, insecticides or other potentially toxic substances, and stored in a manner which best prevents its deterioration.
- 9.3 Healthy mature warm blooded animals must be fed at least once each day. Puppies and kittens should be fed at least three times a day and healthy immature animals of other species at least twice each day. Reptiles, amphibians and fish should be fed regularly as appropriate to their needs. The feeding of sick animals should follow veterinary advice.
- 9.4 Feed and water containers must be readily accessible to animals, be stable, non-toxic and easily cleaned and disinfected. Containers should be constructed and positioned so as to minimise the risk that they will be upset or become contaminated with faeces and/or urine.
- 9.5 Food containers should be checked frequently to ensure that food of suitable quality and quantity is available. Spoiled food should be removed immediately.
- 9.6 Drinkable water must be available at all times.

10. TRANSPORT

- 10.1 Because transport causes stress to animals it should be kept to the minimum necessary.
- 10.2 All animals sold should be boxed or otherwise suitably restrained to ensure their security and protection when handed or sent to the customer. Transport containers must not be too large so as to avoid self-induced trauma, but should be spacious enough for the animals to turn around.
- 10.3 Food and water should be provided at least daily during long periods of transport.
- 10.4 Containers in which animals are transported should be strong enough to withstand stacking and general handling, and constructed to provide adequate ventilation and light.

- 10.5. The consignor and consignee should confirm departure and arrival time of animals with the carrier. In the event of delays or cancellations, it is the responsibility of the carrier to ensure the welfare of animals in transit.
- 10.6. Containers must be clearly labelled with the time and date of departure, name, address, of the consignor and consignee and phone numbers for contacting them.
- 10.7. Transport by air should be in accordance with IATA guidelines.

11. AFTER SALE CARE

- 11.1 The purchaser of any animal should be referred at the time of sale to or provided with printed advice about the animal, including information on:
 - 11.1.1 general care, housing and management requirements;
 - 11.1.2 appropriate diet;
 - 11.1.3 legal responsibilities of animal ownership;
 - 11.1.4 vaccination, desexing and ACT Government registration/permit papers (including relevant forms and information regarding acquisition of registration), where appropriate.

12. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: BIRDS

- 12.1. According to the species of birds, cage or aviary construction, size and shape should provide security for the birds to avoid unnecessary stress or injury. Cages must be large enough to ensure that birds can fully extend and flap both wings simultaneously.
- 12.2. Sufficient perches, roosting areas and/or feed and water stations to meet the needs of all the birds in a cage or aviary must be provided.
- 12.3. Perches should be of a diameter and construction appropriate to the species held, and should be placed for the birds' comfort and to avoid contamination of food and water containers.
- 12.4. Floors or floor coverings in cages should be covered with a suitable disposable material, such as sand or sawdust, which can be readily removed and replaced to maintain hygiene standards.
- 12.5. Bedding should be provided if appropriate.
- 12.6. Small species of birds and young birds of some species should have access to food at all times.
- 12.7. Except where it is a species requirement, birds should not be fed directly off the floor.
- 12.8. Fresh fruit, greens or seeding grasses should be supplied where appropriate.

- 12.9** Grit and other supplements, if required, should be available at all times.
- 12.10** A separate container of bathing water should be available for some species; however, except where water birds are held, continually wet areas should be avoided.
- 12.11** Signs of illness for which attention must be provided include:
- 12.11.1** changes in appearance of droppings.
 - 12.11.2** changes in food and/or water consumption.
 - 12.11.3** changes in appearance or posture.
 - 12.11.4** changes in weight.
 - 12.11.5** enlargements or swellings.
 - 12.11.6** vomiting, injury or bleeding.
 - 12.11.7** discharge from nostrils, eyes or beak.
 - 12.11.8** excessive feather loss.
 - 12.11.9** lameness or sores on feet.
 - 12.11.10** overgrown beak or nails.
 - 12.11.11** stains or scabs around eyes or nostrils.
- 12.12** A heated hospital cage should be provided for isolation and treatment of sick or injured birds.

13. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: DOGS AND CATS

13.1 Age at Sale

- 13.1.1** Kittens under the age of six weeks shall not be offered for sale.
- 13.1.2** Puppies shall not be offered for sale under the age of seven to eight weeks, that is,
- small breeds should be eight weeks of age;
 - medium breeds should be seven to eight weeks of age;
 - large breeds should be seven weeks of age.

- 13.2** Purchasers of a dog should be advised to have it vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus, and to have external and internal parasite control programs (including hydatid control) implemented as soon as possible following purchase of the animal. Purchasers should also be advised that all dogs over the age of three months require ACT Government registration.

- 13.3** Purchasers of a cat should be advised to have it vaccinated against feline infectious enteritis and feline respiratory disease, and to have appropriate external and internal parasite control programs implemented as soon as possible following purchase of the animal.
- 13.4** Information regarding the need or desirability for desexing of dogs and cats should also be provided.
- 13.5** Signs of illness for which veterinary attention must be sought include:
- 13.5.1** runny nose.
 - 13.5.2** runny or inflamed eyes.
 - 13.5.3** repeated sneezing.
 - 13.5.4** coughing.
 - 13.5.5** vomiting.
 - 13.5.6** severe diarrhoea, especially if bloodstained.
 - 13.5.7** lameness.
 - 13.5.8** bleeding or swelling of body parts.
 - 13.5.9** inability to stand, walk, urinate or defaecate.
 - 13.5.10** inappetance.
 - 13.5.11** weight loss.
 - 13.5.12** apparent pain.
 - 13.5.13** fits or staggering.
 - 13.5.14** patchy hair loss.
- 13.6** Cage floors should be lined with a readily removable, absorbent disposable material (such as newspaper) which should be replaced as it becomes soiled.
- 13.7** Cats should be provided with litter trays containing an adequate amount of litter. Litter must be changed as often as necessary but at least once each day. The tray must be cleaned each time the litter is changed.
- 13.8** Bedding should be provided. It must be changed frequently and kept clean.
- 13.9** To prevent the spread of hydatid disease, raw meat or offal should not be fed to dogs or cats.
- 13.10** Except on veterinary advice, raw or cooked fresh meat should not be given to puppies or kittens under 12 weeks of age without appropriate calcium supplementation.

- 13.11 One feeding container of adequate size should be provided for each adult animal, for each puppy or kitten over the age of 12 weeks, for up to three puppies from the same litter under 12 weeks of age and for up to three kittens under 12 weeks of age.
- 13.12 Proper exercise should be made available to puppies and dogs kept for more than 14 days.

14. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: RABBITS, RATS, MICE AND GUINEA PIGS

- 14.1 Cages and pens should be roofed. Cage and pens for mice and rats must have solid sides to minimise draughts, spread of disease and stress. Cages and pens for rabbits and guinea pigs must not be totally open-sided and must have a private section.
- 14.2 A dark area in each pen or cage must be provided where animals can hide.
- 14.3 Nest boxes should be provided for breeding females.
- 14.4 Litters under one week of age should be disturbed as little as possible.
- 14.5 Suitable non-toxic bedding for the species must be provided and changed at least once a week.
- 14.6 Wooden gnawing blocks should be provided.
- 14.7 Cubed or pelleted diets, supplemented by fresh greens should be given.
- 14.8 Water should be constantly available and supplied from a glass or plastic bottle with a nipple drinker, the tip of which must not come into contact with the animals' bedding or food.
- 14.9 Purchasers of rabbits should be advised that an ACT Government permit to keep rabbits is required.

15. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: FISH

- 15.1 Tanks should be sheltered from direct sunlight.
- 15.2 25% of the water in the aquaria should be replaced at least fortnightly.
- 15.3 Fish must be fed as often as required by the species.
- 15.4 Fish showing any signs of illness should be separated from others to prevent possible spread of illness and any attack on weaker fish by healthy ones.
- 15.5 To prevent the possible spread of disease, all nets should be disinfected weekly.

- 15.6 Lids should be fitted or appropriate measures taken to prevent fish from jumping out of tanks.
- 15.7 Water chemistry should be checked at weekly intervals, and appropriate measures taken to correct any imbalance.
- 15.8 All electrical equipment such as lights and heater thermostats should be checked regularly for correct performance.
- 15.9 Filtration equipment should be adequate and working at all times.

16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Code draws heavily on the document "Guidelines for the Care and Management of Animals in Pet Shops" produced by the New South Wales Department of Local Government and endorsed by the New South Wales Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.