



2023-04

**NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION ACKNOWLEDGES
THAT VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT IS
NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, vigorous enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is essential to ensuring the welfare of animals kept by licensed breeders and exhibitors; and

WHEREAS, such enforcement is not as vigorous as it should be, resulting in much documented animal suffering; and

WHEREAS, when inhumane conditions at facilities cause animal suffering, USDA is empowered to confiscate the animals; and

WHEREAS, USDA confiscation of animals from licensees, however, has declined in recent years despite a consistent rate of documented violations; and

WHEREAS, USDA persists in automatically renewing the licenses of breeders and exhibitors who are out of compliance with AWA standards and the court has held that such renewals are unlawful in the face of documented noncompliance; and

WHEREAS, despite being required to do so by AWA standards, USDA is lax in meeting its responsibility to share information about noncompliant facilities with state and local law enforcement authorities; and

WHEREAS, such multiple enforcement failures result in there being present in our communities inhumane facilities that unnecessarily present a safety hazard to our communities and strain the resources of local law enforcement authorities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association urges Congress to strengthen the Animal Welfare Act's licensing and confiscation provisions and to clarify for USDA its responsibilities under the law.