

Report on Research Compliance Volume 19, Number 1. January 02, 2022 RRC E-Alerts: December 2, 2021

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USDA Final Rule Amends Animal Welfare Act

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has finalized as issued a proposed rule published in 2020 that amends five requirements in three sections of regulations implementing the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Under the rule, published Nov. 24 and effective Dec. 27, research facilities will not have to update their registration every three years nor will institutional animal care and use committees (IACUCs) be required to “conduct a continuing review of research activities involving animals.” The rule, instead, requires “a complete resubmission and review of such activities at least every 3 years. We will also no longer require that research facilities request an inactive status if they no longer use, handle, or transport AWA covered animals.”

The rule also clarifies “the duration of a registration and conditions for its cancellation and will no longer require that the Institutional Official or Chief Executive Officer sign the annual report.” APHIS made other “miscellaneous changes to improve readability.” The changes are designed “to reduce administrative burden on investigators, IACUC members, attending veterinarians, and other related facility staff, and will not affect the Animal Welfare regulations that ensure humane animal care during research, testing, experiments, or teaching,” according to the rule.

[Link to final rule](#)

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