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**Pet Advocacy Network Updates Small Animal Care Standards**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – August 16, 2023 – The Pet Advocacy Network today rolled out an updated version of its voluntary standards for breeders and distributors of small mammals, reptiles and birds, the Small Animal Care Standards, during an in-person session at the Super Zoo pet trade show in Las Vegas. First released in 2017, the standards are a compilation of federal Animal Welfare Act regulations, veterinary review, and existing pet sector best practices based on the latest science and data.

“In just the five years since we developed the first set of standards and distributed them across the pet care community, there have been many important regulatory changes and advances in pet care practices that made this update essential,” said Mike Bober, president and CEO of the Pet Advocacy Network. “These standards provide critical animal care guidance for breeders, distributors, and their employees to help ensure the health and well-being of these animals that will become beloved pets in American homes across the country.”

Spearheaded by members of Pet Advocacy Network’s Small Animal Committee, and with input from pet sector leaders, animal care experts, veterinarians, and others, the standards include comprehensive sections on facilities, care practices, and transport that encompass all stages of animal care by breeders and distributors. There are also guidelines for record-keeping and staffing procedures.

The section on bird care was substantially updated to align with new regulations issued by the United States Department of Agriculture in February 2023 that direct that the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service will oversee inspecting and licensing pet bird breeders, distributors, and transporters. It also reflects the standards that were added to the “Blue Book” of regulations relating to inspectors’ assessments of animal care conditions. Additional changes were made to recommendations regarding the use of UVB lighting in reptile and amphibian enclosures as well as distinctions between quarantine and isolation protocols.

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“We are proud of this resource that comprises a rigorous, substantive set of guidelines to assure the appropriate care of small companion animals,” said Bober. “By codifying best practices and pet sector expectations for care, the standards will help ensure these animals receive the proper nutrition, veterinary care, housing, transportation and more that they deserve and that our trade has a shared commitment to providing at all times.”

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### **About Pet Advocacy Network**

The [Pet Advocacy Network](#) connects the experience and expertise of the responsible pet care community to lawmakers and governing bodies, advocating for legislative and regulatory priorities at the local, state, federal and international levels. Since 1971, the organization has worked to promote animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure access to healthy pets, including small animals, cats, dogs, fish, reptiles and birds. Pet Advocacy Network members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers’ representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations.

