

## Meeting Minutes: Breeder Excellence Advisory Task Force

Date: June 11, 2018  
Location: Davanni's, Coon Rapids, MN

### Attendance

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#### Task Force Members

Perry Burros-Lemke  
Chad Carlson  
Belinda Donley  
Dan Moscho  
Kayla Pierson  
Tasha Podratz  
Flo VanSlyke  
Mike VanSlyke  
Courtney Wheeler  
Pamela Withage

#### Guests

Annie Balghiti, Minnesota Board of Animal Health  
Melissa Bieber, Licensed Commercial Dog Breeder  
Elaine Hanson, Minnesota Pet Breeders Association  
Ardeh Livermore, Licensed Commercial Dog Breeder  
Beth Thompson, Minnesota Board of Animal Health

### Program Goals and Intent

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In accordance with Minnesota statute, the Board of Animal Health, in consultation with representatives of the licensed commercial dog and cat breeder industry, must develop a program to recognize persons who demonstrate commercial breeder excellence and exceed the standards and practices currently required of commercial breeders.

### Review of minutes from last meeting

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Kayla Pierson, Commercial Dog and Cat Breeder (CDCB) Program Administrator, read the minutes from the March 12, 2018, meeting. There were no changes or corrections.

## **Presentation of suggestions for exceeding standards, discussion/comments**

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Task force members were asked to submit suggestions for the program to the program director and/or program administrator prior to the meeting. Suggestions were reviewed and compiled by program staff and presented for discussion.

### **Suggestions and Discussion:**

**Suggestion:** Breeder Excellence Program should follow a tiered structure with a higher level requiring additional criteria. For example: Bronze, Silver or Gold levels.

#### **Discussion:**

- A tiered Breeder Excellence Program could encourage commercial breeders to improve their breeding operation based on what level they want to achieve, but it could also open up breeders for additional public scrutiny and confusion with customers inquiring why a breeder achieved one tier but not another.
- An all or nothing (non-tiered) Breeder Excellence Program could be based on a point system with specific criteria. The commercial breeder would need to accumulate enough points or meet enough of the requirements during the evaluation to be included in the program.
- The goal for the next meeting is to draft two versions, one tiered and one not, of the Breeder Excellence Program and receive feedback from task force members on which would work the best.

**Suggestion:** Participants should be required to maintain a detailed, written biosecurity protocol.

#### **Discussion:**

- This would be a more detailed document than what commercial breeders are already required to include in their Veterinary Protocol under “disease control”.
- Inspectors would review the protocol and verify it is being implemented.
- Consideration was made as to whether or not a veterinarian would need to sign off on this protocol, and if they could sign it at the same time they review and sign their Veterinary Protocol.

**Suggestion:** Participants should be required to obtain Continuing Education (CE) from 6-24 hours per year.

#### **Discussion:**

- Multiple organizations offer monthly online educational courses, including the Minnesota Pet Breeders Association and the USDA.
- The Board could draft a list of courses that would be approved for CE. Prior approval would need to be given from the Board if a breeder wanted to attend a class that was pre-approved.
- Twelve hours of CE will be included in the first draft.
- The Board will compare the number of required hours to similar industries.

Additional suggestions for what is most important for building this program:

- Annual health examinations, vaccinations and heartworm testing for all adult animals.
- Continuing education.
- Facility visits by a licensed veterinarian (minimum annually).

- Breed-specific genetic and disease testing for all dogs in a breeding program, not just a percentage.
- Detailed, enforced exercise program.
- Facility emergency evacuation plan.
- Detailed enrichment plan.
- Annual or biannual testing for canine brucellosis.

### **Action Items:**

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- The Board will create two drafts, one tiered, one not, for the Breeder Excellence Program and send to ask force members for review prior to the next meeting.
- The Board will also reach out to licensed commercial cat breeders to get their input on requirements for cats.

### **Next meeting**

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Davanni's  
3430 129th Ave NW  
Coon Rapids, MN 55448  
Monday, September 24, 2018  
11:00 a.m.