



Premises Registration Facts and FAQs

Overview

Premises Registration is a system that allows animal health officials to stop the spread of a contagious livestock disease by allowing them to quickly locate those farms with infected animals and act as necessary. Vermonters who keep certain livestock will be asked to “register” the location (the “premises”) at which those livestock are kept. One’s personal data is protected, by state law, from disclosure to anyone other than those whom the owner allows to have access, and certain animal health officials. The information will be used for only two purposes: in the event of a disease, to respond quickly; and to address educational materials regarding prevention and advisories to livestock owners.

Vermont needs to prepare for the predicted arrival of Avian Influenza (AI), or “Bird Flu” as it has become known. This “highly pathogenic” virus has spread from Asia to the Middle East and Europe, and will likely reach North America this summer. It is fatal to poultry, and has killed more than 100 humans.

Animal health experts have learned, through decades of experience with contagious diseases, that a system that identifies the location of sites where certain species of livestock are kept is the best tool that animal agriculture has to contain a major disease outbreak. If Bird Flu is, for instance, found in Vermont, the veterinary community will need to know where that farm is, and what other farms are in the area so they can quickly assess and contain the disease.

The Agency of Agriculture has been discussing this proposal with the legislature and farm groups for over a year, and has drafted a proposal to require those who keep livestock in Vermont to register their premises and the species there housed. (The proposal does not seek individual animals’ identification, and is distinct from USDA’s proposal.) Vermonters will have a chance to comment yet further on the Agency’s proposal at a number of public meetings in June, or by submitting comments by mail.

Important facts regarding Premises Registration:

The system requests and stores only the geographic location where livestock are kept, and the species that one keeps;
The system is protected from public disclosure by state statute;
Registration is free to all, regardless of the number of livestock kept;
Registration can be done directly via the Internet, or with the assistance of Agency employees;
No information regarding the number of animals kept, or any individual identification that the owner may have assigned is requested;
Owners need not notify the Agency when their animals leave the farm, except when current federal rules governing interstate movement apply;
The data will only be used to educate and advise livestock owners regarding biosecurity and disease advisories, and to respond in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease. Only the Agency of Agriculture will have access to the data.

Frequently Asked Questions about Premises Registration:

Why do we need a premises registration system?

Premises registration will give the Agency of Agriculture the means to educate livestock owners about disease prevention, advise them of an impending disease, and respond properly in the event of an outbreak. Experience has demonstrated that Premises Registration is the essential “tool”.

Will Premises Registration Stop Avian Influenza from coming to Vermont?

Premises registration is a critical piece of a comprehensive animal disease management strategy, and is integral to several aspects of that strategy:

1. Prevention – Vermont (like all states and Canadian provinces) regulates the importation of

livestock and promotes farm biosecurity in order to prevent the introduction and spread of animal diseases.

2. Monitoring – The Vermont Agency of Agriculture routinely monitors for Scrapie, West Nile, Chronic Wasting Disease, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, and Equine Infectious Anemia.
3. Control – The Agency is now working with owners of dairy cattle and sheep to control two endemic diseases, Johnes and Scrapie, respectively.
4. Response – The Agency has trained its animal health professionals, and a number of private veterinarians to respond to an animal disease outbreak. Premises registration is critical to the success of their efforts.

It is unlikely that the U.S. and Vermont can prevent the introduction of Avian Influenza, but being prepared can limit its damage.

Will I need to file a report to the state when an animal leaves a farm, even when I take my horse out for a ride?

The state only needs to know where your farm is, and what types of livestock you house there. Current federal law requires livestock owners to notify the state or province into which certain livestock are being moved. If your livestock do not leave Vermont, no notification is now needed, or is proposed by this system of Premises Registration.

What species are included?

Bovine (bison, cattle)
equine (horses, donkeys, mules)
goats
poultry (chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowl, squab)
captive game birds (pheasants, quail, wild turkeys, migratory wildfowl, pigeons, exotic birds,)
sheep
swine (other than wild hogs but including pot belly pigs)
cervid (deer, elk, moose, caribou, reindeer)
camelids (llamas, alpacas)
ratites (rheas, ostriches, emu, cassowary, kiwi)
fish (aquaculture)

Rule Content

The Agency’s proposed rule includes the following key provisions:

1. Those who keep “livestock”, as defined in 6 VSA §1151, will register their premises with the Agency of Agriculture.
2. Reregistration will occur biennially.
3. Registration merely identifies a location in this state at which livestock are kept. The unique premises code remains with that location, even if the registrant changes (some exceptions apply). Registration does not create any “ownership” rights that do not otherwise exist.
4. Operators of livestock facilities currently licensed or inspected by the Agency (dairy farms, cervid farms, animal markets, livestock dealer premises, livestock transporter premises, slaughter establishments, equine quarantine facilities, and rendering establishments) must register the facilities licensed to them, and may not let others register those premises for them. Generally, license holders will be able to register as part of their license renewal.
5. The registration requirement under this rule will be implemented in a two-tiered process. Livestock operations that sell product to the public will need to register within 6 months of the rule’s implementation (approximately, by the winter of 2007); those who keep livestock as a hobby or for personal use will need to register within one year (approximately, by the fall of 2007).
 6. There is no fee to register, reregister or update one’s livestock premises. A person may register on-line, or in writing on forms provided by the Agency. VAAFMM will send biennial renewal forms to registrants to make renewal as easy as possible.
7. Each registrant must provide the following information:
 - Registrant’s legal name, trade names if any, mailing address, and phone number;
 - The location of one’s primary premises and up to 3 secondary locations that are part of one’s livestock operation;
 - Name and phone number of a contact person with knowledge of livestock movements between one’s own locations, if one has more than one premises on which livestock are kept;
 - Type(s) of livestock operation (e.g. Farm, Slaughterhouse, etc.);
 - Type(s) of livestock kept;
8. The information is protected and confidential under 6 VSA §61.