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Changes to Agriculture Rules to Take Effect

Charleston, WV - The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is notifying the public of several changes made to agriculture rules and regulations passed during the 2018 legislative session. A total of seven rule changes were proposed by the WVDA and approved by the West Virginia Legislature and Governor Jim Justice. Most of these rules will be in effect as of Sunday, April 29th. The changes to 61-11B "Auctioneers" will take effect Monday, August 6th.

"Technology, innovations and federal guidelines change on a yearly basis. This requires the WVDA to update rules and regulations to modern standards. The department is here to help farmers and producers understand these changes," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

House Bill 4079 approved the following agriculture rules: 61-01 Animal Disease Control, 61-02 WV Apiary Law, 61-08B Fruit Inspection, 61-11B Auctioneers, 61-14A Noxious Weeds, 61-16 Inspection of Meat/Poultry and 61-23D Inspection of Nontraditional, Domesticated Animals.

Notable changes:

- 61-01 – "Animal Disease Control" allows Honor Flocks (Sheep) and Honor Herds (Goats) to submit certifications online or via mail. In addition, certified flocks or herds can be approved for entry to fairs or festivals by the Commissioner of Agriculture or through a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI).
- 61-02 – "WV Apiary Law" changes the registration date for apiary licenses from December 31st to June 30th.

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- 61-11B – “Auctioneers” changes the minimum bond requirement for auctioneers from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and sets up procedures to increase bonds on disciplinary cases.
- 61-14A – “Noxious Weeds” adds kudzu effective immediately and Japanese Barberry by July 1, 2020 to the Noxious Weeds list. Plants on the Noxious Weeds List cannot be commercially grown, harvested or sold in West Virginia.
- 61-23D – “Inspection of Nontraditional, Domesticated Animals” increases the number of rabbits slaughtered that are exempt from inspections from 1,000 to 20,000. In addition, exempted rabbit meat products may now be sold to retail stores, restaurants and distributors. This mirrors changes made in previous years to backyard flock regulations.

“We encourage people to reach out to the department if they have any questions. Our philosophy is to educate before we regulate,” Leonhardt said.

For questions or more information, please contact the WVDA at 304-558-3550 or Jodee Martin at jodeemartin@wvda.us.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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